

Aldabra Atoll - BIOSECURITY CHALLENGES AND PROGRESS



ALDABRA ATOLL

Aldabra Atoll (154 sqkm), a UNESCO World Heritage Site in the Seychelles, is a biodiversity-rich coral atoll and refuge for a wide range of threatened and endemic species. Apart from a small research station, staffed by 15 people, the island is uninhabited. Since 2011, biosecurity practices have been developed and strengthened for Aldabra in addition to several eradications of established invasive species.



Aldabra Atoll



Aldabra Atoll in the Western Indian Ocean, located 1100 km south-west of Seychelles' main island Mahé

INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES (IAS)

- **Major threat** with devastating impacts
- **Hazardous for islands** with unique species and biodiversity
- **Prevention** costly but **cheaper than** emergency **response/ eradication**
- **Higher success** rate **detecting IAS prior arrival** to the island to prevent IAS incursion/establishment and the need for eradication
- **Aldabra's biodiversity** is particularly **threatened** by all types of IAS arriving with visitors, supplies, staff travelling by planes or boats, and even with marine litter

CHALLENGES

- Supply vessels stopping elsewhere
- Building & maintaining institutional and national capacity
- Cooperation of stakeholders
- Biosecurity is a job never finished
- Aldabra's size makes any eradication very difficult and expensive
- Marine invasive species arriving with ships and marine litter
- Future rat & cat eradication needed
- Developing full biosecurity infrastructure on Mahé & Aldabra
- Securing annual biosecurity budget
- At times, beaching supply vessels on Aldabra are unavoidable



Sending supplies in pest-proof containers to Aldabra after thorough inspection of all items

Invasive ant eradication on islands is estimated at USD 19,000/ha (→ Aldabra 15,500 ha = USD 293m)
 Early detection pays off



Seeds encountered during biosecurity checks prior to departure to Aldabra (above); biosecurity checks for tourists visiting Aldabra (above right); supplies bound for Aldabra being thoroughly checked (right)



THE WAY FORWARD

Biosecurity is a job never done...

- Preventing any new IAS from establishing on Aldabra
- Maintaining institutional capacity with dedicated biosecurity officers
- Solely chartered/owned supply vessels without stopovers at other islands
- Combatting marine litter and its marine IAS
- Strengthening regional cooperations
- Robust surveillance and response system
- Biosecurity monitoring programme
- Quarantine facilities on Mahé
- Rat & cat free Aldabra (est. min costs € 8m)

INVESTMENTS

Biosecurity costs a lot, but eradication costs much more

Investments into management of IAS (2012-2015)	€ 1,000,000
Biosecurity investments 2017-2018	
Equipment	€ 30,000
Capacity building	€ 25,000
Transport	€ 85,000
Total biosecurity investments 2017-2018	€ 140,000
Estimated required annual biosecurity budget	€ 75,000