



**London Eye architects to design Aldabra House**



*Aldabra Atoll © SIF*

Following the declaration of the Aldabra House project at the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Aldabra as an UNESCO World Heritage site, we are delighted to announce that the architects to develop the project concept will be the UK-based firm, Marks Barfield Architects.

Aldabra House, which will be based on Mahé, will be a remote access visitor centre providing an Aldabra experience for the many people who cannot visit, due to the atoll's remoteness and access difficulties. The main aims of the centre are to increase public access to Aldabra by bringing Aldabra to Mahé. This is seen to be important to raise awareness and visibility of its outstanding universal value as a natural heritage site, and to diversify and increase sustainable financing mechanisms for Aldabra by becoming a visitor destination itself. To ensure that Aldabra House will be a centre of excellence with the highest international standards in sustainable architecture and an appealing design, SIF launched an international competition and invited five architectural firms to share their concept ideas to find the most suitable partner for this exciting project.

All five submitted concepts were of an extremely high standard, making the final decision exceptionally difficult for the Aldabra House committee. Following careful and detailed consideration of the conceptual design proposals, the Aldabra House Committee selected Marks Barfield Architects. Founded in 1989 by Julia Barfield and David Marks, Marks Barfield Architects conceived and designed the famous London Eye. They have a diverse portfolio of projects that includes the Royal Botanic Gardens of Kew Treetop Walkway as well as school, cultural, commercial, leisure, and transport buildings. The company has won more than 60 awards for design, innovation and sustainability. We are excited and very much looking forward to realising the Aldabra House project in partnership with Marks Barfield.

**Aldabra designated part of the IOSEA site network**



*A Green Turtle returning to sea after nesting on Aldabra © SIF*



**Aldabra Sisal eradication nearing completion!**



*The latest team on Ile Michel with a pile of dead Sisal plants © SIF*

A huge team effort on Ile Michel this month has brought Aldabra within reach of being free of invasive Sisal (*Agave sisalana*). Sisal is an introduced plant which forms dense stands that eventually dominate habitat and outcompete native flora. On Aldabra there were three Sisal locations before the current eradication efforts; a patch on Picard near the old settlement, a cluster of plants on Polymnie and a much larger Sisal area on Ile Michel. The small patches of Sisal on Picard and Polymnie were eliminated earlier in 2014 using targeted herbicide application. However, on Ile Michel, due to the size and density of the patch and the number of plants, the control on this islet has required several visits.

An additional challenge is that Ile Michel lies within the lagoon on the other side of the atoll to the research station and can only be reached for a couple of hours during a high tide. The eradication team therefore has to stay at and depart from the nearest field camp on Malabar Island early in the morning on a high tide and are confined to Ile Michel until the tide rises again at the end of the day when they can return to camp.



*Sisal patch on Ile Michel before treatment in early 2014 (left) and now in October 2014 after treatment (right) © M van Dinther*

A team of four worked two long days on Ile Michel in October to eliminate the last of the surviving Sisal plants on Aldabra. Previous work on the island in March and May had involved cutting the larger Sisal plants (> 1 m) at the central leaf stem and applying herbicide directly to the cut stem. On the latest visit the team was relieved to find that most of the large plants had died, making it possible for them to remove the dead material and reach the much smaller plants still growing underneath. During the two days the team worked through the patch inch by inch, removing dead plant material and cutting and treating all remaining small sisal plants, some of which were smaller than an inch high.

The Aldabra team will regularly monitor the three eliminated sisal patches in the coming months and remove any new plants that might re-sprout from remaining roots. Aldabra should be declared Sisal free very soon, which, as far as we can find out, will be the first Sisal eradication on a large island.

