



ISSUE 2 | JANUARY – DECEMBER 2019

TOP NEWS



ABOUT TOP:

The Ocean Project Seychelles is a not-for-profit, non-governmental organisation that was set up in 2016 with a mission to protect our ocean through education, action and research.

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60+ clean-ups including the Seychelles Outer Islands Clean-Up and our first dive clean-up!

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Climate Action Week. Seychelles led by TOP joined more than 7 million people worldwide who took to the streets to demand climate action.

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2020 TOPCAST: What's on the TOPcast for 2020 and how you can get involved.

MARINE PLASTIC POLLUTION

CLEAN-UPS

TOP hosts monthly educational coastal clean-ups across Seychelles with community groups, schools, local businesses and other NGOs to give participants a first-hand understanding of marine plastic pollution and engage participants to care more about the environment.

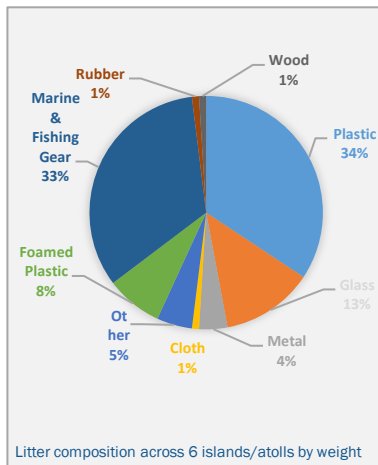
In 2019, TOP held 60+ clean-ups on 14+ islands, engaging 400+ people & intercepting 12+ tons of marine litter!

A CLOSER LOOK:

Seychelles Outer Islands Clean-Up (March)



From the 18th to the 31st March, 40 participants consisting 20 TOP volunteers, embarked on a journey of a lifetime to one of eight outer islands of Seychelles, for the first large-scale clean-up of these islands organised by the Islands Development Company (IDC) in partnership with TOP. TOP was invited by IDC to come on board as a partner to lead marine litter assessments on the outer islands in a bid to learn as much as



possible about the quantity, composition and potential origin of litter stranded on the shorelines of Alphonse, Astove, Coetivy, Desroches, Poivre, Platte, Remire and Farquhar. In under 7 days of cleaning up, the participants removed over 10 tons of marine litter.

The bittersweet experience culminated in an awards ceremony at the Savoy Resort organised by IDC to thank partners and volunteers for the hard work, time and energy invested in the Seychelles Outer Islands Clean-Up. As a result of the OICU, TOP and IDC have cemented a partnership over the next 3 years to enable TOP to conduct marine litter surveys on Farquhar, as part of TOP's nation-wide marine litter monitoring programme (see page 4) to monitor the accumulation rate of marine litter and inform better management of the issue.



Thank you to our Project Team, Zara, Karine, Natasha & Victoria for making this a reality and to our volunteers who worked tirelessly to clean and collect data! Read more on [Seychelles News Agency](#). Check out videos of the clean-ups by two of our volunteers, [Sasha Marivel](#) and [Emilie Chetty!](#)



A CLOSER LOOK:

First Dive Clean-Up (September)

TOP held its first dive clean-up on World Clean-Up Day in partnership with Underwater Centre, Beau Vallon. In 50 minutes, 32 divers collected 108 items of marine litter, weighing approximately 84kg, over an area of 1000m² in the Beau Vallon Bay. No surprises, plastic was the main culprit. Keep an eye out for more dive clean-ups in the coming year! Thank you to our Project Managers, Archil and Charlene, for our first dive clean-up!



A CLOSER LOOK:

Mangrove Planting and Clean-Up (September)

As part of Climate Action Week and to commemorate World Clean Up Day and Clean Up the World week, TOP ventured away from beach clean-ups and targeted other environments that need as much, if not more, attention. The importance of mangroves, especially for Seychelles small islands, are undeniable. Not only do they protect the coasts from floods, waves and coastal erosion and maintain water quality and clarity, but they also provide an essential habitat for thousands of species. Mangroves have unfortunately been damaged and destroyed over the course of Seychelles history mainly for either coastal development or timber.

Under the key guidance of the knowledgeable Sir Terrence from the University of Seychelles, a successful mangrove planting activity took place at the University of Seychelles' restored wetlands. TOP was joined by LWMA, the Seychelles Rising Lions Club, Rotaract Club of Mahe and the Anse Royale Eco-School led by Sir Jude; together planting 87 mangroves in 1 hour, of which 43 mangliye zonn and 42 mangliye ponm. Whilst some planted, others cleaned the filtered litter left behind by the effective root system of the mangroves and de-weeded young coconut palms, considered invasive to the ecosystem. Approximately of 50kg of litter was collected from that morning.



