

Editorial

Welcome to the fifth issue of *Mediz* newsletter, a publication by the Seychelles National Parks Authority (SNPA).

This year, five protected areas celebrate 35 years of existence. These are **Baie Ternay MNP**, **Port Launay MNP**, **Curieuse MNP**, **Morne Seychelles NP** and **Praslin NP**. Thanks to all who contributed towards the celebratory activities organised by Seychelles National Parks Authority.

If you would like to contribute an article or suggest ways to improve the publication, please do so as your support is welcome. Please contact Ms. Sylvanna Antha (s.antha@snpa.sc) for more details.

Celebrating 35 years of Conservation

On 11th June 1979, 2 Terrestrial National Parks and 3 Marine National Parks were designated. To mark the occasion, the Seychelles National Parks Authority (SNPA) which currently manage these National Parks, organized a series of activities. On Tuesday 10th June there was a special exhibition in town.

In attendance were the Minister of Environment and Energy; Prof. Rolph Payet, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of SNPA; Mr Denis Matatiken, the Chairman of the SNPA board; Mr Flavien Jourbert, Director General of Climate Affairs, Adaptation and Information; Mr Alain Decommarmond, staffs from the Authority and friends of SNPA. Prof. Payet delivered a speech highlighting the important services that National Parks provide. Former CEO's of the authority were rewarded for their contribution towards conserving these parks.

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Cutting the cake

The winners of the different competitions organised to commemorate the anniversary celebration received their prizes, followed by cutting of the 35th anniversary cake by Minister Payet, Mr. Matatiken and Mr. Joubert. To end the short ceremony, a photo of the competition winners, along with the Minister, CEO and Board Chairman was captured, after which guests were served with snacks and refreshments, while they viewed the exhibition.



The exhibition allowed people to follow the history of the national parks and learn about the different activities that take place in the parks. Friends of SNPA which are also passionate about protection of the environment were also present to showcase the work they do, and these included organizations like Plant conservation Action group (PCA), Seychelles Island Foundation (SIF), Nature Seychelles and Global Vision International (GVI). Many tourists that were in town seized the opportunity to seek information, especially about access to trails and marine parks.

My National Park Experience – 35th anniversary Competition

This was the theme of the photography, and short story competition organised by the Seychelles National Parks Authority, as part of its 35th anniversary celebration.

Prizes were awarded in different age categories and also under different sub themes such as; for photography 1) the fauna or flora, 2) human activity or 3) landscape. All photos had to have been taken in any of our national parks. For the story competition, again, prizes were awarded in different age categories, and included cash, books, trips and dinners.

Santina Moumou from Beau-Vallon Primary was chosen to read her short story which won first prize in her category. It was a beautiful story depicting a hike she went on with the CARE club along the Copolia trail, describing the interesting critters and plants she saw along the way. The other winner, of the same competition, was Isaac Jean-Louis from Beau-Vallon Secondary School, who described his experience in the Anse Major Area (which falls within the Morne Seychellois National Park), while him, his dad and brother, searched for a friend's toy drone. He aptly described many of the endemic plants found along the trail. The winner in the adult category was Bettina Francois.

First place winners for the Photography competitions were; Landscape: Vidura

Fonseka , flora and Fauna: Bettina Hortence ; Human activity: Lymiah Bibi.



Souvenir photo of all winners with (back row) the Minister for Environment and Energy; Prof. Rolph Payet (4th from left), CEO of SNPA; Mr. Denis Matatiken(6th from left) , the Chairman of the SNPA board; Mr Flavien Jourber (3rd from left)t, Director General of Climate Affairs, Adaptation and Information; Mr Alain Decommarmond(5th from left)

First Aid Course for SNPA staffs

During the month of April, staffs from various sections within Seychelles National Parks Authority (SNPA) attended a first aid training exercise. The training was carried out so that these staffs could learn various first aid techniques, such as how to do Cardiopulmonary resuscitation(CPR), how to attend to an individual with broken limbs and how to take care of someone suffering from heat stroke. Staffs also learnt the proper procedures to bandage various cuts and injuries. The training included practicals, which

ensured that staffs were able to properly understand and put into practice what had been taught in the theory sessions. To achieve this, the facilitator from the Ministry of Health made sure that everyone participated in these practical sessions. At the end of the training, participants had to sit for a written assessment. Each participant should receive a First Aid certificate, valid for 2 years, after completion of the course. Participants were in agreement that the skills learnt will benefit them in their daily duties and responsibilities.



Securing the injured



Taking care of
broken limbs

‘Take a Child to Work Day’

This year, to celebrate Labour Day, the Ministry of Labour and Human Resource Development (MLHRD), in collaboration with Ministry of Education, arranged for school children to visit different workplaces, so as to better understand the daily tasks undertaken in the workplace, to facilitate choices of students, when choosing a career.

SNPA welcomed students from Belonie and English River Schools. The students visited the Research and Monitoring Section of SNPA, where they observed the different activities carried out, followed by a small presentation on the different

projects being implemented by the organisation. The students were able to see the challenges that staffs encounter in their work, and got the chance to ask questions.

This activity was a way to help students to better understand the transition from school into the world of work.



