

# Pilot whale skeleton on display on Seychelles' Silhouette Island

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The four-foot long female pilot whale, also known as ‘cheetahs of the deep,’ was found on Baie Cipailles in 2014. (Seychelles News Agency)

([Seychelles News Agency](#)) - Seychelles' first-ever display of a pilot whale skeleton has been attracting visitors at the centre for conservation on Silhouette, the third-biggest island.

On show under the patio of the **Island Conservation Society (ICS)** centre, the skeleton can be found in the busy La Passe area and a few minutes' walk from the only jetty on the Island.

“Since setting up the skeleton the number of visitors in the centre has increased to at least 150 per month,” says Francois Baguette, the Silhouette Island conservation officer.

The centre, which opened in 2011, is manned by four people and provides information about the different ongoing conservation projects on Silhouette, a National Park and classified Important Bird Area.

It was in 2014 that the around eight-foot long female pilot whale, also known as ‘cheetahs of the deep,’ was found on Baie Cipailles -- a secluded beach protected by reefs -- located north-west of the luxury Hilton Seychelles Labriz Resort and Spa.

“The carcass was interred for a year, and once it was confirmed that it had decomposed, the bones were treated before going through the perilous task of attaching each with wires,” Baguette told SNA.



These toothed whales are highly social animals living in pods often comprised of 15 to 50 members. (Seychelles News Agency). Photo License: [CC-BY](#)

The pilot whale is the second-largest variety of dolphin after the orca (commonly known as killer whales) and can grow up to 6 metres. It got its name due to a belief that the pod (a group of whales) always follows a single leader. The pilot whale is rarely seen in the Seychelles archipelago in the western Indian Ocean, hence the skeleton provides a rare photo occasion for visitors and residents.

Many visitors have also taken a token of the toothed whale with them, leaving ICS to monitor closely all visitors at the centre which also has on display several baby giant tortoises.

“People are just curious. They see this as a crocodile, and most of them do not even know what it is,” says Baguette adding that they have started to glue the parts together to prevent visitors from taking mementos.

These toothed whales are highly social animals living in pods often comprised of 15 to 50 members.

At the time of the discovery in 2014, the **Island Conservation Society** stated that this mammal is commonly found stranded ‘possibly as a result of geomagnetic anomalies or sonar or seismic noise which can disrupt their navigation.’

However, it added through a press release that when a single whale is found the cause is usually ‘illness or injury’.