

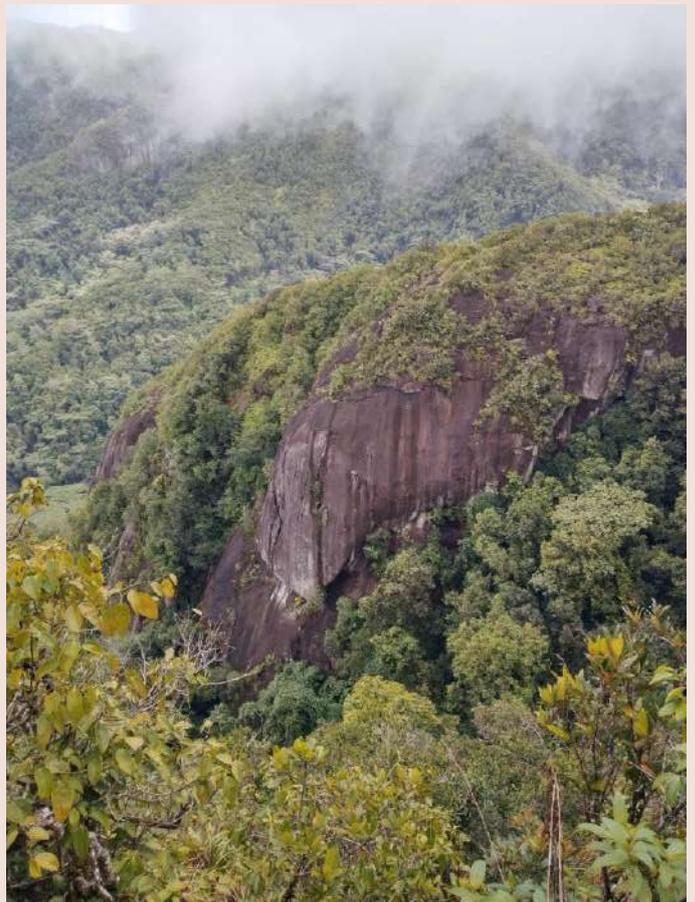
Morne Seychellois National Park



Situated on the northern side of Mahé is the Morne Seychellois National Park, being directly to the west of Victoria and sandwiched by Port Launay and Bel Ombre, the Park covers approximately 20 percent of Mahé and made up of a mixture of mangroves, lush tropical jungles and mist forest on the most elevated mountains. The highest mountain is the namesake Morne Seychellois, which measures in at a little more than 900 metres (2,950 feet) in height, making it the tallest in the entire archipelago

Geology

One of the most interesting facts about the Seychelles is that, unlike other oceanic islands, they are composed of continental rock rather than oceanic basalt or reef limestone. The granite of the main island of Mahé is about 650 million years old, dating back to the Precambrian age. It is believed, though, that long-distance dispersal - by sea, wind and birds - was responsible for bringing plants and animals to the Seychelles, and in this respect our islands are similar to other oceanic outposts. This combination of similar and dissimilar ensures that the environment of the Seychelles is one of the most intriguing in the world to study.



History

The Morne Seychellois National Park was established in 1979 and holds a large part of the uplands of the central Mahé Island. Most of the fascinating plants and animals of the island are given complete protection within its boundaries as part of a Coordinated Land Management Policy, which includes commercial forestry and agriculture.





What to do?

Guided walks are the best way to really see what is on offer here, although there is an array of easy to follow hiking trails available.

The Morne Seychellois National Park forest habitat is divided into three types, According to their altitude (height above sea level):

- Coastal & lowland forests (up to about 250m)
- Middle altitude forests (between 250m- 500m)
- High forest and mist forest (above 500m)

The species of plants found in each type of forest are somewhat different, although some species are found at a wide range of altitudes. Bodanmyen and Takamaka are typical lowland species. Palmis and Kolofant are typical of middle altitude forest. Latannyen Oban and Kapisen are typical of higher forest. Bwa Kalou and Bwa Rouz, Pitcher Plants are examples of plants, which are found below 100 meters and all the way up to 900 meters.

A little more luck will be needed to find the Seychelles White-eye, whereas the Seychelles Scoops owl (a nocturnal bird) will come out only at night. Other animals that can be found in the Morne Seychellois National Park are; the world tiniest and rarest Sooglossid frog, Seychelles Wolf snake, House Snake and Tiger Chameleon.



The Park, in fact, protects a wealth of flora and fauna, much of which can be seen by driving along the Sans Souci road and simply admiring the scenery. Still more can be seen, and taste of the atmosphere of the rain forest savored, by walking in the foothills of Morne Seychellois. You should also see more of the unique birds of Seychelles. It will be impossible to miss the Seychelles Bulbul, and with luck the Seychelles Kestrel, Sunbird, Cave swiftlet, and Blue Pigeon.





Nature Trails

The Park is home to some of the most rewarding hikes on the island. For experienced hikers, a tour to the top of the highest mountain, the 905-metre Morne Seychellois (3,000 ft), certainly cannot be topped, and promises sensational views.

Morne Blanc



Mare Aux Cochons



Trois Frères





Copolia



Anse Major



Salazie-Fairview



Dans Gallas



Morne Seychellois





Sooglossid Frog

In Seychelles we have six species of frog. The whole Sooglossid Frog family is endemic to our islands. There are four species within this family (Sooglossidae). They live in the wet and humid sub-montane forest (300-500 metres) which is part of the Morne Seychellois National Park.



Courtesy Naomi Doark

Jellyfish Tree

This extraordinary small tree was presumed extinct in the 1960s before being rediscovered in 1970. Today, over 40 individuals remain on Mahé, some are found in the Morne Seychellois National Park, mainly in exposed rocky areas. The tree bares its name due to the shape of its fruit.



©TV

Kolimason (Pachnodus Niger)

A small snail, with a rather globular matt black shell, and has an unusual characteristic of wiggling its shell in rhythm when you touch the shell gently. Hence its nickname, the dancing snail. It is found on Mahé and Praslin in high - and mid- altitude forest (including palm forest).



©TV

Wolf Snake

This is the most common snake in Seychelles. Solitary individuals may be seen especially in mid-altitude forests. Wolf snakes move away rapidly when disturbed and is completely harmless.



©SAC



Seychelles Scops Owl

The Seychelles Scops Owl, a nocturnal bird is confined to Mahe, where it is largely restricted to forests at mid- or high altitudes, only rarely occurring below 200 metres. The world population is less than 300 birds. It is a rarely seen bird, and a nest was not found until 1999. It nests in tree holes, probably mainly in endemic tree species.



Pitcher Plant

An endemic liana of Mahé, Silhouette and Praslin, found in woodland, scrub and open areas on red earth soils, often in association with bracken fern, and on glaucis. Many leaves bear terminal 'pitchers' which are insect traps that provide the plant with additional nutrients.

