



RECORD-BREAKING TURTLE NESTING SEASONS ON NORTH ISLAND

2014 and 2015 have been record-breaking years for nesting turtles on North Island. The turtle monitoring programme recorded a total of 216 emergences by Endangered green turtles in 2014. In 2015, some 205 emergences by Critically Endangered hawksbill turtles were recorded.

An 'emergence' is recorded when a female turtle comes ashore to make a nesting attempt. The actual number of turtles involved would be much fewer, as each female lays between three and five clutches of eggs in a season, and may also make unsuccessful emergences where no eggs are laid.

Therefore, the North Island environmental team estimates that these emergence figures translate to approximately 35 green turtles and 30 hawksbills.



Both of these statistics are new records for North Island, where turtle activity has been carefully monitored since 1998. The numbers are remarkable for such a small area and clearly demonstrate the importance of North Island to these species.

The team has also been able to tag increasing numbers of turtles – between 2014 and 2015, some 40 turtles were tagged on the Island. Tagging is a benign action that allows researchers on North Island to identify turtles that return to the beaches, and scientists elsewhere can then also identify turtles they encounter.

Tagging contributes hugely to our understanding of many aspects of turtle ecology, from nesting frequency to long-distance travel in the ocean.

Since the monitoring programme began almost two decades ago, some 141 turtles have been tagged on North Island. Interestingly, only 19 of these have been green turtles, indicating just how difficult it is to see these incredible creatures that emerge onto the beaches at night. Hawksbill turtles, in contrast, tend to emerge during the day.

Re-sightings of tagged turtles over 2014 and 2015 were also high, with a total of 28 individual turtle re-sightings recorded over the two-year period. These included two hawksbill turtles that were tagged back in 2004, one of which has been seen nesting on North Island's beaches every year since she was tagged.

Ongoing turtle monitoring forms an important part of the Noah's Ark programme to rehabilitate the Island and firmly establish it as a natural refuge for endemic Seychellois wildlife.





THE BEAUTIFUL FACES OF NORTH ISLAND

In order to be the world's leading tropical island hideaway, North Island places great emphasis on the training and growth of its staff. Staff members themselves will tell you that they take great pride in the skills they have learnt, and in the fact that at the same time as delivering outstanding service, they are also regularly exposed to world-class training.

North Island has witnessed numerous success stories: staff members who started perhaps in entry level positions and who have worked their way up to much more senior roles.

A great example of this is Marius Malbrook. When he first started working on North Island in 2014, he would have never imagined himself wearing a chef jacket – but then North Island is a place where dreams can come true, and big dreams most of all.

Marius' first role on North was as a steward in the Bistro Kitchen, wearing a different-coloured apron at that time as he worked hard to make the staff canteen utensils shine. His dedication to his work saw him transferred to the main guest kitchen as steward. It only took him a few months to win over the heart of the Executive Chef who decided to give him a chance to prove himself.

At first Marius would assist when other chefs were on leave, often carrying out their duties in addition to his own. Today he is a commis chef in the making under the wings of Executive Chef Jeremy Vermaak who is a champion of on-the-job training. We are confident that Marius will once again prove to be the true 'Islander' he has been since first setting foot on North Island. Who knows, we may one day see his name tag on the Executive Chef's office door. Nothing is impossible on North!

PERSONALISED AND GENEROUS SERVICE WITHOUT LIMITS

The North Island library is probably the oldest building on the island. It was constructed from coral blocks in the 19th century to house the large kiln that was used to dry copra during the Island's plantation days. The dried copra would ultimately be pressed to extract the final product, coconut oil. Having fallen into disrepair, the library was lovingly restored during the Island's construction period.

One of our regular guests has taken to using the library as a dining venue each time he visits, saying, "This is the most beautiful room on the island – these walls have stories to tell." Indeed they do, and there is a subtle irony that a building once involved in the pressing process is now a sanctuary for people who, in their daily lives, are too often pressed for time.

In a classic example of North Island's 'surprise and delight' approach to hosting guests, the team transformed the entire room into a private dining room complete, changing the furniture and décor to create a unique and tailored experience for this guest in his favourite space.

Everyone was so delighted with the transformation that we ultimately decided to keep the new look of the library, so that it can continue to be the custodian of the North Island's history whilst also being a space where all of our guests can enjoy a timeless meal.

Meanwhile, just metres away on East Beach, another turtle emerges from the ocean and makes her way across the sand to write her own new chapter of the story of North Island...

