

Diving in Mauritius, Réunion & Seychelles

A growing number of travellers come to the Indian Ocean for the mother lode of dive sites, and justifiably so. Though largely overshadowed by the iconic Maldives, scuba diving is increasingly popular in Mauritius, Réunion and Seychelles. Beneath the clear turquoise waters is a trove of unbelievable riches: rainbow-coloured fish and large pelagic species (and yes, sharks are part of the package!), a dramatic seascape, a few wrecks and a host of drop-offs and reefs. It's not the cheapest place on earth to dive (Thailand or the Red Sea it ain't) but it's a great place to learn, and in turn love, scuba diving. Good news: bar a few areas, the dive sites are never crowded.

The dive sites presented (see the relevant regional maps for their location) are only a sampling of hundreds of sites available.

HOW MUCH?

Introductory dive: €40-60

Single dive: €40-60
(including equipment rental)

Open Water certification course: €300-400

MAURITIUS

So, you want variety? Abundant marine life, dramatic seascapes, atmospheric wrecks – Mauritius has it all, not to mention well-established, high-quality dive operators. Mauritius is almost entirely surrounded by a barrier reef, within which turquoise lagoons provide great possibilities for snorkellers, swimmers and novice divers. And there is the *pièce de résistance*: Rodrigues, which has virgin sites and outstanding fish life.

Dive Sites

EAST MAURITIUS

There is a fantastic parade of pelagic and reef fish to be observed in the **Passe de Belle Mare**. Strong tidal currents push the deep water back and forth through the passage, providing nutrients for a staggering array of species. The seascape is another draw; the passage is peppered with numerous chasms, gullies, coral canyons and sandy valleys. Sharks, especially bull sharks and grey sharks, regularly patrol the area. There are at least five different sites in the Passe.

Towards the south, off Trou d'Eau Douce, the **Passe de Trou d'Eau Douce** is another worthwhile site, though it's less spectacular than Passe de Belle Mare. It's usually done as a drift dive.

See under Activities headings in the East Mauritius section (p95) for local dive centres.

SOUTHEAST MAURITIUS

Off the southeast coast it's the dramatic underwater terrain that impresses more than anything, making for unique profiles. You'll be rewarded with a profusion of caves, tunnels and giant arches – it's very scenic – as well as large numbers of pelagics thrown in for good measure. The hitch? From June to August, most sites are exposed to the prevailing winds – expect choppy seas in rough weather.

Colorado is the magic mantra. As befits its name, this site looks like an underwater version of the famous American valley. This 400m-long canyon is peppered with chasms, tunnels, crevices and boulders where masses of lobsters, jacks, groupers and barracudas seek shelter. Another must-see dive is **Roches Zozo**, close to Colorado. It features a huge rock that rises from the sea bed to about 12m, pocked with crevices where lobsters hide. To the south, **Grotte Langouste** is a cave brimming with lobsters.

Don't worry too much about the effects of the 2004 tsunami – most sites in Mauritius, Réunion and Seychelles are not coral dives.

Wreck buffs will explore the **Sirius**, a 19th-century vessel that rests in the 20m range off Mahébourg, but it's not in good shape.

For beginners, **Blue Bay** is a safe, lovely spot to learn to dive, with a parade of reef fish to be observed on the sprawling reef. Blue Bay is the only place in Mauritius where you'll find patches of thriving coral.

See p115 for local dive centres.

NORTH MAURITIUS

The north coast is a magnet for divers of all levels, and it's no wonder – there's a good balance of thrilling dives, wrecks, drop-offs and easy dives.

The islands off the coast (Île Plate, Coin de Mire) are the main highlights, with splendid sites and diverse fish life – not to mention a sense of wilderness. **La Fosse aux Requins** will make your spine tingle. On the northwestern side of Île Plate, a bowl-shaped basin carved into the cliff is home to an eerie concentration of blacktip sharks (from five to about 30 certain days) that keep swirling around. Why? Possibly because the waters here are rich in oxygen thanks to the swell. Good news for novice divers in search of excitement: this shallow dive (12m) is accessible with an Open Water certificate, though the current can be a bit tricky. One proviso: the encounter with the sharks is probable but cannot be guaranteed!