A MINI PROJECT:

A Bucket for the Oceans

Old 2L paint buckets from Penlac have been given a new lease on life as litter buckets! Visitors to the Bird Island Lodge can grab a TOP bucket on their way to the beach and collect any marine litter they encounter. Thank you to Mr Yakub and the Penlac team for the generous donation of buckets; and to Nicolas & Jo and the Bird Island Lodge team for helping us take action against marine plastic pollution. If any venue is interested in being part of this mini-project, get in touch with us. (Photo credits: Bird Island Lodge)



A CLOSER LOOK:

Victoria Clean-Up + History Tour (June)

TOP was delighted to support the Seychelles Sustainable Tourism Foundation's hidden history tour and clean-up of Victoria. All drains and streams in Victoria ultimately lead to the sea which means all litter irresponsibly disposed of near or in drains/streams very likely end up in the ocean. Gloves on, bin liners in hand, volunteers went out to 3 sites (Bel Air Cemetery/Revolution Avenue, Olivier Maradan Street and around Independence Avenue) to collect litter neighboring historical monuments. Although there are contractors hard at work to keep the public space around town clean, we must not forget that we all have a civic responsibility to preserve our natural environment and in turn, help restore pride in our cultural and historical heritage.

TOP member, Nathalia Lawen, selected to join Peace Boat Voyage (May-June).

Nathalia was selected as one of the Peace Boat's Ocean and Climate Youth Ambassadors to join its voyage from Europe to New York. The programme brings together youth leaders from states on the front lines of climate change & marine degradation to engage in capacity building. TOP was proud to support Nathalia's voyage through funding under the Environment Trust Fund. Whilst in NY, Nathalia represented TOP at a 4Ocean's clean-up for World Oceans Day; speaking to thousands taking part about our local challenges and initiatives in Seychelles. Well done, Talia!



COLLABORATION:
SESEL X TOP

SESEL® is a company that creates eco-friendly jewellery pieces, with part of their profits donated to non-governmental organisations. We are thrilled that they created a bracelet, inspired by a similar 4Oceans piece, made from ocean plastic & recycled glass and featuring a charm of The Ocean Project Seychelles - made from recycled stainless steel, with all of the profits from the sale of these bracelets being donated to us! Buy from: <https://www.sesel.net/>



MARINE LITTER MONITORING PROGRAMME SUPPORTED BY WIOMSA



TOP has embarked on a 3-year marine litter monitoring programme (MLMP) supported by the Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA). The MLMP will investigate marine litter across beaches and streams in Seychelles; specifically, macrolitter (>25mm), mesolitter (5-25mm) and microplastics (<5mm). With regards to macrolitter, TOP will be monitoring the quantity, composition and accumulation of macrolitter across 3 beaches on Mahe (Beau Vallon, Anse Royale and Grand Police) and 1 beach on Farquhar, over the 3-year period. TOP will also be investigating the likely country or region of origin of macrolitter and the threat posed via rafting of potentially invasive and non-native species.

The macrolitter study forms part of a regional study across 7 countries in the Western Indian Ocean region (Mauritius, Madagascar, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Kenya and Seychelles). To make the MLMP a reality, TOP has partnered up with the Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change (MEECC), the Landscape and Waste Management Agency (LWMA), the Islands Development Company (IDC) and the Island Conservation Society (ICS). As most beaches are cleaned by LWMA in Seychelles, it was necessary, in order to investigate the accumulation rate of macrolitter, to put cleaning on hold during each 10-day survey every 3 months (North-West monsoon, inter-monsoon period,

South-East monsoon, Inter-monsoon period). MEECC will support with the surveys on Mahe and ICS the surveys on Farquhar by providing additional manpower. Travel and stay on Farquhar has been made possible through the continued support of IDC. Without IDC and ICS, it would not have been possible to conduct long-term monitoring on an outer island site (vs inner island).

TOP successfully conducted its first round of simultaneous marine litter surveys at the 3 Mahe sites in November. The next round of surveys will take place in February 2020 - 8th-18th - at all 4 sites. *If you would like to be a TOP research assistant (paid post) or for more information about the programme, contact our project managers, Zara or Victoria, on theoceanproject.sey@gmail.com. You can also read more about the Seychelles and regional study on the [WIOMSA 'Litter Catch Up'](#).*

Our Co-Founder & MLMP Project Manager appointed to Regional Group of Experts on Marine Litter

Our co-founder and MLMP Project Manager, Zara Pardiwalla, has been appointed to a regional Group of Experts on Marine Litter & Microplastics set up by the Nairobi Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment for the Western Indian Ocean Region & WIOMSA to provide a forum for sharing and exchange of information; policy guidance and advice to the Nairobi Convention and other regional frameworks; and synthesize information on the topic from different sources.



GPA Training of Trainers Workshop on Monitoring and Assessment of Plastic Litter

In August, one of our members, Peter Purvis, attended the Training of Trainers on Monitoring and Assessment of Plastic Litter in the Ocean held in Mombasa,






Kenya; an initiative of the Global Partnership on Marine Litter hosted by the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities (GPA), the Nairobi Convention, WIOMSA, the Open University of Netherlands and the Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute. The training involved presentations by leading marine litter experts, as well as practical exercises on shoreline, sea surface, and seafloor sampling and monitoring. All samples collected were also processed and analysed extensively in the KMFRI laboratory; in one instance even involving the dissection of corpus for biota sampling. The training has already proven useful in the design & implementation of our MLMP.

