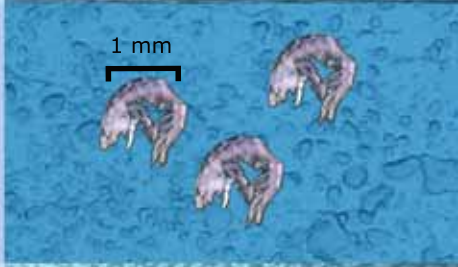
SEYCHELLES INTRODUCED MARINE SPECIES!

In May, 2005 a baseline survey was undertaken to identify native and introduced species around Port Victoria and Sainte Anne Marine National Park. Eleven sites were surveyed and species were sent to international taxonomic experts for identification. Out of 330 species identified three were found to be introduced. The fourth species on this leaflet was already known to be introduced. Although these species have not caused damage yet, their presence indicates the threat of invasive species in the Seychelles is real and must be addressed.

Ericthonius braziliensis is an amphipod that has been recorded in the Hawaii Islands as an aquatic invasive species. It has been found in hull fouling on vessels coming in and out of Hawaii indicating this is the most likely method of introduction and could be the way it has been introduced to the Seychelles. It is vital that we take steps to prevent other more costly species from arriving before it's too late.



Stenothoe valida is a small 'shrimp-like' amphipod that has been recorded as introduced in many parts of the Pacific such as the Hawaii Islands, the Western Coast of America, and Mexico. It is most likely transported through ships' ballast water. Although it does not seem to have caused significant damage in these other locations, it must be monitored to prevent future impacts.

Mycale* cf. *cecilia is a sponge that is very common in shallow water locations. It has been found in Hawaii where it is believed to have been transported via ship bottoms and hull fouling. The Seychelles, like Hawaii, is vulnerable to introduced marine species due to its relative isolation and shipping traffic. Introduced species are also more likely to stay in their new environment if the habitats are degraded, such as reefs affected by bleaching.

Oreochromis mossambicus, a Tilapia from Mozambique, was introduced to the Seychelles in the 1950's. It is a tropical freshwater food fish that has been intentionally introduced for aquaculture purposes worldwide. However, its tolerance to different environmental conditions makes it potentially highly invasive and it exists in the wild everywhere it has been introduced. Even though it is not a threat in the Seychelles yet, it must be monitored.

Protect our Waters from MARINE INVADERS!

Marine species are introduced to new environments mainly through ships ballast water and hull fouling. Up to 7,000 species are transferred around the world via commercial vessels every day.

If these species become established (invasive) they can cause ecological, economical and social problems. They can threaten native species and disrupt habitats, cause health epidemics and cost enormous financial resources to eradicate.

Marine introduced species can become established quickly and without warning, therefore prevention of the arrival and settling of invasive species and monitoring of habitats is essential!

Isolated tropical environments with fewer species and disturbed habitats are more susceptible to invasions. For example, Hawaii has 110 introduced species in its harbours- three of which have now been found in Port Victoria*. How many more will arrive and what damage will they do in the Seychelles?

What can you do?

- Raise awareness about the problem.
- Encourage the monitoring of your local harbours and coral reefs.
- Support measures to prevent the transport and exchange of ballast water between harbours.
- Support measures to reduce hull fouling on recreational and commercial vessels.
- If you see anything suspicious in local waters call Greenline: 722111
- For more information visit: www.iucn.org/themes/marine/invasives/coralreefs/seychelles

*These species were found in surveys undertaken by the IUCN Global Marine Program, the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (New Zealand) and Samaki Consultants (Tanzania) in the Seychelles.

Fondation

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