**SIF still needs your help to complete Ring-necked Parakeet eradication**

SIF is continuing to depend on information from the public on the location of the remaining ring-necked parakeets (kato ver) on Mahé and Praslin. **If you regularly see one or more of these birds in the same location, we would welcome your call. Please contact us on 2523623.**



**Devastating Coco de Mer poaching continues**



*Coco de Mer tree 'F18' stripped of all of her nuts © SIF*

Tragically the Vallée de Mai was targeted by poachers again this month and two of the most well-known female trees were stripped of 18 nuts.

During a regular morning patrol, Vallée de Mai security officers discovered that two trees had been attacked during the night and 15 maturing and 3 immature nuts had been stolen, stripping both trees of their entire crop of nuts and discarding the husks on the ground. The nuts represented well over 100 years of reproductive investment by these female trees into their offspring. The trees are also two of the most attractive to tourists in the Vallée de Mai and were part of the long-term monitoring programme into the Coco de Mer's reproduction, voiding several years of data collection. This loss of nuts is a devastating blow for this long-lived species and for the forest of the Vallée de Mai.



*The remaining husks of the nuts are discarded on the forest floor by the poachers © SIF*

Most people think of animals when they hear about poaching – rhinos, elephants and tigers are all flagship species for international poaching crises. But plants can also be a target for poachers and the Coco de Mer is suffering huge losses, its future is jeopardized by the thoughtless actions of just a few. The Coco de Mer is listed as Endangered on the Red List of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Trade and movement of the nuts are strictly controlled by the Department of Environment and CITES, and all nuts that are exported must have an export permit. It is also illegal to harvest Coco de Mer from the Vallée de Mai without permission.

Unfortunately these control measures do not seem to be able to stop the poaching at its source. The continuing theft of nuts undermines SIF efforts to protect this unique species and threatens the outstanding universal value of a World Heritage Site. SIF is working hard to address this problem but, as others are finding with rhinos and elephants, determined poachers are very difficult to catch.

Aldabra Atoll has received its 4<sup>th</sup> international designation with the announcement that the site will be included in the newly launched IOSEA Network of Sites of Importance for Marine Turtles.

Aldabra will be part of the Indian Ocean – South-East Asian (IOSEA) Marine Turtle Site Network which is expected to enhance both the local and global recognition of the importance of these selected sites, while also offering long term conservation benefits that are most easily achieved through such a coordinated network. This IOSEA network will optimise the use of limited resources and will help to diffuse adverse socio-economic impacts over a wider geographic scale, while promoting ecological connectivity as well as resistance and resilience to environmental stress. Aldabra was accepted into the network as it met the stringent Evaluation Criteria, as assessed by the IOSEA Advisory Committee and as endorsed by the collective IOSEA membership, as a critical site needed to secure the future of marine turtle species. The IOSEA Memorandum of Understanding is an agreement concluded under the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) Secretariat and is administered by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

Aldabra has the second largest population of nesting Green Turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) in the Western Indian Ocean. Lush sea grass beds, diverse coral reefs and undisturbed beaches provide an ideal habitat for these graceful reptiles. Green Turtles are listed by IUCN as globally endangered due to severe declines in their numbers as a result of hunting, fishing by-catch and coastal habitat modification. Prior to 1968, when Aldabra was established as a nature reserve, Green Turtles there also suffered intense exploitation for their meat.

Following several decades of protection under SIF however, and the addition of the Turtle Protection Act in 1994 to the Wild Animals and Birds Protection Act (1961), this turtle population has recovered. Between 1968 and 2008 there was a 500–800% increase in the number of nesting Green Turtles on Aldabra, with around 3100–5225 female turtles nesting annually in 2008, which has continued to increase since. This has been an incredible conservation success and demonstrates the importance of protection for these ocean wanderers. Aldabra Atoll currently has four international designations. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, a Ramsar wetland of international importance, an Important Bird Area under BirdLife International and now an IOSEA Marine Turtle Network Site.

Further details of the IOSEA Marine Turtle Site Network are available through the dedicated page on the IOSEA website: <http://ioseaturtles.org/sitenetwork.php>.