Coin de Mire Island is another diver's treat, with a few stunning drop-offs – we recommend **Carpenters** and the aptly named **The Wall**. Both have fairly good coral formations and tons of fish life. Near The Wall, the shipwreck **Djabela** is a former Japanese freighter that was scuttled in 1998 in 30m. It's more atmospheric than fishy.

To the northwest, Trou aux Biches is the main jumping-off point to a variety of superb dives. Be sure to fill your logbook with **Holt's Rock** (also known as Stenopus), which features two rocky domes and big boulders; **Lobster Rock**, in about 20m, geared to novice divers; and **Tombant de la Pointe aux Canoniers**, between Holt's Rock and Lobster Rock, suitable for experienced divers, with an exhilarating drop-off that tumbles from 32m to about 60m. Other reputable walls in the area: **Caravelle**, **Corsaire Wall** and **Kingfish**, all embellished with black coral and seafans. In the mood for wrecks? Make a beeline for **Waterlily** and **Emily**, as well as the photogenic, 45m-long **Stella Maru**, all of which are accessible to novice divers.

See under Activities headings in the North Mauritius section (p66) for local dive centres.

WEST MAURITIUS

The Flic en Flac area ranks among the best in Mauritius when it comes to diving. Conditions are optimal year round – it's protected from the prevailing winds – and visibility is usually excellent. We can't gush enough about **Rempart Serpent** (Snake Rampart), possibly the quirkiest dive in Mauritius. Located a 15-minute boat trip from Flic en Flac, it takes its name from the sinuous rock lying about 25m below the surface, which attracts perhaps the greatest concentration in the world of weird and wonderful scorpion fish, stonefish, moray eels and lion-fish. Another fave is **La Cathédrale**, with a memorable seascape – think a warren of cavelets, stipples, passages and ledges. It's full of reef species, including fusiliers, surgeonfish, groupers, snappers, angelfish and lobsters. One downside: it's so popular that it's fairly congested. **Couline Bambou** and **Manioc** are less crowded but no less attractive.

Wreck fans will be spoiled here too, with a handful of atmospheric wrecks, including the **Kei Sei 113**, scuttled in the 1980s. Resting at about 35m, it's accessible to seasoned divers only. Beginners might try the **Tug II**, a 20m-long tugboat scuttled in 1981 that sits on the sand in about 20m. She's now

Before embarking on a scuba-diving trip, be sure to obtain reliable information about the physical and environmental conditions of the dive site and dive only at sites within your realm of experience.

In Mauritius, look out for the *Field Guide to Corals of Mauritius* by Ruby Moothien Pillay, Hiroaki Terashima, Atmanun Venkatasami and Hiro'omi Uchida. In Réunion, look out for *Fonds Sous-Marins de l'Île de la Réunion* by Eric Dutrieux (in French).

home to thousands of colourful fish. Hint: lie without moving on the sandy bottom and you'll see swaying conger eels slip down into their burrows.

And the southwest coast? The area between Le Morne Peninsula and Rivière Noire has a few diving hotspots, including the fishy **Passe St Jacques** and **Casiers**. The weak points are the average visibility and the fairly dull topography.

See under Activities headings in the West Mauritius section (p101) for local dive centres.

RODRIGUES

This is the Indian Ocean at its best. A true gem, Rodrigues boasts numerous untouched sites for those willing to experience something different. There's a profusion of coral that you won't see anywhere else in Mauritius, and the density of fish life is astounding. The underwater scenery is another pull, with a smorgasbord of canyons, arches and caves.

Rodrigues' signature dives include **La Passe St François** and **Le Canyon**, off the east coast. La Passe St François is a kilometre-long channel teeming with tuna, unicorn fish, groupers, turtles, rays and jacks (of the *Caranx ignobilis* variety) the size of a small car. Le Canyon is a truly atmospheric dive site – you'll dive in a canyon that runs under the reef, with openings that allow beams of sunlight to pass through. If you're after Tolkienesque scenery, ask for **La Basilique**, which is like an underwater medieval castle carved into the reef, full of galleries, faults and archways (but no coral). **Karlanne** is another hot favourite, offering dense marine life and healthy coral formations, especially those of the *Acropora* and *Porites* genuses.

The south coast has its fair share of thrilling dives too. Most sites are in the area of **La Grande Passe**. To say it's fishy is an understatement, and you don't need to go below 20m of water to admire the full gamut of reef species.

See p129 for local dive centres.

