

Numerous islands...
 Countless endemics...
 One extraordinary experience.

Seychelles Eco-Safari in the Granitic Inner Islands SY Sea Star/SY Sea Bird

The Seychelles archipelago has been cleverly compared to an "armada" of Noah's arks.

The only granite isles to be found mid-ocean, these lush green islands represent the most ancient archipelago in the world - the highest peaks of a submerged landmass that, over millions of years, broke apart from the super-continent of Gondwanaland and drifted into isolation in the middle of the Indian Ocean.

Throughout the millenia ever since, the lifeforms cocooned within these islands were left to evolve in complete isolation.

The result, as man would discover no more than a few hundreds years ago, was a group of islands unlike any other, with astounding species of flora and fauna littered throughout the archipelago, some completely unique to a single island.



Accommodation on Sea Star/Sea Bird

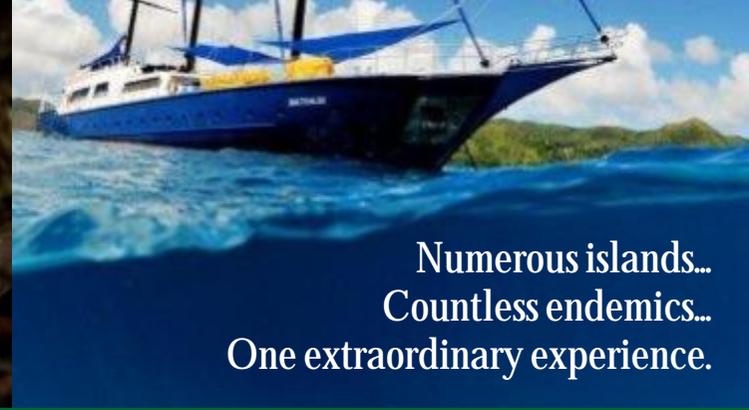
The Granitic Island Eco-Safari & Nature Cruise accommodates guests aboard the S.Y. Sea Star or S.Y. Sea Bird, in supreme comfort across 9 air- conditioned cabins and other facilities, including a salon and bar, dining salon and beautiful sun decks.

A service-oriented crew, which aside from the captain and engineer includes 2 deckhands, a dive instructor, 3 stewardesses and a dedicated chef, all ensure a comfortable experience onboard for guests - the perfect respite from fun-filled excursions during the day.

Experiencing the wonder of such an amazing ecological treasure trove has never been easier, or more comfortable, aboard one of Silhouette Cruises' modern sailing yachts, S.Y. Sea Star and S.Y. Sea Bird.

These spacious vessels provide the ideal platform for discovering the various islands of the archipelago, with easy sailing distances between the isles allowing for the keen nature-lover to take in the sights and sounds of wildlife without the bother of organising individual excursions and different lodging every night.





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The Granitic Island Eco-Safari and Nature Cruise also features an experienced naturalist onboard who will personally accompany all nature tours and island excursions, as well as conduct discussions and presentations onboard to give guests special insight into Seychelles and its fascinating ecology.

Naturalist Profile - Michel Vely



Internationally, Michel plays an integral role with the French delegation to the scientific committee of the International Whaling Commission, and is the chairman of Megaptera, a French association for the study, observation and conservation of marine mammals and whale sharks (for more info visit www.megaptera.org).

Having been involved with a wide range of environmental projects throughout the granitic islands in addition to the more remote outer islands of the archipelago, Michel has extensive knowledge of the many endemic birds, plants and other species native to Seychelles.



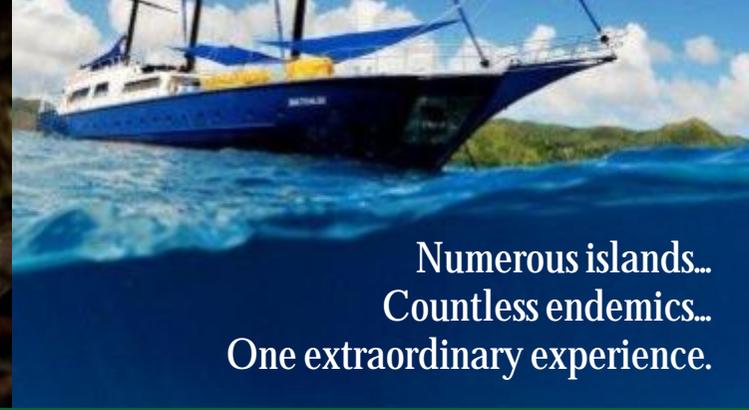
Michel Vely is a professional veterinarian specialised in marine mammals. He has more than 15 years of experience in the Indian Ocean, having worked in diverse locales such as Comoros, Djibouti, Madagascar and Mauritius, in addition to 5 years in Seychelles.

Michel speaks fluent French and English and is able to conduct tours and presentations in both languages.



Michel has served as an advisor to the Ministry of Environment of Seychelles, consulting on coral reefs, sea turtles and sharks, as well as forestry. He is also a member scientist of the Seychelles Island Foundation, the organisation that manages Seychelles' two UNESCO World Heritage Sites, the Vallee de Mai and Aldabra.

