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Cap Du Cerf to upgrade displays inside Doctors House

Cap Du Cerf, based on Cerf Island, has over the years been doing its part towards the conservation of the marine environment and species. Cap du Cerf has especially been involved in conservation activities organized by Seychelles National Parks Authority, as well as education and awareness programs, and has provided support for conservation activities of SNPA. It is with that same attitude that Cap du Cerf is once again doing its part in education and awareness of both locals and tourists, on the importance of conservation of Curieuse biodiversity, through financial contribution needed to upgrade and add to the deteriorated displays inside the Doctors House. The project started in September 2010 and is expected to be completed by the end of 2012, with an improved educational and information display inside the Doctors House museum.



Old display material in the Doctor's House



Doctor's House, Information and Education Centre, Curieuse

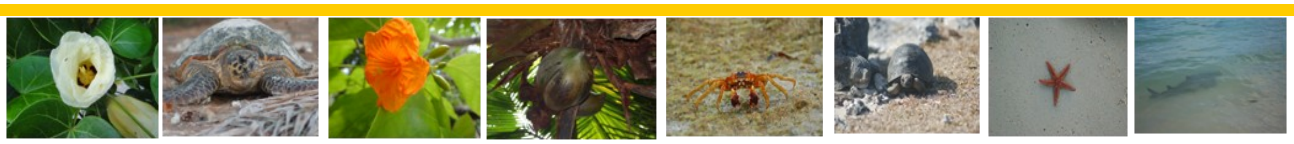
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Establishing Capacity building needs for addressing Climate Change impacts – A workshop for Coastal and Marine Protected Areas in the Western Indian Ocean

The workshop was attended by Ms. Sylvanna Antha, a Research Officer within the Research and Monitoring Section of SNPA. The aim of the workshop was to assess management of non-climate stressors and to see how these management strategies can be enhanced and used, so as to manage for climate change impacts.

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Establishing Capacity building needs for addressing Climate Change impacts – A workshop for Coastal and Marine Protected Areas in the Western Indian Ocean

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These were then used to identify the capacity building needed within the Western Indian Ocean in order to effectively address climate change issues.

It was identified that while there are a number of management strategies used to address non-climate stressors, most of these were not being used effectively. One of the reason for this is the lack of dedication of 'conservationists', 'managers' and 'researchers', as well as other technicians working within coastal areas and MPAs. This lack of dedication leads to half-hearted conservation so that the real issues are not always addressed, monitoring is not done properly and data collected are not always accurate. This means that management barriers are created and MPAs and coastal areas are not protected as efficiently as they could have been. As a result, climate change lead to added pressure to these environments, so that further degradation occur, making it very hard, and sometimes virtually impossible to adapt to these changes, resulting in destruction of MPAs and associated resources.

Further discussions led to the agreement that in order for changes in attitudes and conservation to occur, there is a need for communication and advocacy (in terms of government and people working on policies and support). This will allow understanding of the impacts of climate change is at all levels of society. Furthermore vulnerability assessments need to be carried out for all climate change impacts, so as to create understanding of these impacts (important in order to create resilience and adaptation) and that local collaboration has to be a priority, so that again all levels of society understands the impacts and are involved. This means that capacity needs to be built within MPA management, so that they can work with all levels of society and include all stakeholders in management.

At the same time, there is a need to empower Human Resources within MPAs, so that they understand the importance of recruiting the 'right' people for conservation of (marine) resources, in order to ensure that proper conservation and monitoring work is carried out. Regional and local networks are also important, to ensure information sharing and support for different activities and research within country and within region. NOAA, WIOMSA and USAID have pledged to give their support so as to enable each WIO country to build their capacity in the required fields, so as to reduce impacts of climate change.

A season of Turtle monitoring on Ste Anne.

Five of seven species of the worlds' sea turtles, are found in the Seychelles waters. The two which are most common, are the green (*Chelonia mydas*) and hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) turtles, and they are the only two species of turtles that are recorded to nest here. The other three i.e. the leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*), loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*), and the olive-ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) turtles are rarely observed in the Seychelles water (Hamann et al., 2006).