Practicalities

DIVING CONDITIONS

Although Mauritius is diveable year-round, the most favourable periods are October to December, March and April (January and February are peak months for cyclone activity). During July and August, when the southeast trade winds are at their strongest, the seas are too rough and murky for diving all along the east coast and around Rodrigues. Visibility is heavily weather dependent and thus varies a lot – from a low of 10m at certain sites at certain periods of the year to 40m at others.

Current conditions vary a lot, from imperceptible to powerful. Water temperatures range from a low of 22°C in August to a high of 28°C between December and February.

DIVE OPERATORS

There are at least 40 professional dive centres in Mauritius. Most belong to the **Mauritius Scuba Diving Association** (MSDA; ☎ 454 0011; www.msda-cmas.org), which is affiliated with CMAS and makes regular and rigorous checks. Most dive centres are also affiliated with one or more of the internationally recognised certifying agencies, usually PADI or CMAS. Many dive centres in Mauritius are hotel-based, but they all welcome walk-in clients. In general, you can expect well-maintained equipment, good facilities and professional staff, but standards may vary from one centre to another, so it pays off to shop around.

RÉUNION

Who said that diving in Réunion wasn't interesting? OK, it lacks the underwater charisma of the Seychelles or Mauritius, and it's mostly famous for its

For identification of tropical fish and corals, refer to *Reef Fishes & Corals and More Reef Fishes & Nudibranchs* by Dennis King, or the *Indian Ocean Reef Guide* by Helmut Debelius.

SNORKELLING

If the idea of total immersion doesn't appeal to you, snorkelling is possible in the three countries. It's a great way to explore the underwater world with minimal equipment and without the costs associated with diving. Even the shallowest reefs are home to many colourful critters. In all three destinations, rental gear is widely available from dive centres.

In Mauritius, top spots include the marine park at Blue Bay and along the west coast off Flic en Flac and Trou aux Biches, not forgetting the lagoon around Rodrigues. Companies running trips on glass-bottomed boats will often include snorkelling in the deal.

In Réunion, the lagoon along the west coast between St-Gilles-les-Bains and La Saline-les-Bains offers great snorkelling, with particularly good marine life off L'Hermitage-les-Bains. Take advice before leaping in as the currents can be dangerous.

In the Seychelles, the sheltered lagoons provide safe havens for swimming and snorkelling. The Ste Anne and Port Launay Marine National Parks are firm favourites in the waters around Mahé. Around Praslin, try off Anse Lazio and Anse Volbert beaches, or take a boat trip from Anse Volbert to St-Pierre islet. Close to La Digue, the submerged granite boulders around Coco, Grande Sœur and Marianne islands are teeming with fish life.

trekking options, but it shouldn't be sneezed at. You'll be positively surprised; there's a wide choice of shallow dives inside the lagoon for novices and deeper dives (mostly 25m to 40m) just outside for more experienced divers, as well as a few purpose-sunk wrecks thrown in for good measure.

Dive Sites

Most dive sites are located off the west coast between Boucan Canot and Grand Bois.

ST-GILLES-LES-BAINS

If you want relaxed diving, St-Gilles will appeal to you. Diving here is focused on the reefs, which slope gently away in a series of valleys to a sandy bottom in about 25m – very reassuring. Pelagics are rare, but small reef species are prolific.

Colourful sites such as **La Tour de Boucan** and **Le Pain de Sucre**, none of which are deeper than 20m, offer great opportunities off Boucan Canot. The setting is the strong point, with a contoured terrain and lots of small critters in the recesses (damsel fish, parrotfish, triggerfish, lobsters), as well as a few seafans. On **Petites Gorgones** (also known as Saliba), keep an eye out for leaf scorpionfishes and turtles. Straight off L'Hermitage-les-Bains, **La Passe de L'Hermitage** is an exciting dive. The terrain is nicely sculpted, with little canyons and large boulders that act as magnets for a wealth of species. Sadly, visibility is often reduced.

If you have a hankering for wrecks, the **Hai Siang** (maximum depth 55m) and the **Navarra** (maximum depth 55m) will keep you entertained, though at such depths they are accessible to very experienced divers only. Novice divers will head to **La Barge**, off St-Paul, a relaxing wreck dive in less than 22m.

See p184 for local dive centres.