*This cruise is part of our limited edition cruise portfolio, meaning we operate departures of this cruise on only a few specific dates within the year. However, full boat charters modelled after this cruise can be organised at any time, as according to our availability. Please contact us for more info!



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Day 1 - Saturday

Embarkation at 10.30 at the Inter Island Quay in Victoria, Mahé for a welcome briefing by the captain and an early lunch onboard in port, before an afternoon of exploring Mahé itself, the largest and most populated of the islands. Mahé is characterised by its massive granite mountains and cliffs, the highest point being Morne Seychellois at nearly 3,000ft. The eco-safari begins in the Morne Seychellois National Park, with a pleasant hike up the Trois Freres nature trail to its viewpoint overlooking Victoria, the Ste Anne Marine park and a host of other islands. This is one of the few accessible areas to witness the carnivorous Seychelles pitcher plant and, higher up in the forest, the curiously loud chirp of the Sooglossus may be heard. No bigger than the size of a fingernail, this is reputed to be the smallest frog in the world. Later we visit the ruins of the Mission at Sans Souci, a former colonial boarding school for freed slave children which now serves as a beautiful viewpoint across the western and southern coasts of the island. After returning onboard, the vessel sails into the Ste Anne Marine Park, where a welcome Creole BBQ is served for dinner.

Day 2 - Sunday

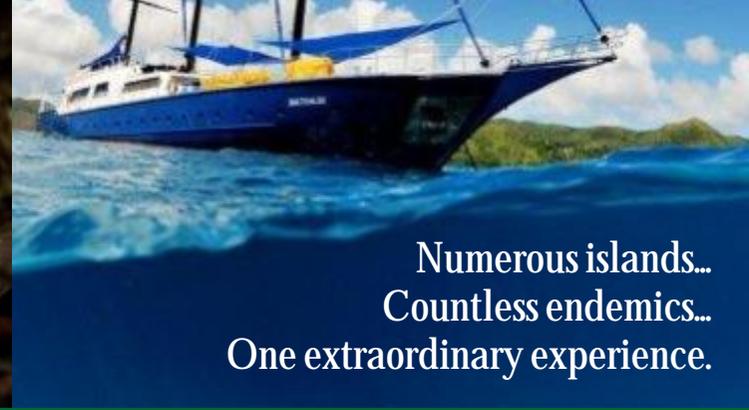
After an early morning sail across to Praslin, the second largest of the inner islands, disembark at Anse Possession for a visit to the Vallee de Mai, one of Seychelles' two UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Explore this forest's eerie pathways beneath its massive canopy, which is home to all six of Seychelles' endemic palms and all four of the endemic screwpines. The valley also hosts the endemic black parrot, unique to Praslin, together with twenty-eight endemic plant species. This includes the famous Coco de Mer palm with its large, curiously shaped nut (the world's largest seed), which served as the inspiration for General Gordon of Khartoum to declare he had found the biblical Garden of Eden when he visited Praslin in 1881.



Day 3 - Monday

A visit to Cousin Island, one of the smallest of the granitic islands of the Seychelles, which is a wildlife reserve managed by Nature Seychelles and an important refuge for endemic birds as well as a sea turtle nesting site. A guided tour of Cousin allows for up-close viewing of endemics such as the Seychelles fody, warbler and magpie robin, as well as beautiful white fairy terns and magnificent white-tailed tropic birds. The giant tortoise has been introduced onto Cousin and this is also a potential opportunity to witness sea turtles landing on the beach to lay eggs. In the evening, enjoy a pre-dinner talk about the fascinating geology of Seychelles, the only mid-ocean remnants of the ancient continent of Gondwanaland.





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Day 4 - Tuesday

A morning sail to La Digue, one of the most renowned islands of the archipelago, and where bicycles remain the most common mode of transportation on this sleepy island community. Experience the Veuve Reserve with its takamaka and Indian almond trees, in which the black Seychelles paradise flycatcher feeds and nests. This endangered endemic – the male has extremely long black tail feathers and the female is chestnut and white with a black hood - is only found naturally on La Digue. The afternoon is free for guests to explore the rest of the island, perhaps by renting a bicycle, to enjoy some of the other points of interest, such as the Union Estate, Anse Source D'Argent or Grand Anse.

