

By contrast, the second type of habitat is dominated by indigenous and endemic species. The conditions in the mid-altitude rocky zones are very harsh and few exotic species can grow well, whereas the native shrubs are well adapted to such circumstances. Examples are the numerous screw pines (Vacoa or Pandanus), sharp-leaved sedges and indeed the Pitcher Plant (Nepenthes pervillei).

There are more endemic species close to the shelter, growing in between stunted Cinnamon. This is the domain of Bois de Natte (Mimusops sechellarum) and Café Marron Grande Feuille (Paragenipa wrightii) hidden in a scrub of Bois calou (Memecylon eleagni).

The surrounding cliffs are perfect nesting sites for the graceful White Tropic Bird, which can easily be seen from the wooden shelter, flying or gliding on the rising air currents. With luck, you may observe a Kestrel in search of geckos or lizards sunning themselves on the rocks.

The main feature of this trail is the wonderful panorama over Victoria and its surroundings, seen from a point which can be reached with little difficulty in less than half an hour.



Kestrel (Falco araea)



Bois Calou



Seychelles
National Parks
Authority

GLACIS TROIS FRÈRES NATURE TRAIL

CHARACTERISTICS OF TRAIL.

Length: 200m

Time to go and come back: 1 hour

Main interest: Panoramic and pitcher
plant

Physical difficulty: low



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The trail gets its name from the three peaks overlooking Victoria. Trois frères (Three brothers) as they are called probably arising from the close proximity of the three peaks. The trail culminates at the foot of the Trois Frères Cross. The Cross is a traditional pilgrimage site for the catholic community on Good Friday .

HOW TO GET THERE

The trail is accessible by bus by taking the SPTC bus No. 35 and 14. Or more energetic individuals may follow the Sans Souci road which goes from Victoria to Port Glaud. In both cases you will have to stop at the Sans Souci Forestry Station.

From here take the secondary road which goes up the hill. After passing through the housing estate you reach a cul de sac which acts as a car park. If coming by car you may wish to park there.

THE ROUTE

The first part of the trail passes through a forest, composed mainly of exotic species. In certain areas the forest is replaced by bushes of *Cocoplum*

(*Chrysobalanus icaco*) introduced at the beginning of the 20th century to help control erosion. Here the vegetation is clear enough for you to get a first panoramic view over the East coast and the international airport at Pointe Larue.

The second part of the trail continues through forest and a few endemic palms (*Latanier*) and screw pines (*Vacua*) start to appear. The paved section of the path is followed by a series of zigzags with wooden



and the path passes a small waterfall and later crosses two streams. Your destination is now only 200m further up.

The last part of the path traverses a "glacis" or smooth rocky slope, the crossing of which is made easier by the presence of stone steps and a handrail.

As you go up, a short path on the right leads you to the famous carnivorous Pitcher Plant (*Nepenthes pervillei*).

Backtracking to the main path, you continue upwards until you reach a flat area where the path forks. On the left, the path continues as far as the Trois Frères Cross but is not suitable for easy walking.

On the right, the flat path leads to a wooden shelter at the edge of the cliff. From here you can enjoy a panoramic view over Victoria, the East coast and the distant islands. Your return is by the same route.

ECOLOGY OF THE SITE

The "Glacis Trois Frères" path gives you the opportunity to discover two different kinds of natural habitat. The first habitat, in the lower part of the route, is a secondary forest, modified by humans through the introduc-

tion of species which are alien to the original flora of Seychelles. The tall trees are mainly Santol and Calice du pape, as well as indigenous Takamaka. The scrubby areas, where *Cocoplum* dominates, represent another kind of secondary vegetation which is indicative of a past bush fire followed by soil erosion.



Paved section of the path