ST-LEU

St-Leu features splendid wall diving and good coral fields. Here walls tumble steeply to several dozen metres. Be sure to bookmark **Tombant de la Pointe au Sel**, south of St-Leu, which is widely regarded as Réunion's best all-round dive site. In addition to great scenery, this stunning drop-off offers a fabulous array of fish life and seldom fails to produce good sightings of pelagics, especially tuna, barracuda and jacks, as well as hammerhead sharks between October and November.

Coral bleaching is triggered by unnaturally high temperatures that cause the polyps to expel the symbiotic algae that give them their colour. If the temperature does not drop quickly enough, the coral eventually dies from the loss of the protective algae.

Les Pyramides is another stunner, with two seamounts rising from 70m to 38m. For novices, nothing can beat the very secure yet atmospheric **Le Jardin des Kiosques**, with a depth ranging from 3m to 18m. It's all about little canyons and grooves. Another relaxing site, **La Maison Verte** is blessed with good coral formations.

Wreck enthusiasts will enjoy the **Antonio Lorenzo**, a well-preserved vessel that rests in about 35m on a sandy bottom off Pointe des Chateaux. Fish life is not dynamic – it's the ambience that's the pull.

Whales can be seen cruising past the area from October to November.

See p190 for local dive centres.

ST-PIERRE

Savvy divers, this area is for you. Absolutely no crowds and only one dive boat (yours): this is diving near St-Pierre. It's unhyped and that's why we enjoy it so much. There are a host of untouched sites between St-Pierre and Grand Bois. The main drawcard here is the topography, with numerous ridges, canyons and drop-offs. Sites well worth bookmarking include **Petit Tombant Tres Poissonneux**, **Japonicus**, **Demotel** and **Cap Thérèse**, to name a few.

See p214 for local dive centres.

Practicalities

DIVING CONDITIONS

While it is possible to dive all year, the best time is October to April, when the water is at its warmest (about 28°C). However, you might want to avoid February through March, which is the cyclone season. Water temperatures can drop to about 21°C in August.

DIVE OPERATORS

The dive centres are concentrated around St-Gilles-les-Bains, St-Leu and St-Pierre. The standard of diving facilities is high. You'll find professional dive centres staffed with qualified instructors catering to divers of all levels. Staff members usually speak English. Most dive centres are affiliated with PADI, SSI or CMAS – all internationally recognised dive organisations.

Take note that a simple medical certificate stating you are fit enough to dive is compulsory for diving in France. You can get one from your doctor in your home country or have it faxed or emailed to the dive centre. Otherwise, you can get one from any doctor in Réunion (€21).

SEYCHELLES

The Seychelles is sure to elicit strong emotions. Billed as one of the Indian Ocean's great diving destinations, it almost rivals the Maldives, though it's much less hyped – all the better for you. Good news: you don't need to be a strong diver – there are sites for all levels.

There's excellent diving off Mahé, Praslin and La Digue, the three main islands. The strong point is the underwater scenery, complete with big granite boulders and seamounts – it's as atmospheric as on land. If you have the chance to embark on a live-aboard, you'll dive the outer islands and Aldabra. Here you'll feel like Cousteau exploring uncharted territory – simply unforgettable.

Dive Sites

MAHÉ

If you are based in the north, whet your appetite with **Shark Bank**, Mahé's signature dive, for experienced divers only. As the name suggests, sharks are a fairly common sight around this 30m-tall granite pillar 9km off Beau

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Vallon (Mahé) – they're generally reef sharks, but you will also see whale sharks between February and November. Expect to encounter brissant rays the size of Mini Mokes, eagle rays, barracuda, batfish and teeming yellow snapper and big-eyes. The pillar is covered with bright orange sponges and white gorgonians. There is nearly always a strong current at this site. **Îlot** is a granite outcrop just off north Mahé which consists of several large boulders topped by a tuft of palm trees. The current in the channel can be quite strong, but the cluster of boulders yields one of the highest densities of fish life in the Seychelles. Golden cup coral festoons the canyons and gullies, and gorgonians and other soft corals abound. You're sure to see yellow-spotted burr fish, turtles, anemones and clownfish, peppered moray eels, Spanish dancer nudibranchs and thousands of hingeback shrimps. **Îlot** is about a 15-minute boat ride from Beau Vallon. It's suitable for all levels of divers. About 5km north of Mahé, and accessed from Beau Vallon, **Brissare Rocks** is another granite pinnacle. The site features abundant fire coral and great concentrations of yellow snapper, wrasse, parrotfish and fusiliers, as well as groupers and eagle rays. Reef sharks and whale sharks are also known to visit the area. The Baie Ternay Marine National Park and the Ste Anne Marine National Park also offer great opportunities for experienced divers and novices alike.

