

# Veuve Special Reserve

Located on La Digue, the Veuve Special Reserve forms part of a 200-hectare plateau, on the Western side of the island, and it covers 21 hectares. The Veuve Special Reserve is dedicated to the protection of wildlife habitats and plant species. It is committed to providing a breeding and feeding habitat for the rare endemic bird species, the Seychelles Black Paradise Flycatcher (*Tersiphone corvina*) population on La Digue.

## Geology

Along with the rest of granitic Seychelles, La Digue is a remnant of the break-up of Gondwanaland, which split into the African and Indian sub-continent. The island is made up of pale reddish/grey granite which is composed of micropertite, quartz, oligoclase, minor amphibole and occasionally biotite.

## History

In 1991, the Veuve Special Reserve was legally designated and regulations enacted under the management of the Conservation and National Parks Division of the Department of Environment. By 1992, the staff had increased to two park rangers and one field worker. A modern office was leased for the staff and in 1993 an information Centre was officially opened.

## How to get there?

By air or sea from Mahé to Praslin and then by local ferry or by the direct one-hour sea voyage from Mahé. The Special Reserve is located in the La Digue Plateau.







## What to do?

Inside the Veuve reserve you will have a chance to see and photograph the rarest bird in the world. It is easy to find the Seychelles Black Paradise Flycatcher in the reserve if one looks at eye-level.



Apart from the flycatchers, many other birds such as the Seychelles Sun Bird, Seychelles Bulbul and mammals such as the Seychelles Fruit Bats can be seen. The trail in the Veuve Reserve is readily accessible and easy to walk along.

## Abraham 'Ovliverne' Niole Information

The Veuve Reserve contains an information Centre. The Centre, which is situated at the main entrance to the Reserve, provides information to visitors about the Seychelles environment, the Flycatcher, its habitat and the Reserve itself.

The display room helps inform Seychellois and tourists alike about conservation and the importance of protecting rare, endemic wildlife, especially the Seychelles Black Paradise Flycatcher.

There is information in the form of wall displays, books and hands on interactions, which explain the history and biology of the Flycatchers, as well as information about their required habitat. Staffs are also available to answer questions and provide guidance.







## Flora and Fauna

Males are glossy black with very long tail streamers and bright blue eye-ring and bill. Females and juveniles have a black head, white belly and chestnut upperparts and tail.

The creole name Veuve (widow) refers to the male plumage. Flycatchers feed on insects and spiders, caught on the wing or gleaned from the undersides of leaves.



They can breed any time of the year. Traditionally the main breeding season was the north-west rainy season (November - April) but more recently, probably as a direct result of climate change and a change in the weather patterns in Seychelles especially rainfall, the birds are breeding more at other times of the year.



## Veuve Reserve Woodland

The woodland, on the La Digue western plateau, of mainly mature Badamier and Takamaka, is an example of the indigenous low lying forest which was originally found throughout granitic Seychelles, but has been largely removed by humans. The Reserve is a good example of the tall broadleaved plateau forest habitat that used to cover the whole of the La Digue plateau.



The importance of native broad-leaved plateau woodland, and especially the Badamier and Takamaka, for the Seychelles Black Paradise Flycatcher has resulted in conservation measures, including the creation of a nature reserve, La Veuve Special Reserve. The primary goal within the La Veuve Special Reserve is to protect the flycatcher, as well as the habitat and prey upon which it relies, while also protecting the Badamier and Takamaka in their own right.



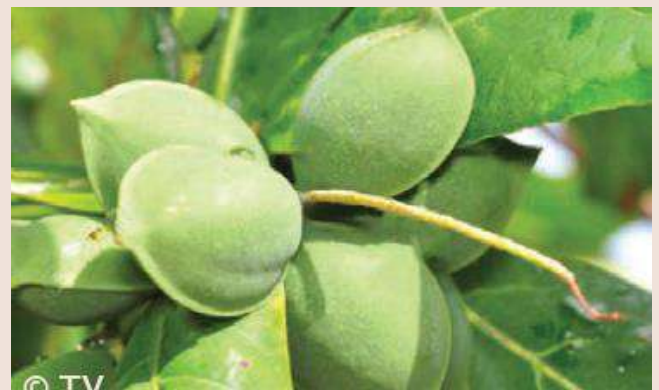




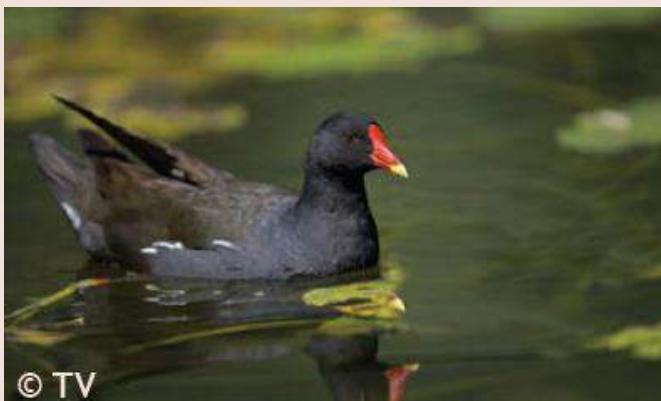
Takamaka Tree



Indian Almond Tree(Badamier)



Moorhen



Palm Spider



A common native wetland bird in Seychelles, where it occurs on and around freshwater and brackish marshes. In the Veuve Reserve it is more likely to be heard than seen: a short explosion call is given from cover.

Palm Spider is probably native and very common in Seychelles. It has a black body with black and yellow striped legs. The web is strongly built and can get very large. The female spider is bigger than the male.





### Flycatcher Nest

The Flycatcher builds its cup-shaped nests on branches which consist of twigs, palm fibre, and spider webs. They lay one egg at a time. Both parents, male and female, take care of the little birds until they grow up. Flycatchers eat insects that they catch in flight, and it for this reason that this bird got its name.



### Giant Land Crab

A very large nocturnal terrestrial crab that is cherry-brown above the carapace and paler below. It is in abundance in the Veuve Reserve, inhabiting large burrows in and around the wetlands. It leaves the burrow at night to graze on vegetation.



### Terrapins

There are three forms of terrapins in Seychelles, one is an endemic species (the Seychelles Mud Turtle which is possibly extinct), and two are endemic subspecies (Black Mud Terrapin and the Yellow-bellied.) The yellow-bellied is common in the Veuve Reserve, and can be observed during rainy seasons.



### Fruit Bat

The Seychelles fruit bat is a mega bat found on the granitic islands of Seychelles. It is a significant component of the ecosystems for the islands, dispersing the seeds of many tree species. It is particularly common in the Veuve Reserve, during the day they roost in groups in the woodland treetops, emerging in the afternoon and evening to feed.

