

SAYA DE MALHA DAILY

A Newsletter by Dominique and François



N°19, 21st November 2022

Where are we ?

Saint Brandon

16°50 South 59.31° East

Sunny some Clouds, Calme Seas, Wind 11.27 Knots

Air Temperature 24°5, Water Temperature 25°7



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Reef of Saint Brandon

Saint Brandon has three main lagoons up to 7 m deep, separated by reef crest walls. The lagoons have sandy floors either heavily bioturbated by worms, crustaceans, bivalves and gastropods, or covered by blue-green algal mats and seagrasses. Patches of reefs grow to 3 m in diameter in the lagoons, often having dead or rubble tops, around which larger fish aggregate.

Saint Brandon coral reef covers 227 km², of which 74.2% is sandy. The eastern side of the Saint Brandon Bank consists of reef slope extending down from a depth of between 10 and 40 m to the ocean floor. Above the reef slope is a gently sloping low-relief reef terrace dominated by coral rock, sand patches and variable cover of hard corals and encrusting coralline algae, with deep grooves parallel to the reef. Two large passes cut into the lagoon and are regularly occupied by white-tip reef sharks and other larger reef fish.

The Saint Brandon Bank has a less-developed western reef crest standing ca. 1.5 m above the lagoon floor and 4 m above the Saint Brandon Sea seabed. To the west of the Saint Brandon Sea, the seabed slopes into the deep Mascarene Basin.



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The Portrait



Gwennais Fustemberg, project leader, MADCAPS

Gwennais was born near Paris in 1999 but grew up in Brittany. The sea was always part of her life, fishing, surfing and hiking. She completed her master's in marine biology on the genetics of marine birds with the University of Brest in June 2022, which took her to Reunion Island and Azores. Her awareness of plastic pollution came from her work as a volunteer on beach cleaning and waste management in Reunion Island. On the expedition, she leads the MADSCAP project on microplastics distribution and vectors of pathogens in the Indian Ocean. "This expedition for me is about encounters, sharing knowledge across projects and life experiences. As the youngest researcher on board, it gives me confidence". Working and sharing knowledge with the crew was the best part".

What's on ?

The Birds



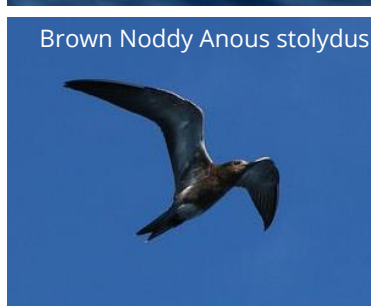
Masked Booby *Sula dactylatra*



Red-footed Booby *Sula sula*



Brown Noddy *Anous stolydus*



White Tern *Gygis alba*



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Editors's comment

This short stay at Saint Brandon would suggest that it is an exceptional but poorly documented site. However, preliminary observations show vulnerability and degradation by factors yet to be investigated. A conservation plan should be considered by the Government of Maurice.