

Saint Anne Marine National Park

Courtesy Raymond Sahuquet STB

The green foliage wrapping the steep hills of Saint Anne island, has always shrouded features of a unique history, which is only revealed today by the relics scattered over the island. From the first settlers in the eighteenth century to present days, the island has offered itself to a multitude of activities.

Actually, it was here that the first settlers set up their camp when reaching the shores of Seychelles. With its strategic position in front of Victoria harbour, its good anchorage far from dangerous reefs and shoals, Saint Anne Island has always witnessed important events in the history of Seychelles.

Geology

The group of islands form part of the main island of Mahé which is about 650 million years old.

History

Over the years, the island has been the site of important plantations, a slave transit area, a whale oil production unit, a World War fuel station, a petroleum depot, a Youth Training Centre, a headquarter for marine life monitoring and boasting internationally recognized resorts.

This is indeed a remarkable historical book which is still unfolding its superb pages. From the skies or from land on Mahé, the island reveals none of its valuable secrets.

Sainte Anne was the first island of Seychelles to be inhabited and it has a special significance in the history of the country. Historical records mention that in 1742 while he was exploring the Indian Ocean, Lazare Picault discovered the Sainte Anne Island. The sea surrounding the six islands, Sainte Anne, Ile Moyenne, Ile Ronde, Ile Longue, Ile Cachee and Ile Aux Cerf's were declared Marine National Parks in 1973. It was one of the first protected marine zones in the Indian Ocean. This park covers an area of 14.53 kilometers square.





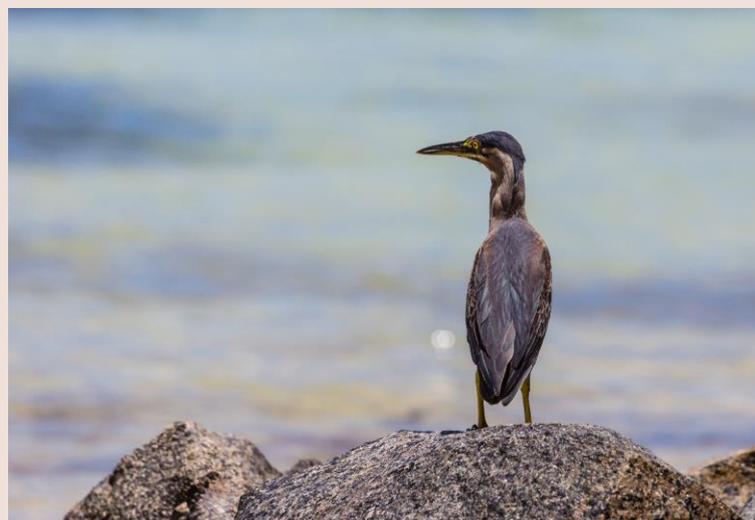
What to do?

Snorkelers on reefs can enjoy a host of corals of all shapes, sizes and colours. Ste. Anne Marine National Park contains one of the largest area of seagrass meadows in the granitic islands and it is not uncommon to see green turtles feeding on them. Visitors might even have the opportunity to swim with hawksbill turtles or watch bottle nose dolphins cruising, for a truly memorable experience.

The clear shallow waters are ideal for snorkeling and visitors can admire a variety of colourful, eye-catching corals while friendly fishes glide smoothly alongside those in the water.



There are restaurants on Moyenne, Cerf and Round island. A popular destination, Moyenne Island just under half a kilometre long is privately owned. Amongst the lush vegetation of this wonderful tropical garden are the remains of early settler's homes, pirates' graves although this cannot be confirmed and a small thatched chapel. There are also giant tortoises roaming freely, numerous birds - all of which can be discovered along the 30-minute trail surrounding the island. Visible in the shallow waters are lemon shark pups.





Marine Life

The Seagrasses plays an important role in the St Anne Marine Park by providing food, habitat, and nursery areas for numerous vertebrate and invertebrate species, such as colourful red starfish, large numbers of sea cucumbers and rays.

In reef areas, quality of the coral beds is variable, but you will swim among hundreds of fishes. They are not feared of humans, since fishing has been prohibited for more than 40 years in the area. Semicircle Angelfish, Steephead Parrotfish and Oriental Sweetlips, among many others, are easy to see and get close to. Ste. Anne waters attracts huge numbers of manta rays each year from April to December. To have a chance to meet these huge and graceful animals, opt for a snorkeling tour with local operators.

Green Turtle



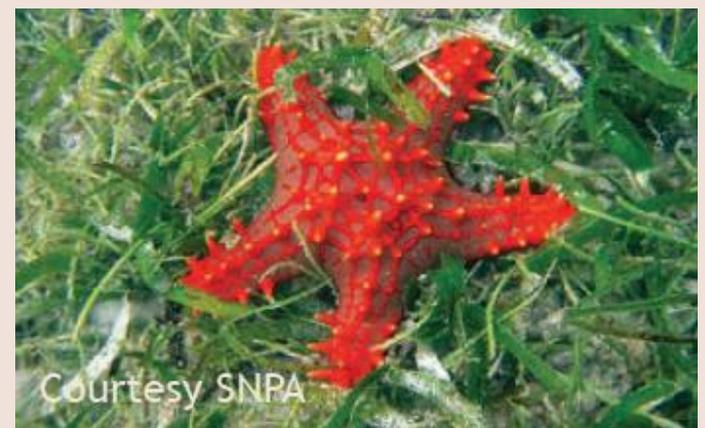
Hawksbill Turtle



Bottlenose Dolphin



Red Starfish





Sea Cucumber

Rays



Courtesy Adventourist

Courtesy Blue safari



Courtesy MCSS

Courtesy Adventourist