If you need a break from offshore dives, a few shipwrecks will keep you happy, including the **Twin Barges**, which sit upright on the seabed in about 20m in Beau Vallon bay. The hot favourite is the **Ennerdale**, to the northeast. This massive 216m-long vessel sunk in 1970 on a sandbank after hitting an uncharted rock. She's broken up, but very scenic.

If you're based in the southwest, you'll probably explore **Alice in Wonderland**, famous for its healthy coral formations, **Shark Point**, **Intendance Rock** and **Jailhouse Rock**.

See p272 and p278 for local dive centres.

PRASLIN & LA DIGUE

There are superb dive sites off Aride Island, including **Aride Bank**, which can be accessed from Praslin if you don't mind the tedious 30-minute boat trip to get to the sites. Closer to Praslin, approximately halfway between Aride and Praslin, **Booby Islet** is an exposed seamount which consistently sizzles with fish action.

Local divemasters also recommend **South Cousine Island**, **Cousin**, **Ave Maria Rocks** (noted for its shark sightings), **Marianne Island**, **White Bank** and **Anse Sévère**.

See p283 for local dive centres.

Make sure you allow 24 hours between diving and taking a flight, to minimise the risk of residual nitrogen in the blood that can cause decompression injury.

DIVING WITH A CONSCIENCE

Please consider the following tips when diving, to help preserve the ecology and beauty of reefs:

- Encourage dive operators to establish permanent moorings at appropriate dive sites.
- Practise and maintain proper buoyancy control.
- Avoid touching living marine organisms with your body and equipment.
- Take great care in underwater caves, as your air bubbles can damage fragile organisms.
- Minimise your disturbance of marine animals.
- Take home all your trash, and any litter you may find as well.
- Never stand on corals, even if they look solid and robust.
- Do not buy or collect seashells, or buy any seashell or turtleshell products.
- Dive with a local dive operator that follows high safety, ethical and professional standards.

THE FIRST TIME

You've always fancied venturing underwater on scuba? Now's your chance. Mauritius, Réunion and Seychelles are perfect starting points for new divers, as the warm waters and the shallow reefs are a forgiving training environment. Most dive centres offer courses for beginners and employ experienced instructors.

Just about anyone in reasonably good health can sign up for an introductory dive (from €40), including children aged eight and over. It typically takes place in shallow (3m to 5m) water and lasts about 30 minutes. It's escorted by a divemaster.

If you choose to enrol in an Open Water course, count on it taking about four days, including a few classroom lectures and open-water training. Once you're certified, your C-card is valid permanently and recognised all over the world.

OUTER ISLANDS

Now we're talking. Adventurous (and wealthy) divers will be sure to visit some of the outer islands, which open up a whole new world of diving. Desroches, Frégate, North, Silhouette and Denis Islands offer fantastic diving options, with absolutely pristine sites. One step beyond, you'll find Aldabra, Cosmoledo and Astove, which are the stuff of legend. They feature the best sites in the eastern Indian Ocean, with electric fish action in a totally virgin territory and high-voltage drift dives. The catch? It will cost you a king's ransom to access these sites – they are only served by one live-aboard, the **Indian Ocean Explorer** (www.ioexpl.com). The dives of a lifetime are well worth the splurge.

Practicalities

DIVING CONDITIONS

Diving in the Seychelles heavily hinges on the weather conditions, currents and direction of the wind, but it can be sampled over all of the seasons as there are always sheltered conditions. Dive sites are chosen according to the prevailing winds. The calmest seas are from April to May and October to November. Due to currents and wind, visibility is temperamental and can drop to 5m. But in normal conditions you can expect 25m.

DIVE OPERATORS

The Seychelles' 15-odd diving centres have first-rate personnel and facilities. You'll find dive centres in Mahé, Praslin, La Digue, Ste Anne, Silhouette, Frégate, Denis, North and Desroches. Most centres are affiliated with PADI.