## Landbird breeding season started on Aldabra



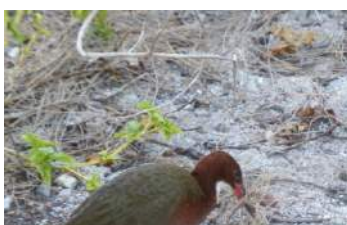
Male Aldabra Fodies have moulted into their breeding plumage © H Richards

With the northwest monsoon season just around the corner the long awaited landbird breeding season has begun.

The team on Aldabra have seen male Souimanga Sunbirds showing off their shiny, metallic breeding plumage and 'supervising' the females as they dash back and forth constructing their suspended nests. The pair of sunbirds at the Site Manager's house were the first to be found incubating eggs. Later two small chicks were seen but disappointingly these disappeared and now the female is already busy constructing her second nest of the season!

Male Aldabra Fodies have now moulted into their striking breeding plumage with a bright orange-red head and chest, and yellow bellies. They can now be seen perched in a prominent position singing loudly, staking out their territories and displaying to interested females. The start of their nest building activities has also been observed, with males constructing the initial framework, weaving twigs and grass to create their closed nests.

The loud duet calls of the Aldabra Rails can be heard across Picard as the pairs declare their territory to their neighbours. Chases and fights between the birds have been observed when intruders venture into another pair's territory. They have also been spotted stealthily running with nesting material to build their nests. Several rail nests have been seen under construction, with mounting piles of dead wood or coconut palms being popular materials amongst the nests found so far. The first pair of rails incubating eggs has been found, with three beautiful eggs found in the nest.



contact us on 2523623.

The public response to last month's appeal has been excellent, with a number of calls leading to information which helped the team to successfully target birds. We would like to sincerely thank everybody who has called with information and been so supportive of this project. The public support continues to overwhelm us with substantial assistance, generosity and hospitality from all over the island. We do still ask everyone to keep an eye out and report any regular visits of ring-necked parakeets to gardens or agricultural areas. Please see last month's newsletter for a more detailed article and update of the project.

Once again, please do not approach or try to capture these birds. The remaining birds are becoming very wary and efforts to help can backfire so we need to assess the situation before taking action. We continue to appreciate all information received and ask that you contact SIF with any information on this species on 2523623 (or the Greenline on 2722111).

## Cinnamon and strawberry guava control started in the Vallée de Mai



Ring-barked Cinnamon tree in the Vallée de Mai © SIF

The invasive species team on Praslin have made great progress on the control of introduced trees in the Vallée de Mai over the past couple of months and have now starting controlling the highly invasive cinnamon and strawberry guava.

The first stage of the management plan for the control of the introduced trees has now been completed. The team have ring-barked almost all of the adult santol (*Sandoricum koetjape*), lagati (*Adenantha pavonina*), jackfruit (*Artocarpus heterophyllus*), bwa zonn (*Alstonia macrophylla*), albizia (*Falcataria moluccana*) and kalis dipap (*Tabebuia pallida*) in the Vallée de Mai. This is an impressive total of 1,415 trees. The few remaining adults are too close to paths or the road to ring-bark and will be felled or lopped in controlled conditions to prevent branches falling in these areas.

The team is now undertaking the next challenging chapter of the programme. In September, they started controlling cinnamon (*Cinnamomum verum*) and strawberry guava (*Psidium cattleianum*). Cinnamon, or Kannel, was originally introduced to Seychelles in 1772 for the spice trade, and is now widespread in the inner islands and considered to be the most prolific invasive species in the granitic Seychelles. It is used as a basic ingredient in traditional Kreole cuisine for its aromatic leaves and bark. On Praslin, its distribution includes the Vallée de Mai and the surrounding Praslin National Park, where it is by far the most abundant introduced species. Cinnamon poses a threat to endemic plant species by creating dense canopies that shade out other plants. Strawberry Guava has undergone explosive population growth on tropical islands, including Hawaii and neighboring Mauritius, and may be a more problematic invader than cinnamon once it is well established.



