

The mountains that form a backdrop to this trail have retained much native palm forest on their slopes and form part of a forest reserve. Interspersed are broad-leaved trees such as Capucin (*Northea hornei*) and Bois de Montagne (*Camptosperma sechellarum*). The flat-topped introduced *Albizia* trees (*Paraserianthes falcata*) between the glacia and the mountains are a roosting site for the Seychelles Fruit Bat (*Pteropus seychellensis*).

Birds such as the Seychelles Sunbird (*Nectarinia dussumieri*), Seychelles Bulbul (*Hypsipetes crassirostris*) and Seychelles Blue Pigeon (*Alectroenas pulcherrima*) may be seen, and perhaps a Seychelles Kestrel (*Falco araea*) flying near the glacia area. You may well encounter large female Palm Spiders in their fascinating golden webs. There is nothing to fear, for in spite of their large size they are harmless (and not normally aggressive). The male palm spider is very much smaller than the female and may be seen sitting higher in the web. A more pleasant creature to encounter is a medium sized brown butterfly (*Melanitis leda*) which is normally active in the early morning and evening. If disturbed, it will quickly settle with folded wings, well camouflaged amongst the dead leaves on the forest floor.



Sunbird (*Nectarinia dussumieri*)

In the stream, a small endemic Gouzon fish (*Pachypanchax playfairii*) may be seen swimming in the shadows. It is rare for isolated oceanic islands to have unique freshwater animals because these creatures cannot survive ocean crossings. The presence of this fish is evidence of the ancient origins of the granitic Seychelles island as part of a micro-continent once attached to India and Madagascar



Bois du lait (*Euphorbia pyrifolia*)

CHARACTERISTICS OF TRAIL.

Length: 720km

Change in altitude: 400m

Time to go and come back: less than 1 hour

Main interest: panoramic view,
picturesque landscape

Physical difficulty: low

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**Seychelles
National Parks
Authority**

GLACIS LA RESERVE NATURE TRAIL



**MORNE SEYCHELLOIS
NATIONAL PARK
MAHE**

This is one of the shortest trails among the official network of trails. It provides for an easy and leisurely walk. Although the trail starts with a short climb, much of the rest is relatively flat.

HOW TO GET THERE

The trail is accessible by the SPTC bus route No. 4 (Victoria – Anse Boileau via Mt. Posee). You should alight at the Cable & Wireless station (Bon Espoir) at the crest of the hill. The trail starts about 10 meters from this point.

ROUTE

The path passes through a mahogany (sweitenia macrophylla) timber plantation with a few scattered endemic palms here and there. A short descent leads to a little stream which often dries up in the dry season. The surrounding woodland through which you then pass is secondary vegetation. The woodland gives way to a wide expanse of bare rock and boulders with vegetation sprouting up in the cracks and spaces in the rock. From the platform you can enjoy a panoramic view of the east coast.

The second stream to be crossed is more permanent and runs close to the path. The surrounding woodland through which you then pass is secondary vegetation which has grown up following exploitation and disturbance. There are several extremely large granite boulders near the path. They appear to have tumbled down from the mountain above, perhaps many hundreds or even thousands of years ago.

The woodland gives way to a wide expanse of bare rock and boulders (known as "glacis" in Seychelles), with vegetation sprouting up in the cracks and spaces between the rocks. If you explore the glacis area, be mindful of the steep drops and crevices between

boulders and also possibly strong winds. From the wooden platform and picnic area you can enjoy a panoramic view extending from the very end of the airport and Anse Aux Pins on the East coast right round to the jutting 'tooth' of Morne Blanc mountain to the North West. The mountain backdrop includes some lovely native forest with endemic palms and broadleaf trees dominating. This kind of forest is increasingly threatened by both invasive woody species and creepers.

ECOLOGY OF THE TRAIL

The woodland along this trail consists of secondary vegetation, the original forest having been over exploited long ago. Frequent bush fires and subsequent soil erosion left poor subsoil on which the vegetation could only recover slowly. In this situation introduced species often compete with native plants . But numerous endemic palms, particularly Palmis (Deckenia nobilis) with long yellow spines , and Latanier Feuille(Phoenixophorium borsigianum) continue to thrive in amongst introduced species such as Cocoplum (Chrysobalanus icaco), Bois Jaune (Alstonia macrophylla), Jambrosa (Syzygium jambos), Cinnamon

(Cinnamomum verum), Bracken Fern (Dicranopteris linearis) and even Mango (Mangifera indica). An introduced spices of wild pineapple is found at intervals along trail, particularly at the start. The small sour fruits taste better when made into a local wine!

By contrast the vegetation on the "glacis"(bare granite rock) is less affected by human activities and has many native species . Amongst these are Bois du Lait (Euphorbia pyrifolia), Bois Dur(Canthium bibracteatum), Bois Calou (Memecylon eleagni), Bois siro (Premna serratifolia), Bois cuiller (Tabernaemontana coffeoides) and Seychelles Vanilla (Vanilla phalaenopsis). These plants are well adapted to growing in small pockets of soil and to the harsh condition on the exposed rocks.

Bois Démon (Ochna ciliate)

