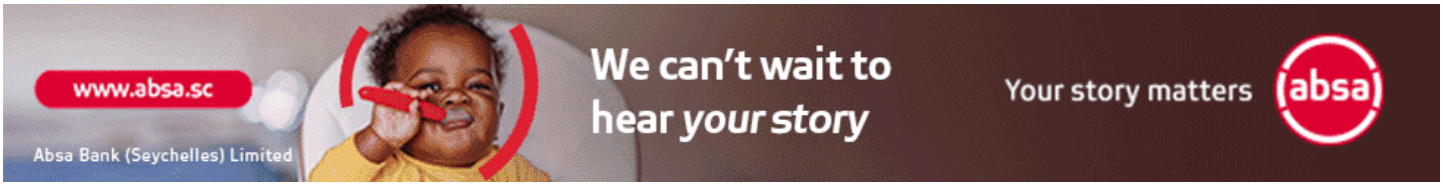

Seychelles' Aride Island Nature Reserve temporarily closed due to severe weather conditions

Victoria, Seychelles | July 3, 2024, Wednesday @ 13:57 in **Environment** » **GENERAL** | By: **Betymie Bonnelame** | Views: 6595

Among the visitors were schoolchildren from La Misère and Anse Royale Primary schools. (Island Conservation Society)

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The Aride Island Nature Reserve is temporarily closed in response to the beginning of the south east monsoon, the **Island Conservation Society** (ICS) announced on Tuesday.

ICCS, which manages the reserve, said the closure has been effective since Monday as a precautionary measure to ensure the safety of visitors, staff, and local wildlife.

The southeast monsoon which begins in May and ends in October reaches its peak in July bringing adverse weather, which includes strong winds and rough seas.

ICS said this poses significant risks as all boats coming to Aride must disembark directly on the beach.

"At this time of the year, we are already observing that the beach is eroding, and therefore all operations on the island will be greatly affected," said Greg Berke, director for conservation and science.

The closure will remain in place until the end of September, though the opening month may change based on weather developments.

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ICS said this poses significant risks as all boats coming to Aride must disembark directly on the beach. (**Island Conservation Society**) Photo License: All Rights Reserved

"In recent years, the island has remained closed longer than expected. We understand the inconvenience this may cause, but the safety of our visitors and staff is our top priority," Berke added.

While the island is closed to visitors, some staff will remain behind to conduct conservation projects and maintain the island, and Anthony Bentley, manager of Aride Island Reserve, said, "As a special nature reserve, our role is not only to show people the wildlife but to protect it."

The team will now be fully involved in conservation projects and the upkeep of the island. Considered a seabird haven among the Inner Islands of Seychelles, Aride is also prone to poaching incidents.

"Despite the rough sea and windy conditions, poachers still find a way to come to Aride. However, in recent years, we have noticed a decrease in boats coming close to the Reserve to fish or poach wildlife," noted Bentley, adding that the team on Aride remains vigilant.

Aride Island Nature Reserve is located 10 km north of Praslin, the second most populated island of Seychelles. The island is entirely funded by ICS, a not-for-profit organisation based in Seychelles with conservation centres on five other islands in the archipelago.

Since late November 2023, 2,000 visitors have landed on Aride Island and most came on private vessels or booked via agencies in Seychelles, an archipelago in the western Indian Ocean.

Among the visitors were schoolchildren from La Misère and Anse Royale Primary schools. The island also welcomes volunteers from various international educational institutes for research purposes or work experiences, including students from the Seychelles Maritime Academy.

Visitors and residents are encouraged to stay informed by following updates from the ICS on its website www.islandconservationsociety.com and social media channels.

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