Strawberry guava © Bobby Hattaway

The team is ring-barking all adults of these two species within the Vallée de Mai, and alongside this is removing saplings (by uprooting or ring-barking) of the previously controlled introduced species. Responses of different species to treatment are also being continuously monitored by the team. Every two months, ring-barked trees are checked for defense mechanisms and for germination of seedlings on the ground surrounding the managed

let alone stop. SIF has a diligent security team working on the ground but even their efforts are not enough to deter these poachers. Regular education and outreach activities are also conducted on Praslin to educate the local community on the importance of this species and to raise awareness of the threat that poaching poses to its future existence.

## Festival Kreol celebrated at the Vallée de Mai



Traditional dances were performed by the Vallée de Mai staff for Creole festival © SIF

To celebrate the 29<sup>th</sup> national Festival Kreol, SIF organised a week of activities at the Vallée de Mai from 24<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> October.

Throughout the week visitors had the opportunity to try traditional creole dishes and herbal teas that were on sale. There was also an exhibition of historical photos, antique objects and artefacts made from Coco de Mer. The photos showed the development of the Vallée de Mai visitor centre, as well as the entrance gate and paths. The visitors were very impressed with the many changes that have occurred in the Vallée de Mai over the past 30 years. On Tuesday and Friday there were extra activities: throughout the day local musicians played traditional instrumental songs, local snacks and drinks were available at the café, and local artisans exhibited their different art forms to the visitors. Vallée de Mai staff also put on a special performance of traditional dances and songs which added to the Creole spirit of the event. The visitors enjoyed this immensely, with many joining in the dancing!

## Seychelles Black Parrot breeding season approaching



Previous seasons Black Parrot fledgling © P Villard

With the Seychelles Black Parrot nesting season fast approaching preparation work has started for the monitoring programme at the Vallée de Mai. Ranger Terence Payet will lead the team for the second season, bringing a wealth of experience and knowledge to this programme.

Seychelles Black Parrots nest in tree cavities, mainly in dead Coco de Mer trunks. The team has started checking previous nests in the Vallée de Mai to monitor these potential nesting sites. Some parrots have already been seen prospecting nest sites. After a good 2013/2014 season, with 12 parrots fledging, it is hoped that this season will be equally if not more successful.

Recently the team has also been conducting education and awareness activities on Praslin on the Black Parrot. A questionnaire was designed and has been completed by different members of the Praslin community to enhance understanding of local perceptions of the Black Parrot. This should help to identify any knowledge gaps or misconception that need to be addressed within the local community and ultimately to secure the future of the vulnerable Seychelles Black Parrot.

## Bird watching activity





An Aldabra Rail with nesting material © H Richards

The Madagascar Kestrels are also busy breeding, with pairs observed being aggressive around known nesting cavities, copulation, and males bringing geckos and skinks to feed the females. Two kestrel pairs are known to be incubating eggs. One female nesting in a casuarina tree has a large brood patch and is sitting tight on her nest so we don't yet know how many eggs she is incubating, and a second pair nesting in the roof of the Aldabra Scientific Coordinator's house has three eggs.

There is great interest and excitement amongst the staff on Aldabra over this burst of breeding activity. Monitoring of nests to assess breeding success and causes of failure will be continued this season, and the Aldabra staff are all keeping their eyes peeled to find nests to monitor as part of this long-term study.

## Second year of marine monitoring underway



Marine life of Aldabra © Imran Ahmad/www.escape.com.sg

SIF's second marine monitoring season is due to start on Aldabra, as the calmer sea conditions return with the arrival of the northwest monsoon. This second season of the marine monitoring programme on Aldabra builds on the hard work which saw 12 permanent transects marked out at two depths around the atoll in 2013 as part of the UNDP-GoS-GEF Protected Areas project.

