

Praslin National Park

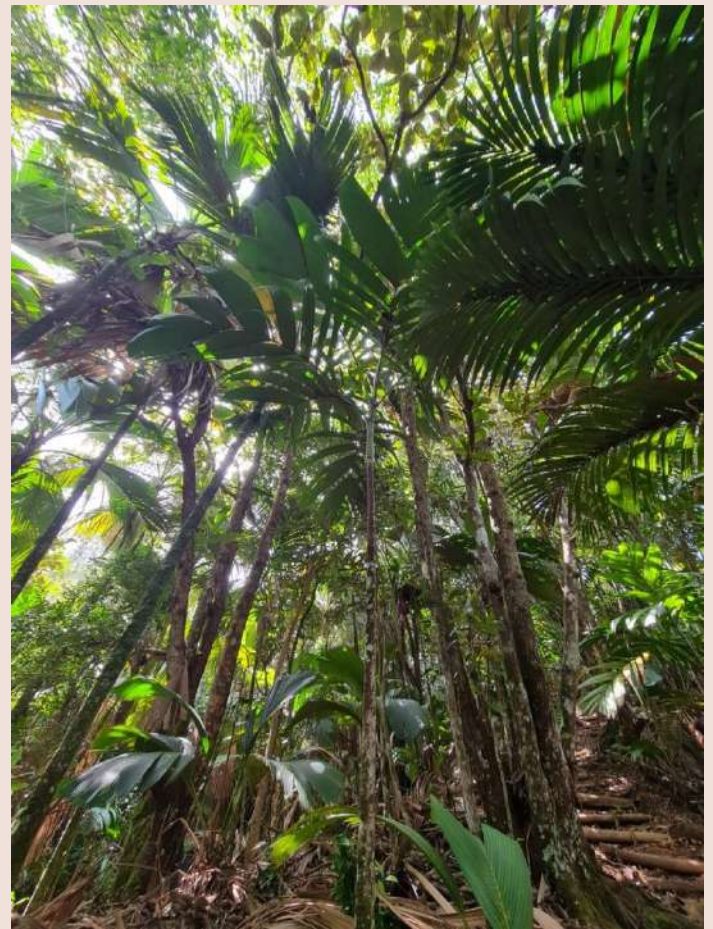
Though small in area (10.5 kilometers long by 3.5 kilometers wide), Praslin ranks second in importance in the Seychelles in respect to population and its tourist attractions. The beaches are magnificent, the finest of them is the Cote d'Or beach, a stretch of fine white sand several kilometers long, sheltered from the monsoon. Closely resembling it is Anse Lazio, one of the most idyllic beaches in the world.

Geology

Along with the rest of Seychelles' granitic islands, Praslin is a remnant of the break-up of Gondwanaland, which split into the African and Indian sub-continents. The island is made up of pale reddish/grey granite. The climate is somewhat drier compared to Mahé; this is mainly due to the presence of gentle hills instead of steep peaks. The soil is much more eroded here as well and the vegetation less lush due to past forest fires.

History

On 10th June 1774, Lazare Picault dropped anchor for the first-time off Praslin in the practically uncharted waters of the Seychelles. He was so overwhelmed by the abundance of vegetation that he named the island I'île aux Palms. In 1979 the National Park on Praslin was founded and it is the second largest National Park in the Seychelles. The Park covers a total surface land area of 32 hectare of the high altitude of Praslin; this also includes the green heart of Praslin Island and contains the Seychelles' intact forest of the endemic Coco de Mer Palm. Vallée de Mai is one of the world's smallest natural UNESCO World Heritage Sites.



How to get there?

This Park is found along the Vallée de Mai Stretch of road. You will be sure not to miss the towering palm forest which acts as a canopy for your journey through the Park



What to do?

The Praslin National Park's highest peak ranges from 80 metres in the valleys to 367 metres at the highest position of the island. This allows visitors a wide variety of picturesque landscapes and panoramic viewpoints. The Praslin National Park exhibits a unique biodiversity with the assemblage of a variety of endemic, indigenous, native Vegetation and Wildlife such as the celebrated Seychelles Black Parrot unique to Praslin.

