

BEACH SEA SAFETY GUIDE



SAFETY TIPS FOR MARITIME LEISURE ACTIVITIES

PRASLIN

SOUSIN
GOUSINE

CURIEUSE



ST. PIERRE
CHAUVÉ SOURIS

SISTERS ISLAND



9999 ISLAND

LA DIGUE



MAHE

STE. ANNE
MOYENNE
ROUND
LONG ISLAND
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EDEN ISLAND

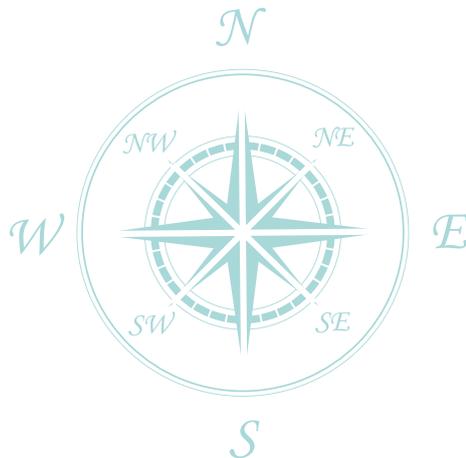


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Dear Readers



Many events have taken place since the first edition of this guide. This revised edition provides you with new and updated information so that you will continue to enjoy all maritime leisure activities and explore our vast marine ecosystem. You are among the most privileged to be able to live this extraordinary experience which we hope will bring lasting memories that you will cherish for many years to come.

As previously mentioned in the first edition, this guide provides you with useful tips so that you are able to take the appropriate decisions when indulging in your favourite sea activity without putting yourselves in any danger which could have been otherwise avoided by simply taking reasonable personal safety precautions. We hope that you will remain safe whilst relaxing on our white sandy beaches or exploring our turquoise and deep blue sea.

*Mrs Anne Lafortune,
Principal Secretary
Tourism Department*

1. INTRODUCTION

The Seychelles islands are well known in the Indian Ocean for its natural beauty with an abundance of terrestrial flora, fauna and a rich marine biodiversity. It is a unique opportunity for all adventurers to be part of this memorable experience.

Tourism maritime related businesses are important elements of the blue economy and are playing an important role to promote the sustainable use of our ocean resources. The sea that surrounds our islands is also part of our natural heritage which we proudly share with all visitors. Nonetheless, the government of Seychelles attaches great importance to maritime safety as we feel it is the first and foremost factor to be taken into consideration to fully experience and protect this exceptionally rich marine life.

2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Tourism Department in the Ministry of Tourism, Civil Aviation, Ports and Marine would like to take this opportunity to thank all those professionals from both the public and private sectors for their kind contributions and for providing us with useful information to complete the revision of the second edition of the Beach and Sea Safety Guide. Your expertise, assistance and continuous support are well appreciated.

3. BEACH AND SEA SAFETY

Useful Tips

A. Beach Safety

The islands of Seychelles are reputed for their spectacular beaches which are amongst the most popular natural tourism attractions of the islands. The islands' beaches are highly frequented by both residents and visitors. Normally visitors either come to relax and lie on the beach for a good sun tan whereas local residents might come for picnics and beach sport activities



i. Sunburn

You can protect your eyes and skin by spending time in the shade when the sun is at its strongest, covering up with clothes, sunglasses and a hat, and applying sunscreen with (Sun Protection Factor) SPF 15 or greater, to exposed skin.

ii. Heat stroke and dehydration

Watch out for heat stroke (exposure to the sun). Wear light clothing, stay out of the sun when it is at its hottest, drink plenty of fluids and avoid alcoholic beverages, which can have a dehydrating effect on the body.

iii. Biting Midges (commonly known as sand flies)

The bites of the midges can be uncomfortable with the irritation leading to scratching and sometimes infected sores. Personal insect repellent applied to the skin and clothing can provide protection from bites.

B. Sea Safety

i. Swimming

Swimming is among the most commonly practised leisure water activity on the islands and the majority of Seychellois and tourists are sure to take a refreshing dip in the ocean. As pleasurable as swimming is, it is advisable to exercise caution and pay attention to currents, depressions in the sea floor and the size of the waves as they can, on occasion, be boisterous and be accompanied by strong rip currents. So be on the alert and stay safe whilst swimming at any beach on the islands. Please bear in mind that lifeguards are stationed at following beaches only: - Beau-Vallon Beach, on Mahé Island, Anse Lazio Beach and Cote d'Or on Praslin Island. There are NO lifeguards present at any other beaches.

