

# ff Fishing

## Where Time Stands Still

Never has there been a better time to enjoy the thrill and challenge of a lifetime, fishing in Seychelles' pristine waters where, in the words of a local author ... 'We still don't have an inventory of exactly what lurks in the secret depths of these legendary isle,' writes Glynn BurrIDGE.



As a brand, Seychelles resonates powerfully as a unique collection of islands blessed with surreal, natural beauty, a near-perfect climate and a tiny population (88,000) enjoying the quintessential island lifestyle in almost perfect harmony. And all this because some 150 million years ago the planet's crust fractured and what we know today as the continents were formed, leaving a handful of island splinters to drift across a universe of azure water to finally occupy a secluded corner of the western Indian Ocean, some 1,852 kilometres (1,000 miles) off the east coast of Africa.

On a planet sorely damaged by Man's depredations, Seychelles' 115 islands (41 granitic and 74 coral) have remained wonderfully untouched as, even now, they stir from their slumber of ages to provide us with a glimpse of Earth in its first innocence. Seychelles is fast earning a reputation for providing a range of extraordinary, authentic experiences to the discerning traveller in search of something special: eco-tourism, diving and snorkelling, sailing, golf, spa and wellness, honeymoons ... and fishing!

Unfathomed, azure depths of open ocean; dappled sapphire and turquoise lagoons where few have still ventured; shimmering sand flats just made for the fly-fisherman; remote outer islands where the only mast in sight is yours and where the only footprints around are your own...this is the stuff that fishing in Seychelles is made of. When you combine that with one million square miles of exclusive economic zone and the fact that Seychelles currently receives a mere 200,000 visitors, you start to get an idea of the extraordinary possibilities for year-round angling in this secret corner of the planet.

Increasingly, Seychelles is becoming a Mecca for sports fishermen the world over in search of a last frontier where one of the finest mixed-bag catches can be found: wahoo, sailfish, barracuda, trevally, dorado, tuna, swordfish, shortbill spearfish, amberjack, rainbow runner and such sought-after trophies as the mighty blue, black and striped marlin, all of which combine to propose the game fishing experience of a lifetime.



With a legacy of artisanal fishing stretching back over more than 200 years, the fishing scene in Seychelles has evolved to accommodate world-class trolling, jigging, popping, bottom-fishing, fly-fishing and blue-water fly-fishing and the chance to challenge the record books in virgin waters which have already yielded world records for bonefish, bonito, dogtooth tuna, wahoo, rainbow runner, giant guitarfish, moustache grouper and trevally, barracuda and wrasse.

The Inner Islands of Mahé, Praslin and La Digue and their satellites, some with peaks rising nearly 1,000 metres high, offer a wide variety of fishing grounds easily reached by Seychelles' fleet of modern fishing craft whose crews each have their choice spots where to introduce both fishing aficionado and novice to the thrills of deep-sea and bottom-fishing. Interestingly, there are also two low-lying coral islands, namely Denis Island and Bird Island within the Inner Islands.

The Inner Islands are convenient for both full and half-day fishing excursions and offer exciting fishing opportunities for spectacular - and tasty - catches. Fishing grounds are some 44 kilometres (24 miles) from the main Island of Mahé with a sharp drop off from 50 metres to 2,000 metres. Inner Island trips can take fishermen as far north as Bird and Denis Islands (100 kilometres), where the ocean floor also plunges to great depths.

Similarly, the islands of Frégate to the east, North Island and Mahé's lofty neighbour, Silhouette, all possess fertile fishing grounds and offer the opportunity to catch a great range of fish.

Seychelles' dazzling chain of Outer Islands and their seldom-visited fishing grounds present unique opportunities for the intrepid fisherman to battle with the heavyweights. In particular, the resorts of Desroches Island in the Amirantes group and Alphonse Island offer convenient bases for forays



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The traditional fishing method of bottom-fishing produces an equally impressive catch, rewarding you with some of the finest tasting fish on the planet: groupers weighing in excess of 30 kilogrammes as well as massive trevally, kingfish, greater barracuda, snapper, coral tout, sea bass, emperor and bream.

More recently, Seychelles has also become renowned for its salt-water fly-fishing and casting your lines on the magnificent, little-visited flats of the Outer Islands will provide prizes of feisty silver bonefish, giant trevally, permit, triggerfish, milkfish and sailfish. Blue-water fly-fishing is also gaining popularity for the ultimate challenge of landing large pelagic fish on light tackle.



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into areas legendary for their great fishing where big-game, fly and bottom fishermen alike can test their skills to the limit.

Further afield, sparsely populated islands such as Providence, Farquhar and Cosmoledo, accessible only on long-range fishing expeditions, present the ultimate challenge to the fisherman in search of truly exceptional experiences.

Arguably, what has made the greatest difference in raising the profile and success of fishing in Seychelles is the fleet of new, state-of-the-art fishing boats available from 9 metres (30 feet) upwards, most of which cruise in excess of 25 knots with a top speed of 35 knots and are equipped with the most modern fishing tackle and accessories. Today, these are in the hands of a new, adventurous breed of skipper and mate adept at employing the very latest technologies and joining forces with the older generation of experienced fishermen, they are proving to be a formidable combination. The fleet is further complemented by a number of excellent marinas (Eden Island, the Wharf and Angel Fish) that have sprung up over recent years to provide a full suite of first-rate facilities to leisure boaters.

Several new fishing tackle outlets now offer the latest equipment for trolling, jigging, bottom-fishing and popping and although each charter operator will cater for the needs of their individual fishing charter, anglers



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are still advised to bring along an adequate supply of favourite tackle and to check equipment availability with their fishing trip operator prior to booking.

Seychelles is proud of its long-standing, enlightened conservation policies, adopted to ensure protection of fish stocks through best practice in the fishing arena and the practice of 'tag and release' - when a fish is caught and then released alive back into the water - has been widely adopted in order to safeguard local fish stocks.

Seychelles' Sports Fishing Club, started by local sports fishing enthusiasts, has now grown to over 400 members, which is becoming a natural hub of the local Seychelles fishing scene. The islands even have their very own *SeaLife* magazine, launched in late 2011 and published bi-annually which gives great coverage of fishing in Seychelles.

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Face book page: [Seychelles Sports Fishing Club, http://www.facebook.com/groups/seychellesfishing/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/seychellesfishing/)

Further information is available on the Seychelles Tourism Board website: <http://www.seychelles.travel/en/home/fishing.php>