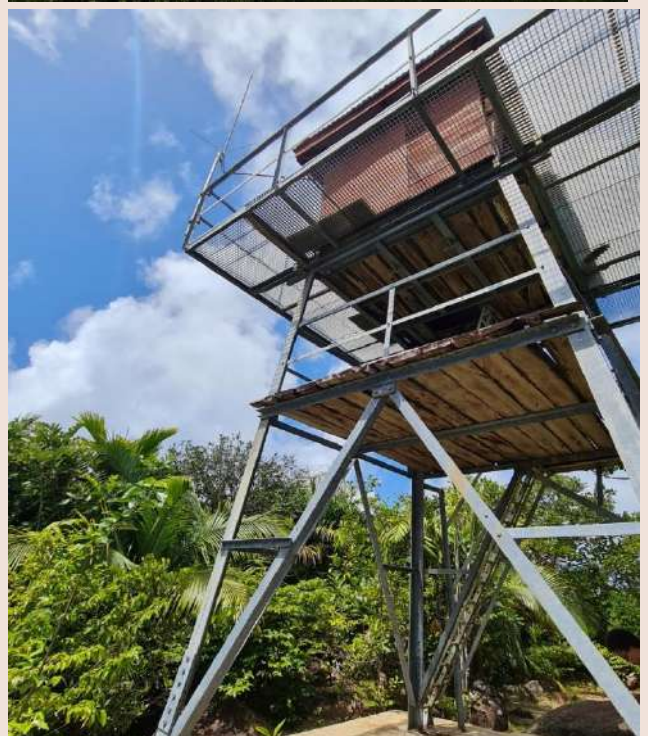
The Park offers a high conservation value and immediate mid-altitude wetland habitats provide ecological services for suitable water catchments, local reserve areas, tourism, leisure, environmental, education activities, and more to do with scientific research.



The Praslin National Park can be considered as a treasure trove for Scientists and visitors. The more time spent in the Park the more animals you might encounter, such as the masters of disguise, the colour-changing lizards the Seychelles Chameleon found on the vegetation and many more thrilling treasures like the recently discovered Sooglossid Frog species (world tinniest frog) and not to forget another recently new species of Caecilian.

Glacis Noire Trail

Nature lovers should not miss the opportunity while on Praslin to visit Glacis Noire trail; the view at the end is purely stunning! The whole sets of inner granitic during a clear sunny day might be the prize winner for hiking this trail; La Digue, Île Ronde, Félicité, Marianne, and further away Denis, Mahé and Fregate is well rewarded.





Seychelles Black Parrot

The Seychelles Black Parrot is endemic to Praslin island, Seychelles and they are found nowhere else in the world. The world population size is only 520-900 black parrots on Praslin. They have been known to feed on Curieuse island but they do not live or breed there.



Sooglossus sechellensis

It is a species of frog found on the island of Mahé, Praslin and Silhouette. The Seychelles frog lives on the floor of damp at altitudes from 150 to 991 meters above sea level. Higher altitude sites are considered to be more climatically stable and more suitable. The species is present in the Morne Seychellois National Park, Silhouette National Park and Praslin National Park. The reproductive biology of this species is unusual. Eggs are laid on the ground and guarded until they hatch. The tadpoles are thereafter carried on one of their parent's backs.



Stylodonta studeriana

A large endemic snail, with a heavy yellow-brown shell, found in Coco de Mer Palms in the Vallée de Mai and other palm forests on Praslin. A very similar species *S. unidentate* is found on Mahé and some satellite islands. Both are viviparous.



Seychelles Tiger Chameleon

An unusual lizard with small independently moving eyes and two toes on each foot. It feeds on small insects caught with its long tongue. The chameleon spends much of its life climbing in vegetation, but may occasionally be seen on the ground, for example crossing the road, where it is slow moving and vulnerable.