There are also safety warning signs at the following beaches on Mahé, Praslin and La Digue as follows:-



Mahé Island

1. Anse Forbans
2. Anse Takamaka
3. Roche Copra- Baie Lazare
4. Grand Police
5. Anse Intendance
6. Carana Beach
7. Grand Anse,

Praslin Island

1. Anse Lazio
2. Anse Georgette
3. Boat house at Lemuria Resort, Anse Kerlans

La Digue Island

1. Anse Cocos
2. Grand Anse
3. Petite Anse
4. Anse Gaulette.

If you are at a beach where there is no swimming warning sign or designated swimming area and you are not sure if the beach is safe to swim, please call the Seychelles Life Guard Services on **tel: 2529976** for advice and query as to whether that particular beach where you are located is safe for swimming.

Additional warning signs are gradually being installed at some other beaches so please do watch out for them and do ask the lifeguards if these signs are available at the beach where you intend to go or contact the Maritime Safety Administration on **tel: 4224866**

Useful Tips

Learn how to swim. The best thing anyone can do to stay safe in and around the water is to learn to swim. This includes anyone participating in any water sport. The Seychelles National Sports Council (**NSC**) offers swimming courses for people of any age and swimming ability. Please contact them on **tel: 4671200**. A fee is charged for the swimming courses.

- Always take the precaution of informing someone of your whereabouts especially in which areas or on which beaches you intend to go for a swim. Stick to these areas that you have indicated to the person in question.

- Do not leave your personal belongings unattended.

- Please ensure that you swim within the demarcated zone indicated for swimming and, at beaches where there are lifeguards, please stay within the sight of the lifeguards.

- Avoid swimming in sea channels reserved for boats or areas demarcated for boating only.

- Avoid swimming alone. Always be accompanied by someone, especially at isolated beaches.

- Never go swimming when under the influence of alcohol when your judgement and reflexes might be impaired. The most common cause of drowning is alcohol intoxication.

- Wait at least **30 minutes** after your meals before going into the sea.

- Check for presence of warning signs and, at those beaches where there are lifeguards, it is advisable to liaise with them for advice on potential hazards. Their contact number is **tel: 2529976**

- Swim within the designated swimming area

- Be on the safe side. Do not overestimate your swimming abilities.

- If by any chance you get caught in breaking waves, duck under the waves and allow them to pass over you while you manoeuvre yourself into calmer water. Getting repeatedly hit by breaking waves is no fun and will tire you out, increasing the risk of drowning.

- Don't try to swim against a current. Rather swim gradually out of the current, by swimming across it.

ii. Snorkelling

Snorkelling is a popular activity here in Seychelles and it is the simplest way to enjoy the marine life along the islands' coastal reefs. Visitors are free to either rent snorkelling equipment from water sports centres, dive centres or to use their own. Boat charter operators also offer snorkelling activities in various locations around the islands some of which have been indicated below.

Visiting the Marine National Park can give you an amazing opportunity to view our unique underwater ecosystem and diversities of marine life. There are six Marine National Parks which cover an area of 61.77k². The parks were designated from 1973 to 1997. All the six Marine Parks are strict, No Take Zones (IUCN Category II *). The parks are open 7days a week, 24hrs and on Public Holidays, except for Curieuse which opens from 0800am to 0500pm. Curieuse is also famous for its giant land tortoises, sea turtles and Coco-de-mer.

There is an entrance fee for all non- residents visiting all Marine Parks. Please contact the Seychelles National Park Authority (SNPA) on the telephone number 4225114 or visit their website at www.snpa.sc for details regarding the fees.