In preparation of this season's diving surveys, Aldabra staff have been trained in fish and benthic survey methods to ensure high quality data collection. The training included fish identification, fish size class estimation and benthic photoquadrats. Prior to the fish surveys photo slide shows of the 86 monitored species and species groups, highlighting distinguishing characteristics, were shown to divers to familiarise them with the fish. Practice surveys in the water will also be done, along with an exam to ensure that the fish surveyors are familiar with the species recorded in these surveys.



Staff on Aldabra practicing reviewing their underwater size estimation practice © SIF

Staff also practiced underwater size estimation of fish using PVC tubes cut to different lengths, which were strung to a moored rig. Divers swam past the PVC tubes and estimated their size, which could later be compared to the actual size of the tubes. Exercises like this help divers to improve their underwater size estimations over time.

Photoquadrats are used to monitor the benthic substrate, and consist of a camera mounted on a frame that allows divers to take photos at a set distance from the substrate. As the images are collected at a fixed distance, the surface area of each image is standardised and can subsequently be used to calculate the surface area of different habitat types, such as live hard coral, macro-algae or sand. Divers were shown how to use a photoquadrat on land before having an underwater training session.

The Aldabra staff have shown great enthusiasm, and an eagerness to learn and participate in this programme. SIF has invested in training the staff in diving, and survey methodologies over the last two years to build capacity and enable a long-term marine monitoring programme to continue. Dive equipment has been purchased, and serviced from SIF's GEF funding to support this project, as well as the development of protocols to share with other conservation agencies to further facilitate marine monitoring

get. The Vallée de Mai is on its way to once again becoming a haven for native species.

## Training for Aldabra biosecurity plan



SIF Head Office staff receiving training on how to prevent the introduction of invasive species to Aldabra © D Baccus

The preparations for the implementation of a biosecurity plan for Aldabra moved forward this month with training for SIF Head Office staff on the detection of pests and diseases.

In SIF's August newsletter, we reported that the Aldabra biosecurity plan had been finalized. Since then, SIF have started to put in place procedures to implement the plan. Biosecurity officers have been nominated both on Aldabra and Mahé to ensure the recommended procedures are adhered to. On Mahé, the nominated biosecurity officer, Wilna Accouche, has held several discussions with staff involved in purchasing supplies and those screening home-care parcels on how to minimise the risks of pests being transported to Aldabra.

Quarantine and plant protection officers from the Seychelles Agriculture Agency were invited to train head office staff in screening for pests and diseases from fresh products bound for Aldabra. Staff were shown how to look for signs of insect scars, where to look for hidden insects in leafy material as well as how to prevent pests from reaching Aldabra. The training was very practical, with fruits and vegetables that are frequently sent to the island used as examples. The sessions were also very interactive and staff could ask questions and talk about any concerns they had to the agricultural officers.

This training is the first step in implementing the biosecurity plan and has already created more awareness of the need for good biosecurity practices within SIF. At a later stage, infrastructure will be constructed, including biosecurity rooms where rigorous checks will be put in place. These measures will allow SIF to maintain the ecological values and integrity of Aldabra and prevent the introduction of invasive species or pests to the atoll. Elsewhere in the world, invasive species such as Yellow Crazy Ants have had disastrous effects on native wildlife, something we never want to happen on Aldabra. SIF would like to thank the Seychelles Agriculture Agency for its support towards the implementation of the Aldabra biosecurity plan.



## Marine monitoring training with GVI

Sheril de Commarmond, an Aldabra Ranger, joined the organisation Global Vision International (GVI) recently for four weeks of marine monitoring training to prepare her to assist with Aldabra's marine monitoring programme.

Sheril was based at Cap Ternay on Mahé at the GVI Seychelles research camp. She joined 24 international volunteers who were undertaking the same training to collect coral and reef fish data for the Seychelles National Parks Authority.

The intensive programme included training in diving skills to PADI Advanced Open Water level, and training in fish and coral identification and marine survey methodologies. The experience was invaluable for Sheril and will equip her with the necessary skills and knowledge to assist with the marine monitoring at Aldabra.

