



COUSINE ISLAND  
SEYCHELLES



# June Newsletter

## 2021

*Where nature thrives and man is a silent observer.*

4° 20 MINS 55.73 SOUTH / 53° 38 MINS 53.24 EAST

## *A Conservation Sanctuary*

# Balance & Harmony

The beginning of this month saw the last hawksbill turtle nest emerge for the 2020 season. The conservation team released 160 hatchlings from this nest and a whopping 20 728 hatchlings in total for the season. This number sounds significant especially for our little island but when we think about how very few survive to adulthood, with estimates ranging from one in 1000 to one in 10000, sadly it is not very many.

This month also saw the mass return of the nesting Brown and Lesser noddies, with nest selection completed by the conservation team for the start of the yearly monitoring. This monitoring is done to estimate the breeding success of these two species on Cousine Island. The conservation team will monitor 150 Lesser noddy and 50 Brown noddy nests until the nest has either failed (there is no longer an egg or chick) or the chick has fledged. Lesser noddies are the most abundant seabird species that breed on Cousine Island. While Brown noddies are far less abundant than lesser noddies, they still represent the third most abundant seabird species breeding on Cousine. Breeding generally occurs during the South-East Monsoon months (May-October), although there are also a small number of 'resident' lesser noddies that remain after the main colony has left and a small number of Brown noddies that breed before or after this period.

## *A Conservation Sanctuary*

# Crab Plover (*Dromas ardeola*)

The Crab plover is an occasional visitor to Cousine Island's shore. This species is related to the waders but is full of contradictions and has quite unique characteristics. For instance, unlike other waders this species nests in burrows in sandy banks, using the ground warmth to help incubate the eggs allowing the parents to be away from the nest for long periods at a time. Interestingly the young chicks are unable to walk, remaining in the nest for several days after hatching. Food is brought to these chicks by both parents with parental care lasting for a long period after they have fledged. Its distinctively heavy bill, specialised for eating crustaceans and molluscs, makes these inconspicuous birds stand out.