** Foot Note: IUCN Category II are land or marine protected areas that have core zones where numbers of visitors are controlled. The aim is to provide large-scale conservation opportunities where natural ecological processes can continue in perpetuity, allowing space for continuing evolution. They are often key stepping-stones for designing and developing large-scale biological corridors or other connectivity conservation initiatives required for the species (wide-ranging and/or migratory) that cannot be conserved entirely within a single protected area. They also allow visitors the opportunity to responsibly participate in recreational activities so as to be kept informed about the need for protection and conservation programmes. Therefore please do the right thing and avoid unnecessary disturbance of all species found in the marine parks.*

Fringing reefs are found around most islands of Seychelles and around Mahé these are predominantly in the North West. Some of the spectacular snorkelling sites around Seychelles include;

Mahé and Satellite Islands

Bel Ombre, near Fisherman's Cove Hotel (Mahé Island)
Baie Ternay, National Marine Park (Mahé Island)
Port Launay National Marine Park (Mahé Island)
Cerf Island situated in the Ste Anne National Marine Park

Praslin, La Digue and Satellite Island

Anse Petit Cours, next to Domaine de La Reserve Hotel (Praslin Island)
Round Island
Curieuse and St. Pierre Islands National Marine Park
Ile Cocos National Marine Park
Félicité Island
Anse Sévère (La Digue Island)
Anse Marrons (La Digue Island)

Useful Tips

- If you hire a boat charter operator for an excursion which includes snorkelling please ensure that the boat operator is licensed and the boat has been legally registered. Taking unlicensed/illegal boat charters will put your safety at risk as they are not insured in case of accidents. Your hotel or travel agent representative can assist you with verification or contact the Maritime Safety Administration on **tel:4224866**
- Know local weather conditions. Make sure the sea and weather conditions are safe. Please note that water conducts electricity, it is wise to stop swimming, boating or any activities on the water as soon as you see or hear a storm. Also take note that heavy rains can make certain areas dangerous
- Never snorkel alone.

A woman with long brown hair, wearing blue snorkel goggles and a watch, is underwater. She is surrounded by a school of silver and black striped fish. She is pointing her right hand towards the camera. The water is clear and blue.

Snorkelling in the Marine Park

- Practice in shallow water.
- Check the equipment carefully and know how it functions.
- Ensure that you snorkel within demarcated zones indicated for swimming or snorkelling
- Avoid snorkelling in channels reserved for boats or areas demarcated for boating only.
- Never go snorkelling under the influence of alcohol when your judgement and reflexes might be impaired. The most common cause of drowning is alcohol intoxication.
- Learn how to clear water from the snorkel.
- Learn how to put your mask back on when you tread water.
- Be careful not to swim or be carried by a current too far from shore or the boat.

iii. Surf, Body Boarding and Kite Surfing

Surfing, be it body boarding or kite surfing is an emerging water sport activity in Seychelles, currently being practised by local young Seychellois, expatriates and tourists. Most of the surf breaks are reef breaks, some are up to 150 metres offshore. The locations where the sport is being practised are as follows:-

North East Point, Police Bay AnseTakamaka, Anse Bougainville, Barbarons, Anse aux Pins, Anse Forbans, Anse Gaulette, and Baie Lazare on Mahé Island, Anse Kerlans on Praslin Island, Grand Anse, Petite Anse, Anse Cocos, Anse Patates and Anse Source d'Argent on La Digue and Anse Lascars on Silhouette Island.

Presently, there is one licensed professional surf school at Baie Lazare. It is locally licensed and registered with internationally accredited surf coaches.

Please see ratings below for best surf locations in Seychelles .**SAFETY RATING:** the more stars the more dangerous-

Mahé Island

1. North East Point ★★
2. Police Bay ★★★★★
3. Anse Bougainville ★★★★★
4. Barbarons ★★★★★
5. Anse aux Pins ★★★★★★
6. Anse Forbans ★★★★★
7. Anse Gaulette ★
8. Grand Anse Beach ★★★★★

Praslin Island

1. Anse Kerlans ★

La Digue Island

1. Grand Anse Beach ★★★★★
2. Petit Anse Beach, Anse Coco ★★★★★
2. Anse Patate ★★★★★
3. Anse source d'Argent ★★★★★

Silhouette Island

1. Anse Lascars ★★★★★



Surfing at Grand Anse La Digue

Useful Tips:

