

# Fruit bat PUPS rescued on Silhouette Island...festive season's delight

CONTRIBUTED BY NASREEN KHAN(CONSERVATION OFFICER) AND JAMEE CLARISSÉ, SENIOR RANGER, ISLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY (ICS)



During the December period, two fruit bat pups were found on the ground, 3 weeks apart from each other. The first pup who was only 2 weeks old had fallen from a branch and was found on the ground by the staff of the Labriz Eco Dive Centre, they immediately called the Island Conservation Society (ICS) team who gave it electrolytes and milk and placed it up a nearby tree overnight, hoping that it would be reunited with his mum.

Unfortunately, she did not return for him so he remained in the care of our team for two more days who was guided by Protect Paradise Seychelles. We named him, pti baba Buba. Buba was sent to Mahe and placed in the good hands of the Protect Paradise team. He will remain in their care for 6 months until he is weaned off milk and ready to fend for himself when he will be released back on Silhouette - his island home. We are grateful for the dive centre staff for contacting us when they found him, to Hilton Labriz for facilitating his transportation to Mahe and Protect Paradise for taking him in and rehabilitating him.

The second resident fruit bat pup, was found on the ground at La Passe. She had distinct light fur on her head and was named baby Blondy. The ICS team were quick to collect and examine her for any injuries. A few hours after, her mum began circling the area, where her pup had fallen. We noticed the incredible communication between mum and pup as both kept calling out to each other.

Said Harrybba, ICS conservation officer swiftly climbed a nearby guava tree and placed baby Blondy on a high branch. It didn't take long for mum to reunite with pup. They stayed in the tree for a few minutes so that she could nurse her ravenous pup.

Our team was very pleased that mum and pup reunited. It was a wonderful success story during the festive season!

## Below are some fun fact on the Seychelles fruit bat:

Silhouette Island is home to two bat species; the fruit bat (*Pteropus seychellensis*) and the sheath-tailed bat (*Coleura seychellensis*), one of the world rarest and most endangered mammals in the world is commonly known by locals as 'sousouri bannann'.

Fruit bats are abundant on the island despite their history of being caught and cooked for our traditional creole cuisine. Fruit bats are also known as flying foxes because their heads look similar to those of foxes. Unlike some bat species, they do not echolocate, but rely on sight to navigate. Flying foxes can weight up to 500 g with a wingspan of 1.1m. They are known as fruit bats because they love to feed on fruit, flowers and nectar. As such, they play an important role as seed dispersers and pollinators.