MARINE LIFE

Let's be honest: the western Indian Ocean is not the richest marine realm in the world – some parts of the Caribbean, the South Pacific and the Red Sea boast more prolific fish life. But it's far from being poor – in fact, it has everything from tiny nudibranchs (sea slugs) to huge whale sharks. It's just a matter of quantities, not diversity.

Like Technicolour critters? You'll encounter a dizzying array of reef species darting around the reef, including clownfish, parrotfish, angelfish, emperor-fish, butterfly-fish and various types of grouper. Moray eels are also frequently encountered.

Pelagic fish – larger beasts that live in the open sea, such as tuna and barracuda – sometimes cruise quite close to the reef in search of prey. Of the shark species inhabiting these waters, the most common are the white-tipped reef shark, the hammerhead shark and the reasonably docile nurse shark.

The most common species of ray found around the Seychelles and Mauritius is the manta ray. One of the larger stingray species, often encountered

If you're a certified diver, don't forget to bring your C-card from a recognised scuba-diving instructional agency and your logbook with you.

at Shark Bank off Mahé, is the brissant (or round ribbon-tailed) ray. It can grow up to 2m across. The blue-spotted stingray is quite common in the sandy areas between the granite boulders of the Seychelles.

The best place to see turtles in the wild is the Seychelles, where there are a number of important breeding grounds for hawksbill and green turtles.

And coral? It's not the strongest point. The Indian Ocean's shallow-water reefs were badly hit by 'coral bleaching' in 1997 and 1998. In parts of the Seychelles, up to 90% of hard corals (the reef-building corals) were wiped out. They are still struggling, but there are encouraging signs of new growth. Fortunately, the fish and other reef creatures don't appear to have been affected.

MARINE CONSERVATION

The main pressures on the marine environment are pollution, over-exploitation and inappropriate activities such as the use of drag anchors, and explosives for fishing. In recent years Mauritius, Réunion and the Seychelles have introduced laws banning destructive practices, such as shell and coral collection, shark finning and spear-fishing. Each has also established marine reserves to protect at least some of their coral reefs. If you're willing to help, there are good volunteering opportunities, especially in Mauritius and the Seychelles.

Mauritius

The most active groups are the **Mauritius Marine Conservation Society** (MMCS; ☎ 696 5368; <http://pages.intnet.mu/mmcs> in French) and the **Mauritius Underwater Group** (MUG; ☎ 696 5368; <http://pages.intnet.mu/mug>), both of which were founded by concerned local divers. They run education, research and monitoring programmes, campaign for the control of water pollution and reef destruction and the installation of pavement mooring buoys, and have created artificial reefs (the wrecks along the west coast) to enhance the marine environment. Both groups are also pushing for more marine parks.

In Rodrigues, **Shoals** (☎ 831 1225; www.shoals-rodrigues.org) is campaigning for the installation of 'environmentally friendly' mooring buoys and working with local authorities to establish marine reserves as part of a sustainable fisheries project. It also runs volunteering programmes.

Supported by the **Mauritius Scuba Diving Association** (MSDA; ☎ 454 0011; www.msda-cmas.org), an increasing number of dive operators now regularly clean 'their' stretch of lagoon. If you find an operator polluting or destroying the reef, report it to the MSDA.

Réunion

The **Association Parc Marin de la Réunion** (☎ 0262 34 64 44; <http://perso.wanadoo.fr/parcmarin.reunion> in French) is charged with managing and protecting the lagoon. After many years campaigning for the park to be upgraded to a nature reserve, it succeeded in early 2007 – the park's now a fully fledged nature reserve.

Seychelles

The **Marine Conservation Society Seychelles** (MCSS; ☎ 713500; www.mcss.sc) monitors and promotes marine habitats and biodiversity. Current projects include whale-shark, turtle and coral reef monitoring. Visitors are welcome to participate in the monitoring programmes (see the website). To add to the fun, you can also adopt a whale shark or a turtle through MCSS.

Nature Seychelles (☎ 601100; www.nature.org.sc) also works to improve biodiversity. Its conservation projects include the restoration of island ecosystems and a recent wide-reaching project to study the effects of coral bleaching on fish life.

Seychelles Island Foundation (☎ 321735; www.sif.sc) concentrates its efforts on studying and protecting Aldabra, a marine biodiversity hot spot.

According to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), marine turtles are among the world's most endangered species, threatened by pollution and human exploitation. Their downfall has been their edible flesh and eggs, as well as their shell, which is used for jewellery and ornaments.

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