

Island discovery

Tis the season to visit Aride Special Reserve

Now that it is officially certified COVID-Safe, the Aride Island Special Reserve will re-open next Monday, 16 November 2020. Welcoming visitors during the North-West monsoon season from October to April each year, ICS issued on 13 November a statement concerning the opening of the reserve and protocols to follow, which we reproduce below.

Contributed by Island Conservation Society

The Aride Island Special Reserve (Aride) is open to visitors – both resident and nonresident – normally throughout the North-West monsoon season of October to April each year. During the South-East Trade Winds season of May to September, Aride Island Special Reserve is closed to visitors.

To book

Visitors are allowed during weekdays only and while some visits on weekends or public holidays during the season may be possible, they may only be organised by prior arrangement; this must be done at least 48 hours in advance with the ICS Head Office on 4 375 354 or the Aride Island Manager on 2 719 778.

To book, all visitors - non-residents and residents both – must liaise with local boat operators based on Mahé, Praslin or La Digue to make travel arrangements to and from Aride.

A list of boat/vessel operators



Aride Special Reserve is only open to visitors during the North-West Monsoon

based on Praslin is available on the Aride Island Website at www.arideisland.com or from the ICS Head Office. The reserve team will do their best to accommodate your preferred day during the week for your visit, but please note that the Special Reserve may be closed for reasons of weather or interference

with ongoing conservation work.

Setting off

All boat/vessel operators are asked to contact the Island Manager on 2 719 778 before transporting visitors to the island. Once the boat/vessel arrives at Aride Island, ensure it is properly anchored and ready for transfer of visitors no later than 9.30am. If you are likely to be late, please telephone the Island Manager on the mobile number provided and we will endeavour to accommodate your party or advise what you should do. It is difficult to land on Aride in rough seas which may sometimes occur during the open season. It is therefore advisable to telephone the Island Manager before setting off if you are in doubt about the state of the sea. Aride is remote, and sea conditions at your place of departure may not reflect those at Aride.

Anchorage

Vessels should be anchored in the marine park roughly in front of our boat house. At present, we don't have allocated boat moorings. Please take extra care to choose a sandy patch before dropping anchor so our corals are not damaged or harmed in any way. The water depth on the small shelf that surrounds the island is shallow, between 3-10m. Please limit the amount of anchor chain you need to anchor. Fishing from the boat/vessel is strictly prohibited.

Landing

The Aride Island Special Reserve follows a strict policy to protect our biodiversity and to prevent the accidental introduction of alien plant and animal species. Accordingly, no boats are permitted to land on the island and transfers from your boat/vessel to the island will be carried only by the Aride boat operated by our boatmen.

All boats/vessels must present a log or record with documentation of a recent temperature reading of all guests visiting Aride Island to the Aride boatmen and must also ensure that all guests have sanitised or washed their hands and wearing face mask before transferring to the Aride boat. Only then will our boatmen transfer your passengers from the vessel to Aride. Please respect this policy by not attempting to land yourself. Additionally, for reasons of safety and security we discourage anyone to be swimming ashore during the landing process.

Fees

Our standard entrance fees for

non-residents are Seychelles Rupee 650 per adult and Seychelles Rupee 300 per child (4-13 years of age) or its equivalent in other currencies. Children under the age of 4 will enter for free. Preferential rates will be given to all residents on presentation of an ID card or resident permit. All residents should contact the ICS Head Office for more details. Film crews and commercial photographers will pay commercial fees and should contact the ICS Head Office prior to travelling to Aride on telephone number 4 375 354.

Visitors are asked to bring extra money to purchase a memento of your visit from our Visitors Centre as we don't have credit card facilities. All revenue from sales is directed towards conservation efforts and conservation projects on the island.

On Aride

Aride Island is globally recognised as an important and unique nature reserve and we maintain a strict biodiversity protocol, as part of the ongoing process of preventing the accidental introduction of alien plant or animal species.

- Accordingly, as part of the process, we reserve the right to search all bags and other equipment brought onto the island.

- We strictly enforce a no-take marine zone that extends 1km around the whole of Aride Island.

- When on the island, please respect all animal and plant wildlife. The removal of any animal, plant or other biological material from the island is strictly prohibited under Seychelles law.

- Once on Aride, the island staff and volunteers are also your guides, so please listen carefully to their instructions.

- There are barbecuing facilities in the visitors' shelter, but you must bring along your own barbecue utensils and charcoal. Additionally, please ensure you bring sufficient water and other essential medications or supplies you may need during your short stay.

More information will be made available regarding our certified COVID - Safe protocol applicable to all visitors via a preferred email. Please contact the ICS Head Office for a copy or scan this QR code.



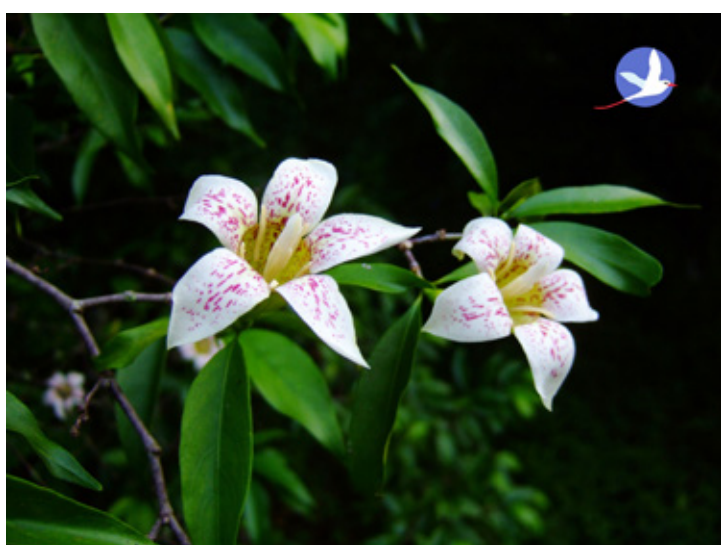
Departure

The island tours may take up to two hours depending on if you choose to do the west hill walk or plateau. Departure time from the island is between 11a.m. to 1.30 p.m. Once again, as part of the ongoing process of preventing the accidental introduction of alien plant and animal species, please ensure that you take everything back including all rubbish and unwanted material with you and leave nothing, except your footsteps in the sand.

Should you have any further questions please contact the Island Manager by telephone on 2 719 778 or ICS Head Office on 4375354.



Wedge-tailed shearwater



Wright's gardenia - rare flora found on Aride



Brown noddies sunbathing



Giant tortoise



The orange hermit crab. Removal of any plant or animal material from the reserve is strictly prohibited