- Take surfing lessons from an experienced individual.
- Never surf, body board or kite surf alone, always have someone with you children should always be accompanied and be supervised by their parents or a responsible guardian.
- Before starting to surf always ensure that your equipment is safe and in good condition and that the board has appropriate safety leash.
- If the surf is big and you are not a strong swimmer, don't venture into the sea. This also applies for anyone participating in any water sport.
- Know local weather conditions; it is important to note that in Seychelles weather conditions change quickly. Make sure the water and weather conditions are safe. Please note that water conducts electricity, it is wise to stop surfing as soon as you see or hear a storm. Also take note that heavy rains can make certain areas dangerous.
- Contact the local Meteorological Services for guidance on weather conditions. **tel:-4384070.**
- If you lose your board and get caught where the waves are breaking, duck under the waves and allow them to pass over you.
- Getting repeatedly hit by breaking waves is no fun and will tire you out, increasing the risk of drowning. You only need to dive a couple of feet below the surface. The wave should pass over you very quickly.
- If you are really struggling and can't get back to shore, get out beyond where the waves are breaking as it will be a lot calmer there, as long as you can keep yourself afloat.
- Catch your breath and signal for help.

iv. Watercraft (Jet Skis)

Jet skis are another watercraft which is becoming popular in Seychelles and are common amongst local residents. However visitors can also practise this activity at Beau-Vallon Beach, on Mahé Island. There are water sport centres at Beau-Vallon where you can hire Jet skis.

Important Information

Please do note that Jet skis are to be used in specified demarcated areas or a distance not less than 120 metres from the shore.

Useful Tips:

- Operate your WC (Jet Ski) with courtesy and common sense. Follow the traffic pattern of the waterway. Obey no-wake and speed zones.
- Use extreme caution around swimmers and surfers. Run your WC (Jet Ski) at a slow speed until the craft is away from shore, swimming areas, and docks. Avoid passing close to other boats and jumping wakes.
- Appropriate life jackets (preferably **SOLAS** approved ones) need to be worn by the operator of the WC (Jet Ski) as well as any riders.
- Ride with a friend as you never know when an emergency might occur.
- Alcohol and operating a WC (Jet Ski) doesn't mix. Alcohol impairs your judgment, balance, and coordination. For the same reasons it is dangerous to operate an automobile, people should not operate a WC (Jet Ski) while drinking alcohol.
- Always use the "killcord"
- A 10 to 15 minutes test run training is always advisable
- Ensure that you hire jet skis from licensed water sports centres only. All jet skis should have a registered number so please verify if the one that you have hired is registered.

v. Water Skiing

Another water sport which is also practised in Seychelles is water skiing which is practised mostly at Beau Vallon Beach on Mahé Island only. This sport is also common amongst both visitors and locals. Equipment for water skiing can be rented from the water sports centres in Beau Vallon.

Useful Tips

- Wear appropriate life jacket, preferably SOLAS approved ones.
- Be sure the boat and ski equipment are in good shape.
- Always turn the boat motor completely off when you approach a fallen skier.
- Watch the water ahead of you at all times.
- Have an extra person aboard to watch and assist the skier.
- Run parallel to shore and come in slowly when landing. Sit down if coming in too fast.
- Use proper hand signals to signal boat operator.
- Do not ski at night or in restricted areas.
- Alcohol and skiing doesn't mix. Alcohol impairs your judgment, balance, and coordination. For the same reasons it is dangerous to operate an automobile, people should not ski if you have consumed alcohol.
- Know local weather conditions. Make sure the water and weather conditions are safe because water conducts electricity, it is wise to stop skiing on the water as soon as you see or hear a storm. Also, heavy rains can make certain areas dangerous.

vi. Windsurfing

• Windsurfing is another sea leisure sport activity which is common among both our visitors and residents and most water sport centres in Seychelles have equipment for windsurfing. There is also a local competition organised by the Seychelles' National Sports Council which is the most common windsurfing event in Seychelles, this is the Mahé to Praslin challenge.

Useful Tips

- Always wear an approved life jacket preferably SOLAS approved ones. Wear a wet suit in cold water to prevent hypothermia. You need good physical strength and swimming ability. Take windsurfing lessons from a qualified instructor.
- Know local weather conditions. Make sure the water and weather conditions are safe. Please note that water conducts electricity, it is wise to stop windsurfing, as soon as you see or hear a storm. Also, do take note that heavy rains can make certain areas dangerous.

Scuba Diving

Diving is one of the emerging sea leisure activity around the islands and it is an adventurous way to explore our rich and colourful marine life. Some of the top dive spots in the world are located here in Seychelles.

Below are some useful information on safety precautionary measures to be taken into consideration whilst exploring the treasures of the ocean.

