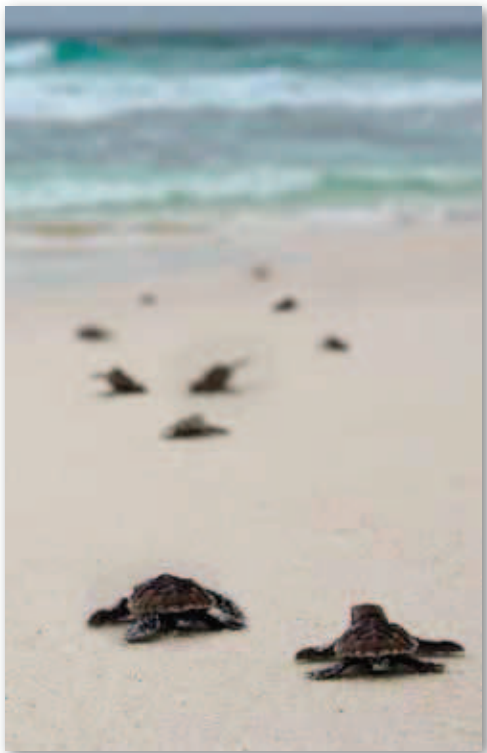


- AN INTRODUCTION TO - SEYCHELLES

The Republic of Seychelles is a cluster of 115 islands across 950 000km² of Indian Ocean off Africa's east coast. Lying just south of the equator and beyond the cyclone belt, surrounded by warm waters, Seychelles epitomises the expression 'tropical island paradise'.

Seychelles is divided into 43 Inner Islands – the only oceanic islands of granitic composition on Earth – and the Outer Islands – five groups of flat, low-lying coral atolls and reef islets. The most famous is Aldabra atoll, the world's largest raised coral atoll and a World Heritage Site where over 150 000 giant tortoises live. The Seychellois themselves call their home "Forever Eden" and for good reason. More than 1 000 flowering plant species and over 220 bird species are recorded, and insects, amphibians and reptiles abound – amongst them the smallest frog and the largest land tortoise in the world. Mammals are less abundant as befits island ecosystems, with the most common being the famous flying fox, a large fruit bat. Tourism is the mainstay of the nation's economy, benefiting from policies that take into account both the conservation of natural and cultural resources as well as the carrying capacity of the islands.



OUR SEYCHELLES AREA

North Island

Some 30km from the main island of Mahé, the 210-hectare Ile du Nord, or North Island, comprises three granite outcrops with a tropical interior of coconut palms and takamaka trees. After a ten-year comprehensive rehabilitation and conservation plan known as the 'Noah's Ark Project', North Island has begun to reclaim itself.

More than 200 plant species have been identified in 16 different habitat zones and a number of endemic invertebrates and reptiles thrive. Seychelles Blue Pigeons and Seychelles Sunbirds, rare or absent in 1997 when Wilderness Safaris acquired the island, are now relatively common and together with the Seychelles Kestrel, Seychelles Swiftlet and introduced Seychelles White-Eye comprise the five endemic bird species present. Emerging from the ocean to nest on North Island's beaches in growing numbers are endangered green and hawksbill turtles. Endemic day geckos with fluorescent orange markings clamber over surfaces while Seychelles fruit bats, the so-called flying fox, are often seen.

The warm, clear waters surrounding the island are filled with an abundance of sea life. Hard and soft corals litter the ocean floor, nudibranches are often seen and hugging the reefs is an endlessly colourful array of fish such as spotted eagle rays, parrotfish, round ribbontail rays and white-tip reef sharks. Many members of the kingfish family, giant barracuda, wahoo, and sailfish move through the depths. Whale sharks and giant sleepy sharks are seasonal, and awe-inspiring, visitors to the area.

We are most proud of this ecotourism development, one that has allowed Wilderness to meaningfully advance the renewal of this vital, verdant Noah's Ark, afloat in the Indian Ocean. Today, North Island and its ecotourism development are an example of the ecologically sensitive utilisation and rehabilitation of a precious natural treasure.



SEYCHELLES



NORTH ISLAND

Wilderness Collection



North Island is a place of barefoot luxury for those seeking an unspoilt, spectacular tropical retreat. There are only 11 individually handcrafted guest villas on the entire island, each constructed to create a sensorial experience in surroundings of understated elegance and providing a unique atmosphere and distinct flavour of the Seychelles. Each villa has a study or second bedroom, creating the perfect space for children. All the villas are built directly on the eastern beach.



A lounge, dining room and library, scenically located health spa and gym, world-class dive centre, and a rim-flow swimming pool are all built into a granitic outcrop. A sunset bar and restaurant are tucked away on the western beach of the island. Activities include mountain biking, gym, guided walks, snorkelling, fishing, boating, sea kayaking, and scuba diving. North Island has created a signature style that combines natural beauty with sheer luxury, a rare experience in harmony with the environment. It is thus an example of a sustainable ecologically-sensitive utilisation of a precious natural treasure.



FACILITIES & ACTIVITIES



