

Ste Anne-The Oldest Marine Park in Seychelles Turns 44 years

St Anne Marine Park lies just a few kilometres off Victoria and is one of the most accessible and visited national parks in the Seychelles. Created in 1973, the marine park covers an area of 14.53 km². It hosts extensive coral reefs, as well as some of the largest seagrass beds in the Seychelles. This year on March 19th Ste Anne Marine Park, managed by SNPA turned 44. To celebrate such major achievement in marine conservation, the Authority in collaborations with various partners organised a series of activities. The main event; the kayak race started on Long Island, where competitors had to paddle to Cerf island, onwards to Moyenne island, passing in front of Round Island. On Moyenne Island the eco racers had to go round the trail before boarding their canoe to paddle back to Long Island. The aim of the race was to raise awareness on the oldest marine park in the country while allowing the public to enjoy the park in an eco-friendly manner.



Participants of the kayak race

Content	Page	Content	Page
Ste Anne– The Oldest Marine Park Turns 44 years	1	Tagging of tortoise hatchlings	4
SNPA Launches new campaign to control invasive creepers	2	D r House re-opens	4
We have moved	3	Maintenance work in Morne Seychellois National Park continues	5
Beach clean up in Baie Ternay Marine Park	3	New mooring buoys for Cocos Marine Park	5
Curieuse Marine National Park Scientific Programmes	6		

Continued from page 1.

Most participants remarked that despite being a competition it was great opportunity for them to appreciate the islands and the marine Park. A total of 30 participants were present on Long Island that day for the start of the race. A large crowd of supporters were on long island to support their teams. CEO of SNPA thanked the competitors, sponsors, supporters and his staffs for joining in the celebrations, before awarding prizes to the winners of the different categories.

The following week talks were given in schools and to The Natural History Museum club, to raise awareness on the importance of marine parks like Ste Anne. In total the 300 students who attended the informative talks showed interest and had many questions for the presenters.

SNPA launches new campaign to control alien invasive creepers

The new campaign was Launched by Principal Secretary for Climate Change, Mr Wills Agricole on 5th June, to coincide with World Environment Day. The campaign will be coordinated by SNPA and a sum of R250,000 has been allocated to start the project. Presently 16 invasive plants have been targeted for eradication and the campaign will target areas in the National Parks and state land. These invasive plants poses serious threats to ecosystems and to natural areas in the country. To eradicate them completely is no easy task but controlling them requires regular monitoring and removal.

During the short ceremony, SNPA staffs demonstrated how an area can be cleared and how the removed creepers should be disposed of, to ensure that they do not re-sprout. SNPA will contract the services of local contractors to undertake the control but local groups will be encouraged to participate so as to raise awareness on the threats of invasive Alien plants.



Forestry staff demonstrates how to dispose invasive creepers after removal

We have moved

SNPA's headquarters used to be based at Laurier Avenue, on the top floor of STC's Fruits and Vegetables wholesale building. The Research and Forestry sections were based in other buildings around Victoria. In order to have all its office staffs under one roof, it was vital for SNPA to relocate to somewhere more spacious. On Monday 6th February 2017 all of SNPA's sections started operations in Orion Mall on the second floor. Our postal address and phone number remains the same.

This move allows staffs from different sections to communicate more effectively with one another. It also permits management to better administer the Authority.

"I prefer the old building where we were before, as there were less people in the office and thus less disturbance" commented one member of staffs who still enjoys the other benefits of the move such as the ease of access to other staffs.

"I prefer the old building as here at Orion Mall parking is a big problem" remarked another staff.

"I prefer our new office because facilities are better and it is more spacious than at the old head office" stated a member of staff.

Six months from now SNPA will be in good position to assess the benefits of the move.



Beach clean up in Baie Ternay Marine Park

To celebrate World Ocean Day, SNPA teamed up with the Ocean Project and GVI to clean beaches in the Baie Ternay and Port Launay Marine Parks. About 100 people including school children participated in the clean up. The various rubbish collected were sorted and recorded. The items included plastic bags, bottle tops, pieces of metals, ropes, tyres etc...

After lunch, the kids participated in other activities organized by GVI and SNPA, to learn more about the marine environment, these included beach safari and recycling. The highlight of the clean up, for the children, was observing turtle hatchlings swimming in the shallow waters of the bay.



Left: Sorting out rubbish collected. Right: Cleaning in the mangrove at Anse Souillac

Tagging of tortoise hatchlings

Tortoise survey conducted in 2016 on Curieuse shows that there are 114 adult giant tortoises roaming freely on the island. Presently there are 2 juveniles and 37 hatchlings in the nursery, which is located behind the ranger's headquarters at Baie Laraie.

Last year SNPA received a donation of nano tags from 'Parco Natura Viva – Garda' Zoological Park in Italy. These grain-sized tags are suitable for the hatchlings which weigh slightly less than 100g. They will allow SNPA to better monitor the hatchlings and additionally help deter poachers. If ever one of the baby tortoises are stolen, using the scanner, SNPA will be able to identify the animal. Turtle expert Jeanne Mortimer was on Curieuse in March this year, to teach SNPA and GVI staffs, how to tag such small and delicate tortoises.