SIGNS OF DECOMPRESSION SICKNESS

Decompression sickness can result in a rash often over chest and shoulders or limb and joint pains, normally involves only pain in the body.

Decompression sickness is serious and can be immediately life-threatening. The main effect is on the nervous system. The symptoms may start as tingling, numbness, respiratory problems, and unconsciousness. Symptoms can spread quickly and if left untreated can lead to paralysis or even death.

Useful Tips:

For **CERTIFIED DIVERS** (any international certification) Only dive with a current licensed operation. Seychelles issue an annual licence that proves each dive operator has provided all requirements for diving and boat safety. **As part of sea safety ensure that the boat is legally registered as a dive boat.**



Scuba Diving around the islands

- A 2 yearly medical examination that states you are fit for SCUBA diving is recommended.
- If your medical condition changes between examinations always get a new doctor's certificate
- It is recommended to have your personal Diving Insurance. Usually DAN (Diver Alert Network) is one company that can be contacted for any accident, medical treatment and evacuation.
- If you are using your own equipment remember to have it serviced once a year.
- When using rental equipment be sure to check it thoroughly before going on the dive.
- Always have a dive buddy allocated to you as well as your supervising Dive master. Never dive alone.
- Always get Dive Site briefings indicating depth, time and current weather and sea conditions.
- Always request for a boat briefing telling you how to safely enter and exit the water with the boat in use for your dive. Emergency equipment location and recall instructions are also given at this time.
- Remember to check your depth gauge, air gauge and bottom time frequently during the dive. Do not forget to share this information with your dive buddy and dive master.
- When surfacing, remember to perform the SAFETY STOP at 5 meters for 3 minutes.
- When performing a dive exit (as is done in most Dive Centre's in Seychelles) remember the following steps:
 - 1st remove the weight belt
 - 2nd remove the dive tank and BCD
 - Lastly remove fins once holding onto the ladder and make your entry into the boat.

For STUDENT DIVERS:

All of the above for certified divers plus:

- Minimum age is 10 years Self-assessment medical forms with no medical problems are required.
- Any medical problem requires a doctor's certificate stating you are fit to SCUBA Dive
- You should be comfortable in deep water and be able to swim 200 metres and float for 10 minutes without panic.

- Make sure your Instructor is annually renewed with the certifying agency (mostly PADI) and therefore allowed to teach diving courses and issue certifications.
- PADI courses require each student to have personal copies of manuals, dive tables and log books. Certification with PADI required a personal photo ((digital or passport)

vii. Yachting and Sailing

Yachting and sailing are two sea leisure activities which are common here in Seychelles and practised by visitors as well as residents. As Seychelles enjoys an extensive economic exclusive zone that spreads across 1.4 million square kilometres of combined ocean, this makes yachting and sailing very attractive as adventurous leisure activities. However, it is important to take safety precautions in order to enjoy these two activities and make your experience a memorable one.

Useful Tips

- Ensure you are a competent to strong swimmer when participating in smaller or large modes of sailing such as yachting /dinghy sailing where there is an increased likely hood of falling into the water.
- Always hire yacht/dingy from a licensed boat charter operator and ensure that the yacht/dingy are legally registered.
- Ensure that you are wearing a buoyancy aid/lifejacket (preferably a SOLAS approved life jacket) that is fitted correctly and the correct size for your weight and designed for the type of sailing you are undertaking.
- Ensure you are wearing or have the correct clothing for the activity you are undertaking (wetsuits/wet weather jacket) and that you have a waterproof watch to keep track of the time.
- Advise family, friends (who you see or communicate with regularly) and or authorities of the area, location and or destination you intend to sail. Should you have a problem this will reduce the area rescue services need to search. Also should plans change, advice the same people of your plans to avoid the rescue services receiving conflicting information.



Yachting and Sailing
around the
Seychelles islands

- Check weather conditions for the duration of your sail before setting off
- Before sailing, visually check all equipment to ensure it is in full working order. Sail around the start location to check if equipment is continuing to work correctly before venturing further at sea.
- Never go sailing alone

Marine Flora and Fauna

Snorkelling and scuba diving in our waters can give you an amazing opportunity to view our unique underwater ecosystems. Coral reefs display a wide range of colourful fish, starfish, eels, rays, anemones, octopi and many other species. Although coral reefs allow you to discover a new world, nonetheless there are precautions to be aware of. Like any other habitat, there are venomous species inhabiting this unique ecosystem. In this chapter we will advise you on how to avoid any danger and enjoy exploring our coral reefs. In the event that you come across any of the species listed below please call the green line number indicated at the back of the guide.

