

Masafuera Island

Masafuera Island (also called Alejandro Selkirk Island) is impressive at the first sight. With 1400m over sea level at the highest peak, this incredible piece of rock that emerges from the sea seems to defy human even at large distances. In fact, around 30 people live there and only during the lobster capture season (October-may). There are no grocery store, no streets and electricity is generated by an oil motor that runs few hours a day. Life is hard at Masafuera! Food supply depends on uncertainly ships trips that reach Masafuera to buy the precious lobsters.

Masafuera is also unique because of its flora and fauna. Endemic ferns, trees and birds are the reason why Masafuera Island is part of the Archipelago from **Juan Fernandez National Park** (about 800km away from the continental Chilean shoreline) and an important Biosphere Reserve by **UNESCO**.

One of these endemic species is the **Masafuera Rayadito** (Aphrasfun Masafuera): a small, acrobatic, insectivorous, bird that lives only at Masafuera highest elevations (over 800m over sea level). This species has been affected by a severe habitat loss in the past (the island was in fire for several years) and the predation by exotic mammals (feral cats, rats and mices). Considered as critically endangered by the **IUCN**, this bird is virtually unknown. A collaborative project between **Juan Fernandez Island Conservancy** (JFIC) and the **University of Chile** have just begun. Our objectives are to determine the population size (in this case, for the entire species), to describe its habitat use and to encourage species breeding by the use of nest boxes. We are just starting our project, but we expect that it can be the starting point to know this unique specie better and to help to secure its survival in time.

If you want to learn more about our project, you can e-mail me at:

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