

Milestone: Island Conservation Society (ICS)

“These islands were like a supermarket to poachers,” says Adrian Skerett

On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Island Conservation Society (ICS), TODAY spoke to the founding chairperson of ICS, Adrian Skerett, who described ICS as the society that has changed conservation in Seychelles, moving on from purely creating reserves and protecting species.

by A. Edmond

Island Conservation Society, whose job is to promote the conservation and restoration of island ecosystems, sustainable development of islands and awareness of conservation issues, celebrates their 20th anniversary today.

Adrian Skerett, founder of ICS, explained that the reason behind the launch of the NGO in 2001 was the lack of conservation activity on the outer islands of Sey-

chelles. According to him, conservation efforts on the granite islands were doing well, however, if someone were to visit the outer islands, they would find beautiful islands that only few people could reach with the exception of poachers, who would take turtles, birds or eggs. He commented, “It was almost like a supermarket for them. There was a desperate need to do something for these islands. That’s how it got started; we approached IDC to get an agreement to act as a conservation advisor for the outer

islands.”

The society, which Mr Skerett founded along with other trustees, started 20 years ago in 2001. The now well-known ICS had humble beginnings with no money, no office, and no staff but only a passion and belief that something needed to be done for conservation.

Today, ICS has changed conservation in Seychelles, Mr Skerett says, and with offices on Farquhar Atoll, Alphonse Atoll and Silhouette Island, to name a few, they hope to expand to islands such as

Cosmoledo, which he described as the most important unprotected island of Seychelles, a mini Aldabra. Mr Skerett explained that at one time conservation only meant creating nature reserves, protecting wildlife and so on, but today, it means much more than that; it’s about saving the planet and the human race. “We see sea levels are rising, some islands or even coral reefs may disappear. Conservation concerns everybody and what we wanted to do was to create an organisation that brings everybody



To mark their 20th anniversary today, ICS is launching a new commemorative postal cover

together so we included businessmen, lawyers and accountants as well as scientists with backgrounds in species such as turtles or birds. We all have a common interest of trying to save the natural asset of Seychelles, the greatest asset of Seychelles,” said Adrian.

The founder expressed they

have barely scratched the surface of conservation as there is a lot more that needs to be done. Nevertheless, given that they came from nothing, he is happy to have reached the stage they are at, 20 years later, and that they have a presence in the world of conservation. *Read more on Pages 15 and 16*