Useful Tips

Poisonous Sea Species

There are some poisonous reef species, all of which are not aggressive. Look but don't touch and you should be fine. However, in the event that you are bitten or stung by one of these marine species below are some useful tips that you may consider.

1. Sea Urchins

Sea urchins are omnivorous animals and therefore eat both plant and animal matter. The sea urchins mainly feed on algae on the coral and rocks, along with decomposing matter such as dead fish, mussels, sponges and barnacles. Sea urchins have five paired rows of tiny tube feet which are found amongst the spines which can penetrate the skin. The spines break easily and are difficult to remove. This can cause swelling and may lead to infection.

Useful Tips

- When swimming stay clear from them and especially when snorkelling around areas where there are reefs. Be aware that sometimes they may be hidden in the corals.
- If injured, soak injured part in hot water to relieve pain, then seek medical attention.

2. Jellyfish

Jellyfish or jellies are soft bodied, free-swimming aquatic animals with a gelatinous umbrella-shaped bell and trailing tentacles. Jellyfish are found in every ocean, from the surface to the deep sea.

Useful Tips

- If someone has been stung by a jellyfish, do not rub the affected area as this will make the pain worse.
- Lightly spray the area with seawater and apply a cold compress if available.
- If you spot them in the water, stay clear of them. Do not touch or pick up any jellyfish washed up onto the shore as they may still sting you.

2. Stonefish

The stonefish looks like a stone or a rock. It has spikes on its back that release a poison if you step on it. When wading in shallow water or at low tide, shuffle one foot in front of the other to disturb the sand. This gives the stonefish time to move away.

Useful Tips

- Do not touch or pick up objects that resemble a stone
- Seek immediate medical attention if stung by a stone fish

Lionfish



4. Sea snakes

All sea snakes have paddle-like tails and many have laterally compressed bodies – they look somewhat like eels. However, unlike fish, they do not have gills and must come to the surface regularly to breathe. Although not very common, snakes have been found in and around Seychelles water, especially on the beach.

Useful Tips

- If sea snakes are spotted, make no attempt to pick them up or touch them as they are venomous.
- Do not kill them.
- Instead warn lifeguards and the police so that they can contact relevant authorities to take care of them. There is also a Green line number indicated at the back of this guide which can be used to alert the relevant authority.

5. Lionfish

Lionfish have distinctive brown or maroon, and white stripes or bands covering the head and body. They have fleshy tentacles above their eyes and below the mouth; fan-like pectoral fins; long, separated dorsal spines; 13 dorsal spines; 10-11 dorsal soft rays; 3 anal spines; and 6-7 anal soft rays. An adult lionfish can grow as large as 18 inches, while juveniles may be as small as 1 inch or less. Lionfish have cycloid scales (fish scales that are oval or elliptical in shape with a smooth edge).

Useful Tips

- A sting from these fish can cause extreme pain, swelling, and in very severe cases, cardiovascular collapse.
- Do not approach lionfish or attempt to touch them. Should they be spotted, avoid the area where the lionfish are, as they can swim up against human, stinging them.
- Do not handle dead lionfish as their sting can still poison a human. If found dead, alert lifeguard or tourism police so that appropriate disposal can be arranged.

- If stung, immerse the wound in very hot (but not scalding) water for about 30 minutes and seek medical attention. Remove any spines in the wound and monitor for vomiting and nausea until medical help arrives.

1. Stingrays

Stingrays are commonly found in the shallow coastal waters of temperate seas. ... When they are inclined to move, most stingrays swim by undulating their bodies like a wave; others flap their sides like wings. The tail may also be used to manoeuvre in the water, but its primary purpose is protection.

Useful Tips

- Be aware that stingrays hide under the sea floor, especially in reef areas. Avoid walking on reefs or sand. When snorkelling, refrain from touching the seafloor or any sea creature.
- If a stingray is spotted, allow it to swim away without disturbance. Do not try to touch it or to swim after it.