Two months after the tagging the hatchlings appear to be doing well and the tags are still in place.



Taking measurements

Dr house re-opens to visitors

The largest building in the Curieuse Marine National Park, re-opened to Visitors again on 29th March 2017. The famous Dr House, built in 1873, was officially re-opened by Minister for Environment, Energy and Climate Change, Mr Didier Dogley and Mr Renaud from Air Seychelles. A short ceremony, attended by CEO of Heritage foundation, Partners, Tourism operators, Praslin students and staff of SNPA took place under the varendah of the historic Dr House. Invited guests managed to view for the first time, the new exhibition found on the ground and first floor of the majestic building. The Information and Education Centre contains both Historical and Ecological information about Curieuse National Park. SNPA expresses its gratitude to Air Seychelles, GOS-GEF-UNDP Protected Area Finance Project and its staffs for supporting this important project.



Minister Dogley and Mr Renaud opening the doors to the house

Maintenance work in Morne Seychelles National Parks Continues

The Morne Seychellois National Park was established in 1979 and is one of the largest National terrestrial Park in the country, covering a surface area of 3000 hectare. There is a network of trails dissecting the park, which are regularly visited by both locals and tourists. The numbers and lengths of trails, and amount of activities taking place along them, means that frequent maintenance work is required to ensure safety of park users. The locations of the trails render construction work difficult and costly. Compared to the marine national parks, entrance to the terrestrial national parks is free to all. Work continues this year to maintain facilities in the Morne Seychellois National park. Railing are being placed at Trois Freres. At Morne Blanc the old and damaged wooden decking at the view point is being replaced. At Anse Major new steps have been built to allow for a safe climb. Further down towards to the beach, the two small wooden bridges will be re-built and the loose aggregates along the trail will be stabilized. All of the maintenance work is being funded by ETF and SNPA.



Maintenance work in progress

New mooring buoys for Cocos Marine Park



Newly installed mooring buoys

Mooring buoys are designed for short-time use and employ an embedment - type anchor that holds the buoy securely in place without causing any damage to nearby living corals. Use of these environmentally-sensitive moorings as a means of reducing or eliminating anchor damage has become a widely-accepted tool for managing the coral reef environment.

In April a team of SNPA rangers on La Digue installed eight new mooring buoys at Ile Coco Marine Park and there are still five more to be installed. Ile Co-

co is the smallest marine park out of the five currently being managed by SNPA. It is highly affected by coral damage caused by bleaching and boats dropping their anchors. SNPA is intensifying efforts in installing these buoys, so that the reef at Ile Coco could recuperate. A healthy and diverse reef will lure back visitors to this popular protected area. Operation section continues its regular monitoring and maintenance on all the buoys located in marine national parks.

Curieuse Marine National Park Scientific Programme

Report for the scientific programmes, conducted in the Curieuse Marine National Park (CMNP) by Research partner GVI, for the year 2016, has been submitted to the Authority. From January 2016 till January 2017 a total **rainfall** of 1757.1mm was recorded. Until the end of 2015, 37 different **bird** species have



Left: Mangrove monitoring site

Right: Tagging of lemon shark pups

been recorded over 9,120 observations for coastal and mangrove sightings.

The coco de mer survey shows, similarities in trends, between leaf length and trunk height, for both Praslin and Curieuse populations. As the study continues, the mean number of nuts per female tree is steadily increasing. The fourth year of the annual **Aldabra giant tortoise** census was completed in September 2016, with a total count of 114 free ranging individuals. Only one individual was found dead this year and overall the population appears to be stable. Two free-ranging juveniles were newly located, adding to the previous two being housed in the nursery. Until July 2016, the giant tortoise nursery also housed 26 hatchlings. However, 25 of these were stolen. From that point, 33 more hatchlings have been captured and placed in the nursery.

Out of the five species of **mangroves** found at Baie Laraie, *Rhizophora mucronata* and *Bruguiera gymnorrhiza* are the most dominant. *Bruguiera gymnorrhiza* exhibited the fastest mean growth rate per year. The year saw a slow start to the **sea turtle** nesting season. A relatively high number of untagged hawksbills had tags applied, and a slightly higher number of previously tagged hawksbills were also recorded. The few excavations undertaken pointed to high reproductive success, in line with last season. Photo identification commenced in 2010 and metal flipper tagging began during the 2013-2014 season. Both methods are being continued in the 2016-2017 season. The number of green turtle activities and nests have been much lower compared to previous years.

Since the onset of the **sickle-fin lemon shark** tagging project in 2014, a total of 313 individuals have been caught and tagged, and a total of 81 recaptures have been made, which has provided a wealth of information on changes in size, weight, and body condition. Population estimates have greatly exceeded preliminary estimates, and population size appears to be stable.

Seychelles National Parks Authority, P.O Box 1240, Victoria, Mahé, Seychelles

Tel: +248 2225114 Fax: +248 4224388, Website: <http://www.snpa.sc>



Seychelles National Parks Authority