



EPCO members and Taro Farmers working hand-in-hand towards 'Halting the snail trail of destruction in Mauritius'.

In the context of the World Wetlands Day Celebration 2007 and working on the project: ***‘Halting the snail trail of destruction in Mauritius’***. EPCO organized an **Apple Snail Hand Picking Activity** in collaboration with the **Small Taro Growers of La Porte Providence- Flacq District** on the **3rd February 2007**,





The event was covered by the media- press, tv and radio. Mr. Ranjan Churawah (Taro grower of La Porte, Providence- Flacq) being interviewed by the MBC tv.

The rented wetlands of the poor taro farmers are badly infested by the Apple Snail; suspected to be *Pomacea canaliculata*, and with a relatively high population are damaging the taro vegetation and causing huge economic losses.



Taro plantation badly infested by Apple Snails.

All the Taro farmers were grouped together to carry the **Hand Picking Activity**. Baits (Papaya – Mangoes) were put one day before to group the molluscs, so as to make the picking activity relatively easy.

Some 200kg of Apple snails were collected and more than 1000 clutches of eggs destroyed by some 30 farmers in about 3 Hours.



Putting baits before collection proved to be very effective because the juvenile and even the young snails could be collected.

The remaining snails were controlled biologically using small bundles of neem and tobacco leaves as both leaves are poisonous to apple snails.

Taro farmers were encouraged to group into an association, carry out the hand picking on a regular basis and as a community effort. The latest available information via internet was given to them.