2. Crown of Thorn Starfish/large Fish

The **crown-of-thorns starfish**, *Acanthaster planci*, is a **large**, multiple-armed **starfish** that usually preys upon hard, or stony, coral polyps (Scleractinia). **The crown-of-thorns starfish** receives its name from venomous **thorn-like** spines that cover its upper surface, resembling the biblical **crown of thorns**.

Useful Tips

- Do not touch them.
- They cause extreme damage to the coral, please inform diving centres of their location while diving, for safety measures.

A large, spiky, reddish-brown Crown of Thorn Starfish is the central focus of the image. It is attached to a dark, rocky reef structure. The starfish has numerous long, sharp spines radiating from its center. The background shows a blue sky and other parts of the reef with various marine life, including some pinkish organisms.

Crown of Thorn Starfish

ii. Sharks

Sharks and the Marine ecosystem

General Information

- Sharks are a normal component of a healthy ecosystem in which they serve an important role as apex predators, keeping populations of fish and other marine species in check. Their natural presence in the ocean means that they are present in Seychelles waters, including protected areas such as marine parks. As visitors to their world, you should be aware of them and of the possibility of an occasional encounter with them.

- In shallow water, where most swimming and snorkelling take place, is the most likely place where you may come across small sharks which do not pose any threat to humans, rather choosing to swim off and avoid any contact with them.

- It is therefore very important that as a swimmer or bather you do not interfere with them or attempt to bait, feed or attract them in any way as this may place you in harm's way unnecessarily.

- In the unlikely event that large sharks are spotted, especially in large numbers concentrated in a specific area, and where they are showing a lack of fear or signs of aggression, then swimmers, snorkellers and bathers need to give them right of way and should leave the water at once.

Useful tips

Useful tips for Swimmers and Snorkelers

- It is unwise to go swimming or snorkelling alone for a variety of reasons. If you become ill or lost or encounter difficulties with strong currents or other hazards, having someone with you may save your life.

- For a pleasant experience, choose to swim on clear and sunny days when water visibility is good and when swimmers, bathers and marine creatures can all see each other clearly. Always favour designated swimming areas where lifeguards are present but remember they are only human, so remain within their field of vision at all times.

- Show caution when swimming or bathing in lagoons or small bays at low tide when marine creatures, including sharks, may become stuck and, in their distress, display aggressive behaviour.

- Avoid entering the water wearing jewellery as this reflects light and may attract the attention of fish swimming in the area.

- Be aware of the fact that sharks are creatures of habit and often frequent a particular area, especially one where they have had success hunting, so avoid areas where there has been shark activity. River estuaries, which bring food from inland into the ocean, are favourite spots for sharks and should be avoided.

