

SAYA DE MALHA DAILY

A Newsletter by Dominique and François



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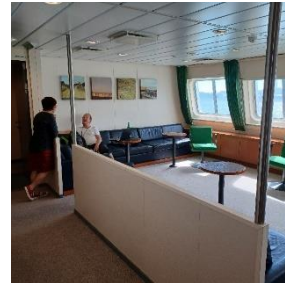
Where are we ?

Open Sea
5.59 South 58.37 East

Overcast with some blue sky
Air Temperature 27°3
Water Temperature 24°6

Aghulas II

S.A Aghulas is a South African owned oceanographic ship. It is 134 m long and 22 m wide and can accommodate up to 80 passengers in addition to a crew of 40. It has all the equipment and laboratories needed by research scientists, as well as an auditorium, a restaurant, and several lounges.



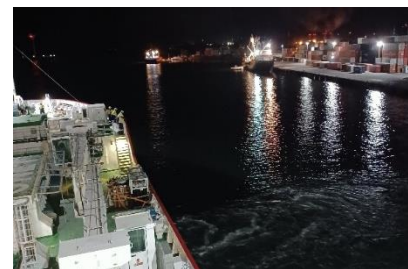
What Happened ?

The Departure

We left Port Victoria last night at 8pm. The second leg of the expedition goes to Mauritius via the Saya de Malha Bank and the St Brandon islands, where most of the research will be undertaken. The 73 passengers and 39 South African crew members boarded on Sunday night.

The Kick-off Meeting

Today was mainly about travelling to the Saya De Malha, which will take 2 days. The teams are getting organised. At 2pm, an information brief was held in the auditorium for all passengers. Gilles, the leader of the expedition presented an overview of Monaco Expeditions and the objectives of the Indian Ocean expedition, Didier and Océane presented the communication strategy and Francis, the scientific director presented the research programme. Given the remoteness and immersed nature of the Saya de Malha bank, most is made of this rare opportunity. Teams will be working day and night to collect samples and images of the seafloor and the water column, from the physio-chemical profile of the water, water depth and currents to the fauna and flora including the observation of cetaceans and birds.





The Portrait



Bernard Rota, Founder of Globice Réunion,

Bernard Rota was born in 1954 in Savoie, France. He has lived in La Reunion for 27 years. In 2001 he set up Globice Reunion, an NGO dedicated to the knowledge and conservation of the Indian Ocean cetaceans. During the expedition, Bernard will share his time between the upper deck with binoculars and camera and on a zodiac dropping his hydrophone in the water for evidence of cetaceans.

He hopes to advance the knowledge of those animals and specifically the Byrde whale observed before between the Ritchie Bank and Saya de Malha.

In the corridors

From the Mauritius team

Prerna Roy and Preeti Oogarah, Both Associate Research Scientists with Mauritius Oceanography Institute, are on board to conduct chemical water profiling and sampling of organisms with medicinal properties. "It is our first participation as research scientists in such a large expedition. it is important for us to understand what is in our waters to better manage the area and for future research. It is a great opportunity for more collaboration and to develop a regional network of young scientists"

Dass Bissessur, from Mauritius Prime Minister's office, is on board as a scientist coordinating the work package 1 and as the representative of Mauritius focal point for the Mauritius Seychelles Joint Management Area. He has participated in previous expeditions on Saya de Malha, in 2018 and 2019.

"As an expert in seabed mapping, it is disappointed that the vessel does not have multibeam echosounder, but we will use our existing data to develop maps for Francis. More Broadly the Prime Minister's office needs to ensure the expedition is conducted according to the JMA regulations and laws".

Ranjeet Bhagooli, professor at the Faculty of Sciences of Mauritius University. "It is of paramount importance that the results of this expedition be well published in open access, for example putting together the result in the *Western Indian Ocean Journal of Marine Science* would be great.

