



## Nature

# Two newly-hatched giant tortoises beat the odds

Two giant tortoises which hatched on Silhouette's isolated Grande Barbe coastal region in December last year, are the first babies seen on the island since 2014. The Hilton Labriz Seychelles and the Island Conservation Society (ICS) have joined forces to ensure the continued survival of these hatchlings.

by S. Marivel



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The two four month old babies, named Samali and Ludivine by the island's local children, were initially spotted by inhabitants of the village.

Whilst the adult female population are known to lay between

25-50 eggs each year, only 1% of hatchlings survive, making conservation vital for this threatened species.

The two newborns have been relocated to the nursery at La Passe village where they are being cared

for by ICS specialists. Once mature enough to survive in the wild, at around five years old, they will be released back to Grande Barbe with the rest of the thriving tortoise community.

"Hilton Seychelles Labriz Re-

sort & Spa are fully in support of the amazing work that ICS and the local community continue to achieve on Silhouette Island. We pledge to support these efforts to ensure Silhouette remains a haven for these rare indigenous flora and fauna, and look forward to seeing them thrive," states Andre Borg, General Manager of the resort.

A population of eight adult tortoises freely roam coastal forests, marshes and can even be spotted in the small settlement in Grande Barbe.

Up until 2010, tortoises were protected as part of a conservation project on Silhouette led by the Nature Protection Trust of Seychelles (NPTS), ultimately leading to the birth of over 150 of these rare animals. The hugely successful breeding programme allowed diversification of the giant tortoise and allowed the establishment of similar sanctuaries in other locations throughout Seychelles.

In 2010, the island's remaining adult tortoises were relocated into the wild, where the sheltered sur-

rounding of Grande Barbe have allowed them to thrive.

In hopes of continuing the excellent conservation work already in place, the ICS has proposed the construction of a future centre and nursery for the conservation of these majestic creatures, to begin 2018.

The natural environment of

Hilton Seychelles Labriz Resort & Spa is rich in nature and provides the ideal environment for the unique wildlife of the Seychelles. As the only resort on the island, and with over 93% of Silhouette designated as National Park, the interior of the island emanates an untouched, natural beauty.



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