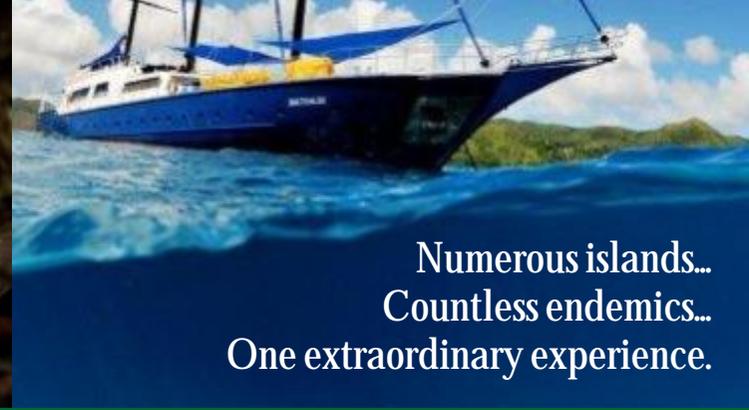
Day 5 - Wednesday

After breakfast, disembark at the island of Curieuse, just off Praslin, for a visit of this virtually uninhabited island and nature park. Curieuse features an expansive mangrove forest, accessible through an elevated boardwalk, where cardisoma crabs and mudskippers can be seen. The walk connects the ruins of an old leper colony and the renovated doctor's house, which is now a small museum, to the giant tortoise conservation programme also being conducted here. Enjoy a BBQ lunch on the beach before re-embarking on the vessel for an early evening spent relaxing at the beautiful granite outcrop of St Pierre.

Day 6 - Thursday

The vessel arrives in Silhouette, the third largest of Seychelles' inner island group, which also features the second highest elevation point - the imposing Mt Dauban - and the only other island besides Mahé to feature mist-forest ecology. The vast majority of this island remains untouched and uninhabited, aside from the small settlement at the harbour and a recently opened 5-star resort. Those keen on to embark on a nature hike across the island will set off with pack lunches, whereas those wishing to relax can take a shorter walk to the beach of Anse Lascares and afterward sail to the northern coast of Silhouette near Anse Mondon to meet up with the rest of the group after their hike.





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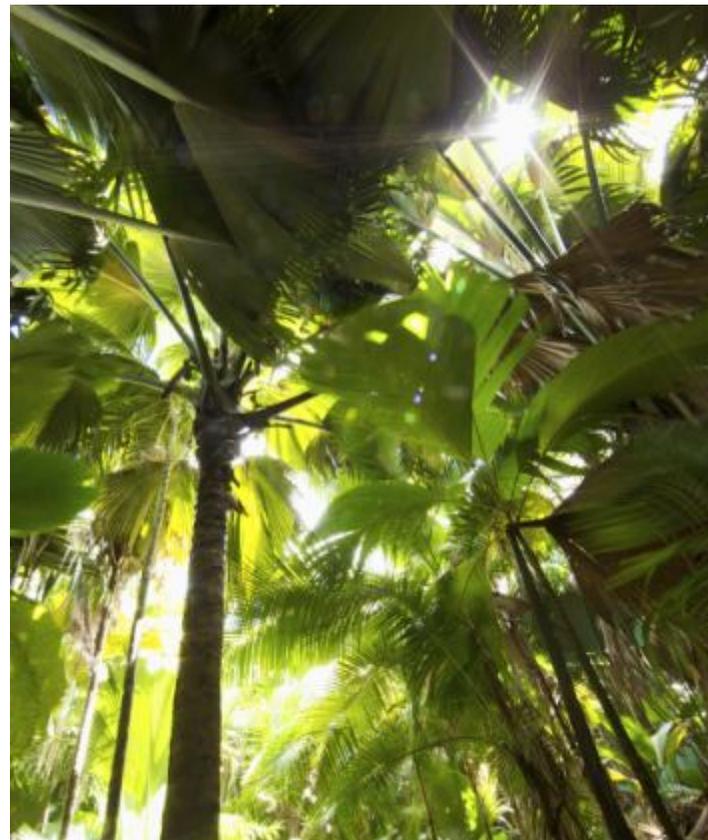
Day 7 - Friday

A morning sail back towards Mahé and the beautiful cove of Baie Ternay on the northwestern coast, for an opportunity to snorkel or dive in this nationally protected marine park with crystal clear waters and an abundance of marine life. Corals here have recovered amazingly well following the 1998 El Nino event in which many corals around the world were devastated. In the evening, sail across Beau Vallon Bay, one of the best spots for a Seychelles sunset, followed by the cruise de-brief and a farewell dinner.



Day 8 - Saturday

Disembarkation at the Inter-Island Quay at 08.30hrs.



Useful Information & Travel Tips

- ✿ Your safety and comfort are our highest priority. In the event of adverse conditions, all itineraries are subject to change at the captain's discretion.
- ✿ Be sure to bring plenty of sun-screen, a cap or hat and sunglasses - Seychelles is generally warm and sunny throughout the year and the sun's rays can be especially impactful onboard the vessel, due to the reflection from the sea.
- ✿ Bring suitable footwear for walking on deck and on the beach, as well as in shallow water (some island visits require embarking/disembarking from dinghies in shallow water)
- ✿ There are numerous opportunities to dive on most days of the itinerary, and we can also conduct introductory dives for novices. Contact us for dive rates and equipment rental fees.
- ✿ Water skiing and tube rides are available at very reasonable rates. Snorkelling equipment and kayaks are included in the cost of the cruise.
- ✿ All of our cruises are full board - we serve a combination of International and authentic Creole cuisine. Please contact us for special dietary needs.
- ✿ Bottled water, soft drinks, beer, wine and spirits are all available on board. Price list available on request.

Images: AMRI Photo, Photo Reisse, Raymond Sahuquet, Lionel Baizeau, Tony Baskeyfield