

Editorial

Welcome to this Special Edition of Mediz newsletter, a publication by the Seychelles National Parks Authority (SNPA).

This issue contains articles related to the Evolutionarily Distinct and Globally Endangered (EDGE) Coral Species project. The project is being implemented by the Seychelles National Parks Authority, with the support of Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology (DICE) and the participation of numerous local partners.

If you would like to contribute an article to the next issue, please contact Ms. Sylvanna Antha (s.antha@snpa.sc) for details.

'Discover Snorkeling' School Holidays Programme

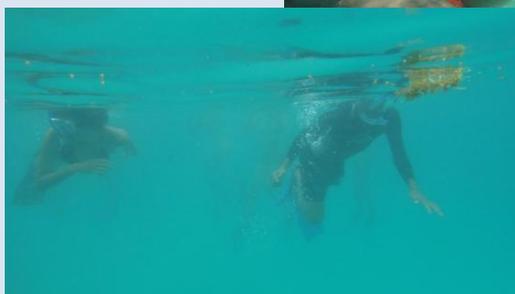
The Seychelles National Parks Authority is currently working to increase knowledge and awareness on coral reef conservation.

As part of its activities, the Research and Monitoring Section in collaboration with the Marine Operations Section of SNPA have been undertaking snorkeling activities with secondary school students, during the school holidays.

The aim of this programme is to provide students with information about coral reef conservation in Seychelles, to increase education and awareness programmes that target young people, to encourage participation in reef conservation and to encourage young people to share a positive vision for the future of our marine environment.

It also provides a healthy holiday activity for students, where they can enjoy nature and exercise while learning about different coral species and marine life.

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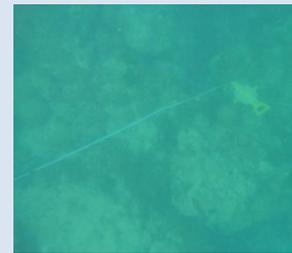
Snorkeling at Anse Royale and Port Launay



Investigating the role of Marine Protected Areas in the Conservation of three EDGE Coral Species

The EDGE of Existence Programme conserves one of a kind species that are on the verge of extinction. As there has been little investigation of the uniqueness, rarity and habitat requirements of EDGE coral species, the EDGE Coral project is investigating the use of Marine Protected Areas for conserving three species of EDGE corals, and aim to establish whether MPAs are sufficient to protect these corals.

This work is being carried out by a group of ladies from the SNPA Research and Monitoring Section. They have thus far studied and recorded corals within the Ste Anne Marine Protected Area, Beau Vallon and Bel Ombre environs, Curieuse, Praslin, Marianne, Aux Soeurs, La Digue, Felicite, Silhouette and Cocos isles.



SNPA Research staffs undertaking coral reef survey

EDGE Coral Cartoon Competition

Reefs are not only biologically rich but they provide ecosystem services. Corals remove and recycle carbon dioxide, as excessive amounts of this gas contribute to global warming. Reefs shelter land from harsh ocean storms and floods. Reefs provide resources for fisheries with food items including fish, crustaceans, and molluscs. Coral reefs attract millions of tourists every year and are very important for the Seychelles economy. The coral reef is an intricate ecosystem and contains a diverse collection of organisms. Without the reef, these organisms would die.

Throughout most of 2013, a cartoon competition was launched in all the schools on Mahe, Praslin and La Digue. The aim of the competition was to understand how young children perceive their marine environment in light of present day challenges, especially challenges to reef ecosystems, and what they think their role, and that of the local public are. The competition targeted three categories of students i.e. P4-P6, S1-S3 and S4-S5 with themes allowing them to show their understanding of the role of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in conserving reefs, and problems faced when managing reef systems, the importance of preserving corals and how local people and visitors can help protect reefs, as well as the threats coral reefs face in carrying out their ecological functions, in light of human and environmental impacts on reefs. The winning cartoons in each category can be viewed on pages 3-5 of this newsletter.

The Cartoons were used in exhibitions from 18th October to 14th November, on Mahe, Praslin and La Digue, to showcase childrens' perception of coral reef conservation and status, and encourage the local public to think about the importance of these ecosystems, and understand why they should be protected and how each individual can contribute towards its conservation; to improve knowledge and participation on reef conservation.

The exhibition was held in collaboration with ZSL EDGE Conservation Programme, Seychelles EDGE Project, Seychelles Island Foundation and Vallée de Mai Praslin, Veuve Reserve Management, Octopus Dive Centre, Wildlife Club of Seychelles and University of Seychelles.



Category: S4-S5
Student: Shane Pierre
School: La Digue

First Prize Winner

LUCAS THE CRAB



Category: S1-S3

Student: Darius Lespoir

School: Beau Vallon Secondary

First Prize winner



Category: P4-P6
Student: Josie Bonne
School: Anse Etoile

First Prize Winner

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