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### Invasive alien vertebrates and biodiversity conservation in the French Overseas Territories

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#### Summary

French Overseas Territories, mainly islands, host an outstanding biodiversity which is highly vulnerable to the introduction of alien species. A recent synthesis coordinated by the IUCN French Committee reveals that at least 145 alien vertebrates are established in these territories, including 32 mammals, 57 birds, 22 reptiles, 11 amphibians and 23 fishes. About 42 of them represent or may represent a significant threat to local biodiversity. The most harmful species include omnivores (rats, pigs), carnivores (feral cats, feral dogs, mongooses, predatory birds, fishes and reptiles) and herbivores (rabbits, goats, sheeps, deers, cattles). Many indigenous species (invertebrates, freshwater fishes, terrestrial reptiles, birds, amphibians, sea turtles...) are impacted by predation and competition, among which marine birds are the most severely affected. By overgrazing, over-browsing and trampling, herbivores have a major impact on indigenous habitats like dry and humid forests, boreal forests, mountain and subantarctic vegetation. The management of invasive alien vertebrates represents an important part in conservation actions carried out to preserve native biodiversity in French Overseas Territories, and many control and eradication programmes are actively conducted to restore indigenous species or habitats. However, important constraints remain regarding regulations, biosecurity, public awareness and knowledge availability. It is crucial that these issues are addressed both at local, national and European levels, and overseas territories should become be a priority for France and Europe in their strategies developed to efficiently manage invasive species.