Picture: Hawksbill turtle

Nesting sea turtles are an important part of the national heritage and biodiversity of Seychelles. It is one of our country symbols and is used on the local banknotes.

Once abundant, these reptiles are in danger of extinction because of human exploitation. The green turtle is listed as endangered by IUCN (**International Union for Conservation of Nature**) while the hawksbill turtle is considered critically endangered. Seychelles host 1 of the 5 remaining regional populations with more than 1,000 females nesting annually in the world.

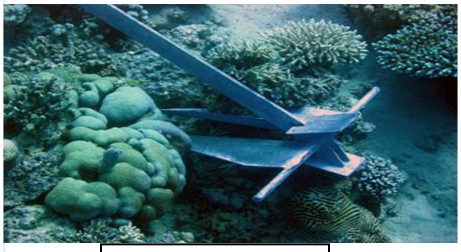
The Seychelles National Parks Authority (**SNPA**) monitors the nesting beaches within the Ste Anne Marine Park, for female turtles. The hawksbills are more commonly seen nesting on different beaches in Seychelles, between September to February. The Seychelles islands is the only known site in the Indian Ocean, and most probably in the world, where hawksbills nest during the day. For this reason, they are quite easy to survey and/or monitor. It has always been part of the Research and Monitoring section within SNPA to monitor nesting turtles in the Ste Anne and Curieuse Marine National Parks (**MNPs**), and the 2011 nesting season was no exception. Monitoring took place through the 6 months with an intensive two week monitoring during November 2011 in the Ste.Anne MNP. During that time alone, 57 tracks were recorded (all hawksbill), 9 sighting with 3 tagged turtles, 3 with no tags or tag scars and 3 where information was no gathered about the individual due to the fact that the animal was either going back to sea or the sea condition was too rough for us to get on the beach to obtain the required information. The table below summarise this information, obtained from our observation.

The amount of turtle observed has slowly decreased but the season was fruitful, to say the least within the MNPs.

SAVING THE CORAL REEFS

Installation of mooring buoys within the Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) managed by the Seychelles National Parks Authority (SNPA) is still ongoing. The aim of this project is to ensure that boats visiting the park are moored securely, and that coral reefs are not destroyed by anchors.

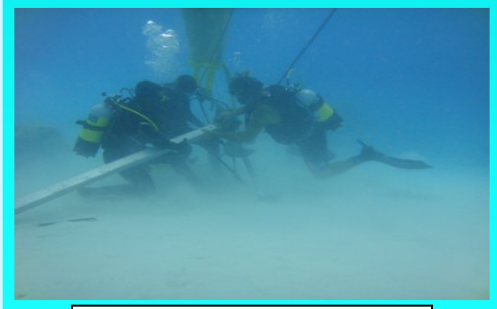
Protecting our reefs today will definitely contribute towards a healthier and enriched marine ecosystem, especially important for MPAs.



Anchor damage on Reefs

The Seychelles National Parks Authority, initially Marine Parks Authority (MPA), started the mooring project about six years ago but with some technical problems and shortage of equipments, the project has been on hold for a while. Towards the end of November 2011, a Non Profit Organisation, 'Anchors Away', headed by Mr Royden du Plooy and his wife, who resides in the Seychelles, approached the SNPA to help preserve coral reefs within the park boundaries, through the installation of mooring buoys.

By the end of November 2011 a number of 6 buoys had been installed in the Baie Ternay MNP, by divers from the Operations Unit of SNPA, under the guidance of the Research and Monitoring section. At the same time, search for pins to which buoys are attached, was started in the Ste Anne MNP. However, as these pins have been installed a while back, finding them has been difficult. . Suspension of sand and silt materials in November – December led to murky water in the MNP, making it difficult to locate pins. However, further diving and drilling is being undertaken, especially with the favourable weather brought on by the North-west Monsoon.