Sheril was thrilled at the opportunity to receive this training which is not only beneficial for her personal and professional development but will allow her to fully contribute to SIF's marine research. SIF is very grateful to GVI Seychelles for inviting Sheril to join their training programme. Sheril describes her experience as fulfilling and fun and recommends the training for any other Seychellois who wish to pursue a career in marine research or conservation.

## Creole festival celebrated at SIF Head Office



Some of the children on the bird watching activity © SIF

This month a special bird watching activity was organised for some of Praslin's school children to learn more about the birds on the island. Seychelles has 13 endemic bird species and it was some of these that the group hoped to learn about and observe on their trip.

Members of the Friends of Vallée de Mai club from Vijaya International School joined Education Officer Maria Briocche at the Vallée de Mai for a morning's bird watching session. Equipped with binoculars and activity worksheets, the children went in pairs to Glacis Noire to try and spot as many bird species as possible and also identify different bird's behaviour in the allocated area.

Many different bird species were seen during the session at Glacis Noire and the children were very excited each time a new bird was seen. The group was delighted to see many Seychelles Black Parrots in this area and they also observed Seychelles Swiftlets, Seychelles Bulbuls, Seychelles Sunbirds and Seychelles Blue Pigeons, notching up five of the 13 endemic species, and all but one of the endemics that can be seen on Praslin (the other is the Seychelles Kestrel)!

## Return to site of Aldabra Banded Snail rediscovery



The distinctive Aldabra Banded Snail © C Onezia

Following on from the exciting rediscovery of the Aldabra Banded Snail (*Rhachistia aldabrae*) in August this year, staff on Aldabra have since returned to the site of discovery on Malabar Island to further explore the area.

On this trip we aimed to check the status of the snail before the season changes from the southeast monsoon (dry season) to the northwest monsoon (rainy season). More importantly, with additional time for the visit it was hoped to gain a better understanding of the snail's abundance, distribution and density.

Intensively searching an approximately 1600 m<sup>2</sup> area, the team recorded 21 trees with Aldabra Banded Snails. The team did not have to move far between *Allophylus aldabricus* trees (an endemic woody shrub) to find snails and a total of 31 snails were recorded, compared to the last observation of 11 snails in early September. Three of the snails were at neonatal stage (less than a single whorl in addition to the larval shell), 14 were juveniles (2–7mm) and 14 were sub-adults or adults (7–14mm).



One of the snails found on the return visit © C Onezia

The team also made some interesting observations. For the first time, two snails were seen on tree species other than *Allophylus aldabricus*, one on *Tarennia supra-axillaris* and one on *Terminalia boivinii*, both of which are native to Aldabra. All snails observed on this trip were inactive; however, most of the individuals recorded previously had moved to new locations suggesting that the snails are in estivation – an inactive state resembling deep sleep, in which some animals living in hot climates, such as snails, spend much time. Estivation protects these animals against heat and dryness.

A larger search of the area is planned so there are likely to be more snails to find. The team will return to the area as regularly as they can to monitor the snails.

## Conclusion of Green Turtle tagging project



Green Turtle at Aldabra © R Baxter

In May this year two female green turtles were fitted with satellite transmitters whilst nesting on Picard's Settlement Beach. Unfortunately we are no longer receiving signals from either turtle.

In our June 2014 newsletter we reported that the first tagged turtle, affectionately named 'Alda', departed Aldabra immediately after her final nesting attempt, travelling rapidly west, then north-west to the Tanzanian coastline, where she then moved further north. Following this substantial journey she stopped in the shallow waters west of the Pimba Channel around Fungu Nyama. Alda remained in this area for over two months until we stopped receiving location data from her tag in August. These shallow East African waters are known for their numerous and extensive seagrass beds which provides ideal feeding habitat for green turtles.



