

# Lagon Bleu News

## Fish and Coral Monitoring

We have continued to monitor 7 sites in the lagoon this year and have made, on average 1 trip per week at the start of the year and 2 per week in the last 3 months.

In June, we changed our monitoring system to align with national monitoring protocol and, since doing so, we have identified around 100 different species of fish and have been able to compare dominant families at each site as well as the diversity of species.



## EDUCATION

We have created a comprehensive ecological education programme based on classroom talks and field trips to Blue Bay, designed to educate primary children about how and why we should protect the marine environment. In 2016, we have carried our education programme in 18 schools in the south-east of Mauritius. This programme has already reached 1500 primary school children and is planned to continue into 2017 and beyond.

It is a great pleasure to see the children showing interest and expressing their curiosity about the topic. They answer our questions about corals, octopuses, turtles and especially pollution with enthusiasm and are amazed by what they learn.



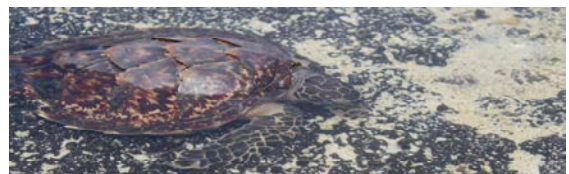
## OCTOPUS PROJECT



We have been an active partner in the National Awareness Campaign for the Temporary Closure of Octopus Fishing, in collaboration with the Ministry of Ocean Economy and Fisheries, GEF Small Grants Program implemented by UNDP, the Indian Ocean Commission, as well as other NGOs, to sensitise local communities, especially fishermen on the importance of the closure for sustainable fisheries in Mauritius.

As a means of sensitizing local fishermen, meetings were held at five villages in our allocated region namely; Grand Sable with, Bambous Virieux, Le Bouchon, Vieux Grand Port and Mahebourg where we explain about the life cycle of octopuses and the importance of the closure period, which lasted from 15<sup>th</sup> August to 15<sup>th</sup> October. Once the closure was over, a prize was awarded to the fisherman who caught the biggest octopus and it was found in our region!

## TURTLE PROJECT



As part of the National Marine Turtle Conservation project, we have collaborated with Albion Fisheries Research Centre to work on a national protocol for turtle sightings and nesting turtles. We also carried out awareness and education programs in primary schools and in the local community to sensitize locals about turtles and the dangers they are currently facing. In addition, within this collaborative project with MMCS and Reef Conservation, a turtle booklet was launched and distributed to Standard V kids of primary schools in the southern region. The turtle booklets consisted of educational facts and games, the best means for children to get acquainted with turtles!

## Volunteer Programme

Our international volunteer programme continues to attract around 30 volunteers each year thanks to our partnerships with online agencies.

These individuals have come from 10 different countries to experience first-hand the ecological issues here in Mauritius and, after having given their time and support to Lagon Bleu, have returned to their home countries to spread the word.



## ANOU DEKOUVER NOU FON MARIN

We celebrated the World Ocean Day through the event "ANOU DEKOUVER NOU FON MARIN" that we organised at Blue Bay on the 28<sup>th</sup> May 2016. The day included a series of activities organized and run by a dedicated team of more than 25 volunteers, which included: guided snorkeling and glass bottom boat trips; Educational games incorporating facts about marine life; a mini coral museum and microscope observation (Algae and planktons) stall which engaged people of all ages; an exhibition of educational boards (corals, biodiversity, mangroves and marine pollution) with live presentations.

We had approximately 200 participants for all the activities, making this first event a huge success. We not only surpassed the number of visitors we were targeting but also succeeded in arousing a great deal of interest around corals and other marine organisms.

This success has given us energy and motivation to organize our second event which will be held in December 2016.



## MAURITIUS MARINE GUIDE PROGRAM



19 participants graduated as Eco-guides in October, as part of the Mauritius Marine Guide Course. This was the culmination of a six month course that was funded by the US Embassy and was conducted in collaboration with FGASA and the Tourism Authority of Mauritius.

The Eco-guide program enables a learner to acquire the knowledge skills and values that will enable them to organize and facilitate creative and innovative guiding experiences within the marine environment.

Our 19 graduates will now be able to transfer this knowledge to tourists who spend their holidays on the island but also to fishermen, tour operators and other stakeholders.

We are extremely proud of our graduates and are now working with them to set up their own eco tours and we are also hoping to set up a Lagon Bleu tour!

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to Lagon Bleu's work this year, here is to an even better 2017!