Partial view of students at the Research and Monitoring Section

Coral Reef and Fish Monitoring Training

Research staffs from SNPA, along with other local conservationists, attended a week long training course, in the 2nd week of April. The training was part of the pilot site project under COI (Commission de L'ocean Indien) ISLANDS project. The participants were introduced to the latest reef monitoring techniques by expert Dr. Udo Engelhardt. The first two days were essentially a crash course in reef ecology, which, brought all who were present up to date with latest developments in the field of marine science. The rest of the week included intense diving (up to

three dives a day), so as to apply what had been taught in the classroom. Belt transects were used to record abundance of various ecologically important benthic organisms. The participants also learnt photo quadrats and fish counts. A lot of attention was given to the Crown of Thorns (*Acanthaster planci*) which, at the time of the training, was proving problematic to the North West Mahe region. The sessions were very demanding but a lot was taught and learnt in a short period of time. The following week, SNPA research staffs, took part in the removal of the voracious Crown of Thorns, from Ste Anne and Baie Ternay Marine Parks.

Copolia Trail Walk: Celebrating 35 year anniversary

As part of the of the 35th Anniversary celebrations of five of its National Parks, the SNPA organized a trail walk to Copolia with a group of students from the English River Secondary School. It was drizzling when we started to walk but everybody was eager to discover the trail, as it was a first time for many of the participants. We broke up in groups and each group had a leader, who was an SNPA staff. The students were introduced to the different endemic plants along the trail and some of them were lucky to observe the Sooglosids as well as a snake. Reaching the top of the trail, we were deprived of the wonderful view because of a fog. However, everybody really enjoyed the walk.

Visite à L'Ile Moyenne

Grâce au bon partenariat que l'école secondaire de Rivière Anglaise a développé avec la société thonière de l'Océan Indien (I.O.T) et l'Autorité Nationale des Parcs Marins, la classe de S3A1 de l'école de Rivière Anglaise a pu effectuer une sortie en mer mardi 24 juin à L'Ile Moyenne. Nous les remercions vivement car tout était très bien organisé !



Domage que le soleil n'était pas de la partie !! Un faible rayon nous a accompagné pour notre traversée jusqu'à L'Ile Moyenne. On a vu beaucoup de poissons dans la

mer et on leur a donné du pain. Trois employées de la SNPA nous attendaient sur la plage pour faciliter notre visite et répondre à nos questions concernant le parc marin national de Ste Anne. Il y avait beaucoup de vent. Nous avons fait une randonnée tout autour de l'île à la découverte de sa beauté et de son histoire.



Il y a beaucoup de tortues qui vivent en liberté sur l'île. Monsieur Jason Bastille de la SNPA nous a donné des informations sur leur façon de vivre et leur reproduction.



Un petit musée nous explique que le dernier propriétaire Mr. Brendon Grimshaw a acheté l'île dans les années 70 et y vécut jusqu'à sa mort en 2012. Avec son ami René, ils ont protégé l'endroit et ont planté une grande variété de plantes endémique sur l'île pour créer une réserve naturelle.

Brendon est enterré auprès de son père à côté de la chapelle. Il y a aussi 2 tombes de pirates inconnus. La légende raconte qu'il y aurait un trésor caché dans l'île.

Un peu plus loin, on arrive aux ruines de la maison des tout premiers occupants: Melidor et Julie Louange qui datent de 1850. Nous avons découvert aussi une magnifique petite plage et de nombreux points de vue sur les



îles environnantes tel que l'île Ronde, Ste Anne, l'île Longue et Aux Cerfs. Toutes ces îles font partie du Parc Marin National de St Anne.

Un repas et une boisson nous ont été offerts par I.O.T et nous sommes rentrés à Victoria en début d'après-midi. C'était une très agréable journée.



Our amazing trip to Curieuse Island

On 7th June 2014, some students from Praslin and La Digue schools joined together to visit Curieuse Island which is a Marine National Park. The activity was organized to celebrate the 35th Anniversary of the Curieuse National Park and also to celebrate World Ocean Day. Mrs. Maggy Hoareau and Ms. Brenda Andimignon were on the beach at Cote D'Or to meet us and the SNPA boat took us from there to Curieuse Island.

First, we visited the Doctor's House which is located at Anse José. Inside the Doctor's House, we read information about how and when the place was built and what its use was. We also went upstairs where we learned about the sea turtles: the different kind of turtles? what they eat? how long they take to reach maturity? and how/where you can find turtle eggs. We also learnt about soil erosion and other environmental issues through the displays in the room.

Then, we walked from Anse José to the Bodamier Trail where we saw the coco-de-mer palms. We learned a lot about this fantastic plant but were sad to learn that poachers are now destroying the coco-de-mer population on Curieuse Island. We also learned that some tortoises go up the Bodamier Trail but at times get stuck between the rocks, and cannot go back down, and die.

From the Bodamier Trail, we went down to the board walk where we learned about the mangroves. We were able to identify the different types of mangrove with the help of Ms. Brenda Andimignon who also explained why mangroves are important in coastal eco-systems.

Finally, after walking for more than 1.7 km we arrived at Baie Laraie where we had some snacks and refreshments. After that very long walk we really deserved to have a break and relax. After the relaxation Mr. Jason Bastille talked to us about the tortoises of Curieuse Island. We went to observe those phenomenal animals in the tortoise pen and were able to ask questions to learn more about them. Some tourists were curious as well and joined us. Mr. Bastille's talk was very informative.

We then moved on to observe the ruins where the lepers used to live. Mrs. Maggy Hoareau talked to us about the history of the place. We also checked out the mini-weather station on Curieuse.

After having a delicious lunch, in the company of the CEO of the SNPA and other staffs, we took a little nap before taking the boat to go snorkeling next to the La Reserve Hotel. There was a whole lot of extraordinary organisms under the water (apart from the seaweeds of course). We had a great time at in the water.

Before taking pen off paper I have to add that it was an amazing experience and as I am doing my last year in a secondary school, it would be great if SNPA organizes another event on Curieuse Island for Praslin and La Digue students again.



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