

Ile Cocos Marine National Park

The Île Cocos Marine Park is 18,000 square metres in size, and it is the smallest marine national park. It is located 7km north of La Digue Island and around 1 km north of Félicité Island.

It comprises of three small islets; Ile La Fouche, Ilot Plate and Ile Cocos itself. Part of Félicité Island in the vicinity of “Anse Peniche” falls within the park’s boundary.

Geology

Indeed, these pristine miniature islands with fascinating rock formations sculpted in different characters are believed to be the oldest ocean islands in the world, the fragments left behind from Gondwana, before the Indian subcontinent drifted away from the Mascarene plateau by the expanding ocean floor, sixty-six million years ago.

History

The eye-catching marine park was designated on 19th February 1997.

What to do?

The biggest attraction of the park is the endangered sea turtles swimming in the sapphire waters. The clear crystal water is rich in marine life and numerous species of fish including eels, juvenile sharks and rays can be found swimming on the reef. There have also been many recorded sightings of whale sharks, the largest fish in the world.

The main island among the three, Ile Cocos contains a beautiful white sandy beach, which appears at low tide. The small granitic island contains numerous nesting seabirds and can be accessed via the beach.



How to get there?

The Marine park is opened 7 days a week from 9 am to 5pm. Visits can be arranged from Praslin or La Digue through tour operators and boat charters.



Coral Reef

The rich depths of Cocos Island Marine Park offer a stunning natural aquarium - a must see for lovers of snorkeling. Around this idyllic isle bathed by crystal-clear waters, you can swim amid turtles and hundreds of fish above a wealth of colorful corals.



Flora and Fauna

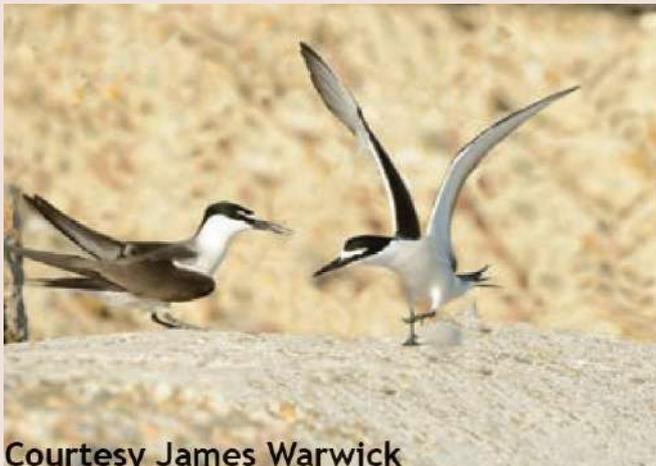
As a popular snorkelling destination, this small granite island with picturesque palm tree vegetation is visited regularly. Around the large coral reef that surrounds the island, divers and snorkellers can see eels, numerous fish, rays, sea turtles, and sometimes even whale sharks.

Fairy Tern

This is the most graceful of all the sea birds. The chick remains in the tree where it was hatched and later fed by the parents until it starts to fly.



Courtesy James Warwick



Courtesy James Warwick

Bridled Tern

The Bridled Terns nest on rocky boulders in intervals of 8.5 months. Never forming large colonies, these birds are often seen alone or in pairs on rocky, exposed areas on the Island.



Wedge-tailed Shearwater

A fairly common resident found in coastal waters on the island, though breeding is restricted to a handful of rat-free islands.



Courtesy James Warwick

Whale Sharks

Whale sharks are the largest fish in the world, and they are not whales although they have the massive size and also feed on plankton. They are in fact sharks and bigger than the great whites. They can grow up to 12 metres and weigh up to 20 tons.



Courtesy Tony Baskeyfield STB

Green Turtle



Courtesy Blue safari

Two species of sea turtle nest in the Seychelles: the hawksbill turtle and the green turtle. Hawksbill turtles have been known to come ashore and nest during the day, while green turtles nest almost exclusively at night.

Spotted Eagle Ray



Reaching widths of nearly 11 feet (over 3 m), the spotted eagle ray is one of the largest eagle rays, with only the mantas growing bigger. They are foraging predators and are known to eat a variety of invertebrate and fish prey. Just like the name implies, the spotted eagle ray is covered in spots and other markings.