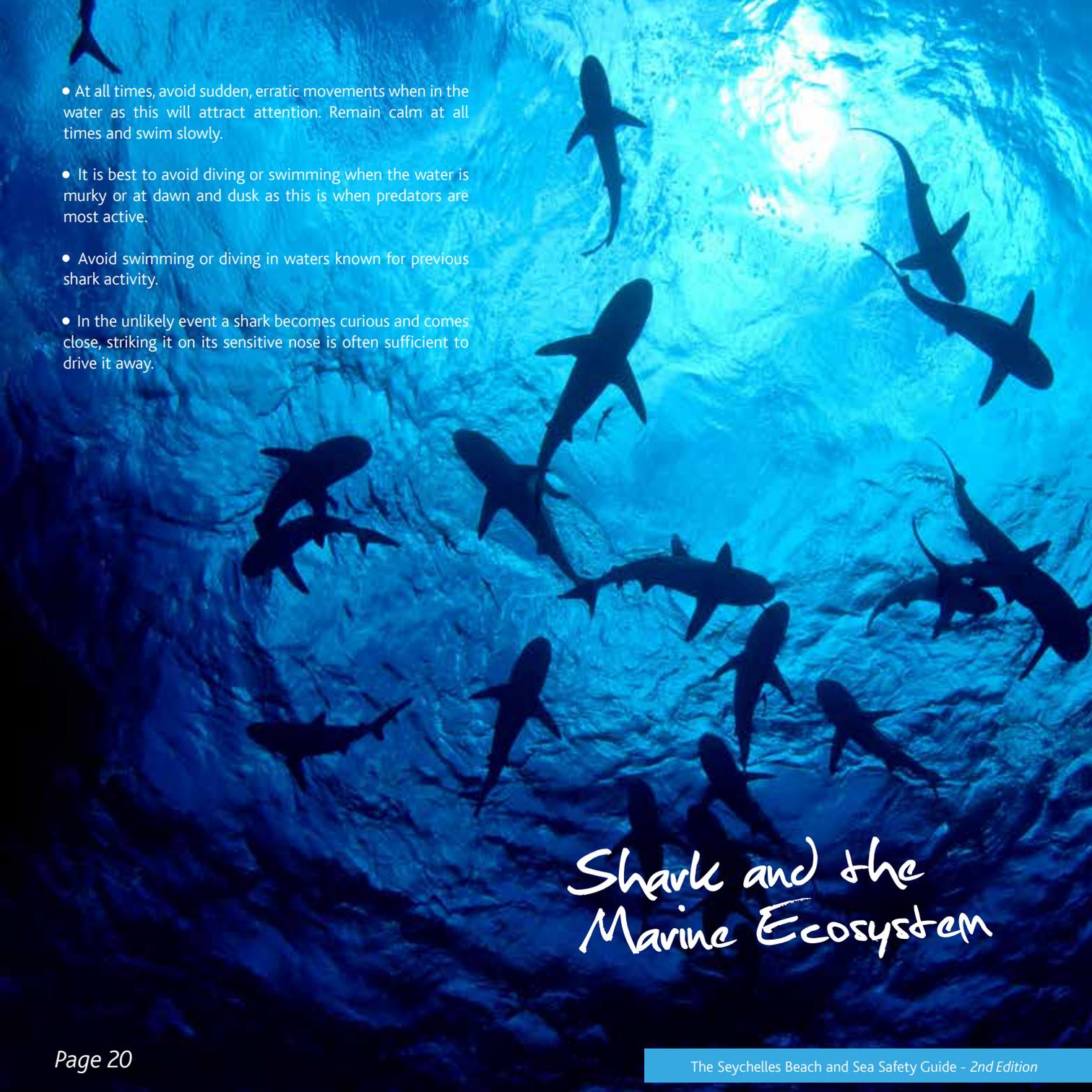
- Sharks have poor eyesight and so if you are reclining on a surfboard with flippers it may confuse you with a turtle, which is its natural prey. Avoid such activity, especially in areas where sharks are known to be active.

Useful tips for Divers

- When diving, wear dull-coloured wetsuits or dive suits to avoid attracting the attention of any sharks in the area.

- If you are diving without an instructor and spot a shark, leave the water calmly and slowly without splashing or showing signs of panic. If a dive instructor is present, then follow his instructions.

- Sharks normally swim slowly and rhythmically when un-aroused. However, if a shark makes sudden, jerky movements, arching its back and swimming rapidly or in a zig-zag manner, then it is best to retreat slowly from open water to a place of safety and leave the water at a convenient moment.

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- At all times, avoid sudden, erratic movements when in the water as this will attract attention. Remain calm at all times and swim slowly.
 - It is best to avoid diving or swimming when the water is murky or at dawn and dusk as this is when predators are most active.
 - Avoid swimming or diving in waters known for previous shark activity.
 - In the unlikely event a shark becomes curious and comes close, striking it on its sensitive nose is often sufficient to drive it away.

Shark and the Marine Ecosystem

D. Important Telephone Numbers

- i. Hotline and Emergency Numbers
!for Emergency or Emergency Related incidents only
 - a. Lifeguard Emergency/Hotline.....4323242
 - b. Coast Guard.....4290900
 - c. Hospital Emergency.....151
 - d. Fire and Rescue Services Agency.....999 .../... 4323242
 - e. Police.....999
 - f. Seychelles Maritime Safety Administration.....2722160/2722956
 - g. Department of Environment Green line.....2722111
 - h. Seychelles National Park Authority.....2818800

- ii. Other Essential Numbers
 - a. Hospital.....4388000
 - b. Police.....4288000
 - c. Coast Guard.....4224411
 - d. Fire and Rescue Services Agency.....4289950
 - e. Seychelles Maritime Safety Administration.....4224866
 - f. Life Guard.....4289900
 - g. Port Authority.....4294700
 - h. Seychelles National Parks Authority.....4225114

- i. Department of Environment.....4670500



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