SNPA divers doing underwater drilling in sandy location

Buoys are expected to be in place by the end of June at Ste Anne, Ile Cocos and Curieuse MNPs.

All installation of buoys is being undertaken by SNPA divers with the collaborations of Silhouette Cruise.



Boats secured on Mooring Buoys at C. Ternay

Special thanks goes to Mr and Mrs Du Plooy, Silhouette Cruise, Mahé Shipping, C.E.O of SNPA Mr Denis Matatiken, Mr Rodney Quatre , Bernard Bijoux, Paul Lavigne, Stephen Guillaume ,Devis Monthy, Ritval Pillay and all who are helping bring about the success of this project.

Rehabilitation of glacis habitat: one path towards preserving Seychelles' biodiversity

Glacis vegetation on the granitic islands of Seychelles is one of the most pristine plant communities of the archipelago. Some locations contain almost entirely species that are native to the islands, including many which are endemic, occurring only in Seychelles. From an aerial perspective, these glacis with their rich plant diversity resemble disconnected pockets of biologically important plant communities embedded in a matrix of habitat dominated by introduced species and forestry plantations. . While introduced species such as albizya, bwa zonn, santol, kannel and mahogany are economically viable species, they directly compete with Seychelles' native plants for nutrients and space, often destroying the preferred living environment of native plants. Given that the majority of native species are slow growing, they are replaced by fast growing introduced species and become restricted to small isolated patches. The invasion of natural areas by introduced plants over the last decades has resulted in many glacis plants now being classified as endangered or critically endangered, including the iconic pitcher plant Nepenthes pervillei *(lalyann potao)*, and the jellyfish tree Medusagyne oppositifolia *(bwa mediz)*, which occur exclusively on glacis.

In collaboration with Dr Christopher Kaiser-Bunbury from Aarhus University, Denmark, we have set out to put a halt to the further degradation of the most diverse glacis plant communities on Mahé.

In a project funded by the Environmental Trust Fund (Seychelles) and the Swiss National Science Foundation, a team of National Park and forestry staff removes all introduced plant species from four separate glacis, using carefully selected plant removal

Rehabilitation of glacis habitat: one path towards preserving Seychelles' biodiversity

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techniques, thus creating space to allow the native plants to spread and reproduce more prolifically. The removal techniques were rigorously tested in a 1-year scientific study prior to implementation on the large scale. The most dominant introduced species that are removed from the glacis are *Chrysobalanus icaco* (prindefrans), *Alstonia macrophylla* (bwa zonn), *Cinnamamom verum* (kannel) and *Psidium cattleianum* (gouyavedsin).

Of the four glacis that are being restored, on two of them the removal of introduced plants has been completed. In a second phase starting imminently, about 2000 native seedlings will be planted across the most affected glacis to support the already established native plants in their efforts to re-create a dense vegetation of indigenous plants. Once the glacis have been fully rehabilitated, two of them will be established as eco-tourism sites. These glacis, which are easily accessible to the public, will be equipped with an educational billboard, highlighting their outstanding conservation value and their importance for Seychelles' plant biodiversity.

The rehabilitation work is part of a larger commitment of the National Park Authority to research the effects of humans on the health and robustness of ecosystems in Seychelles. To safeguard Seychelles natural treasures, it is vital to understand the impact of humans on natural systems, and to mitigate these impacts before the threatened plant species and the native animals that are associated with them go extinct. Interactions between native species breathe life into ecosystems and they provide the basis for the sustainability of Seychelles' plants and animals.


'Restored glacis'

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Conservation and Research Section.

This division within Seychelles National Parks Authority (SNPA) main responsibility is to protect and conserve all the national park, both marine and terrestrial and implementing research programs associated with such sites.

Previously known as **Seychelles Center for Marine Research and Technology** (**SCMRT**) but the name has changed to **Conservation and Research Section** to accommodate the terrestrial aspect of the national parks.

The SNPA head quarter is located at Laurier Avenue but the research section is located at OJ's Mall, Room #44/46 , Market Street, Victoria, Mahé, Seychelles.