SIF Head Office staff with some of the delicious Creole dishes © SIF

SIF Head Office staff joined in the week-long national Festival Kreol celebration with a special Creole lunch at Head Office. Staff members each made a traditional Creole dish to share with other members of the team. There was a delicious array of food including: satini papay, satini mang (papaya and mango chutney), kari koko poul (chicken coconut curry), bred avek pwason sale (spinach with salted fish), ladob banan, salad zourit (octopus salad), gato banan (banana cake), salad zironmon (pumpkin salad), lantir avek sosis sale (lentils with sausage), pwason griye (grilled fish), salad bouden (black pudding salad), salad pwason fume (smoked fish salad), nouga koko (coconut nougat) and juice mang ek bigarad (mango and bigarad juice). There were many happy faces, much laughter and some very full stomachs, an excellent way to celebrate the traditional Seychelles Creole culture!

## SIF on Twitter!



Continuing the development of SIF's communications and social media tools, we have launched our official page on Twitter! We hope that Twitter will allow us to reach and communicate with an even wider audience. As one of the top ten most used social media websites, Twitter offers us a chance to connect and share with a truly international audience.

If you are regular Twitter user then you can find us under @SIF\_Seychelles. For those of you new to this social media page why not sign up now? You can find the link to our page here, [https://twitter.com/SIF\\_Seychelles](https://twitter.com/SIF_Seychelles), and can follow all of our latest updates and news.



Don't forget to join us on our Facebook page that was launched last year! The page has regular news and updates on research and events at both World Heritage Sites and has been well received. We would invite all friends, supporters, partners, colleagues, and anyone else who has an interest in staying up to date with the management and protection of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites in the Seychelles, or in Seychelles' biodiversity and conservation in general to become a fan of our page. For those who have a Facebook account already please use this link [https://www.facebook.com/pages/Seychelles-Islands-Foundation-SIF/1414466072110654?hc\\_location=stream](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Seychelles-Islands-Foundation-SIF/1414466072110654?hc_location=stream) and 'Like' our page. For those that are not on Facebook then perhaps you can receive updates through a friend or family members account, or maybe now is the time to join Facebook for yourself! We look forward to welcoming you onto this page!

The second tagged turtle ('108799') remained in Aldabra waters for almost a further two weeks after her satellite tag was attached, nesting one more time. After this nesting attempt she travelled rapidly towards Africa, reaching the Kenyan coastline east of Kipini, and then travelling along the coast before reaching the shallow waters south of Pate Island. Similarly to Alda she also seemed to have found a good area as she remained here for almost two months, until we again stopped receiving location data from her tag, also in August.



Map showing movement of six of the satellite tagged turtles. Alda is shown by the RED line and 108799 the YELLOW line

In total eight satellite transmitters have been deployed on Green Turtles at Aldabra since 2011 and none of these tags have transmitted data for more than three months. Since the protocol was followed closely for all tags it is assumed that the reason for the short-term data received from all turtles is due to either the tag becoming detached from the turtle or problems with the tags themselves. It is expected that all of the turtles are alive and well, which we will be able to confirm when they return to Aldabra to nest. Aldabra's Green Turtles generally return to lay their eggs every 2–6 years. Staff are therefore keeping an eye out for the return of the female turtles that were tagged in 2011 and 2012 as they could be returning to nest any time now.

Despite their short time transmitting, the tags have still provided valuable insights into the migratory routes of Aldabra's nesting Green Turtles and important information on the foraging areas of this species. To effectively conserve Green Turtles our work confirms the importance of adopting a holistic trans-boundary approach, ensuring that turtle feeding grounds as well as nesting sites are protected. Our work has confirmed that these Green Turtles travel vast distances from a range of countries to lay their eggs on the protected beaches of Aldabra. With short-term data from just six turtles we have confirmed that they use the waters of at least five countries as feeding grounds. It is hoped that this information can be of assistance in collaborative planning to protect the Western Indian Ocean Green Turtle population.

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