Masters student, Sophie Cunnington, from the University of York does 2-month placement with TOP,

from July-August, conducting a pilot macrolitter accumulation study at Beau Vallon (as a trial under the MLMP). Sophie also had to opportunity to present remotely at the Ocean and Health Conference at Avani Hotel & Spa in November on behalf of TOP.

Monitoring Goals

-  **GOAL 1:** Assess the efficacy of waste management measures
-  **GOAL 2:** To inform management of the issue
-  **GOAL 3:** To promote solutions to reduce the threat

CAMPAIGNS

NEW CAMPAIGN: Refill Seychelles

Refill Seychelles is the latest in our line of campaigns to reduce the use of single-use plastics. Over the past few months, we've been gathering feedback from you on how to help you switch from plastic bottles. Although access to safe and clean drinking water is a basic human right, many of you have reported having bad experiences with tap water (usually desalination water) and are skeptical about drinking it. Though we must continue to demand safe & clean drinking water from the authorities, in the meantime we must reduce the millions of plastic bottles that are being produced to meet our demand (contributing to greenhouse gases) and thereafter oftentimes ending up where they shouldn't - our oceans! This is where [#refillseychelles](#) comes in - we'll be working with different organisations and companies to change the way they buy and sell water.

THE OCEAN PROJECT SEYCHELLES

A CAMPAIGN BY THE OCEAN PROJECT SEYCHELLES TO REDUCE THE USE OF SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BOTTLES IN SEYCHELLES THROUGH CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION.

#refillseychelles
www.theoceanprojectseychelles.com

Facebook, Instagram, Twitter: @theoceanproject.sey

WANT TO COLLABORATE?
theoceanproject.sey@gmail.com

2050 = YEAR BY WHICH PLASTIC WILL OUTWEIGH FISH IN THE SEA

100,000 SEA MAMMALS DIE EACH YEAR FROM PLASTIC POLLUTION

IT IS ESTIMATED THAT **8 million tons** OF PLASTIC ENTER THE OCEAN YEARLY = 1 GARBAGE TRUCK EVERY MINUTE

REDUCE YOUR PLASTIC FOOTPRINT

STOP AND SWITCH

DON'T HAVE A REUSABLE BOTTLE?
PURCHASE ONE FROM THEOCEANPROJECT.SEY@GMAIL.COM
100% OF THE PROFITS GO BACK INTO THE OCEAN CONSERVATION PROJECTS



COLLABORATION: Val Riche X TOP – Refill Stations

Over the next few months, keep an eye out in Victoria and your reusable bottle at the ready, because we're partnering with Val Riche, a water bottling company, to bring you Seychelles' very first payable, refill station. With mineral water, at an affordable price, we hope you'll choose to be kind to the oceans and choose to refill, not landfill!

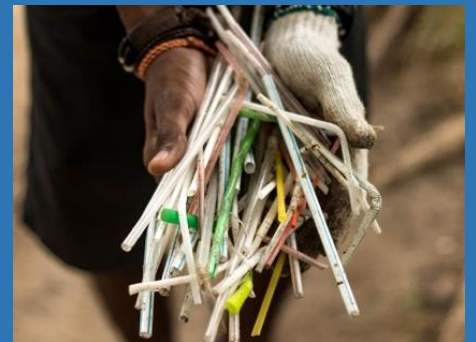
COLLABORATION: Little Splash X TOP

Team work makes the dream work! We're excited to bring you the Little Splash X TOP reusable bottle! For every Little Splash x TOP bottle you buy, Little Splash will donate part of the profits to us, to be applied directly towards our projects to keep plastic out of the oceans. Better yet, at SR500 you won't have to buy plastic bottles again. If you've already got a bottle, why not set someone up for a life without plastic – they make great gifts for your loved ones and our planet! Our happy cleaners haven't wasted any time getting theirs! (P.S. if you're just buying a Little Splash bottle, you can also request that the donation goes to TOP).



PREVIOUS CAMPAIGN UPDATE: The Last Straw Seychelles

Last year, TOP launched The Last Straw Seychelles campaign to engage venues to reduce the use of plastic straws in their establishments. Shortly after, the Government announced an intention to ban plastic straws which was followed by a "partial ban" on 1st January 2019. Whilst we applaud the Government for taking measures against single-use plastics, regrettably they are not bold enough. Plastic straws affixed to juice/milk cartons are not banned, neither are biodegradable/compostable plastic straws. It is a common misconception that biodegradable/compostable plastic straws will easily break down. The reality is quite different. Check out the websites of the brands sold locally and you'll quickly see that most of these biodegradable/compostable products will only break down in an industrial composter or when exposed for prolonged periods to temperatures over 50C. FACT: we do not have an industrial composter in Seychelles and biodegradable/compostable items are not disposed of in separate bins to enable them to be processed in this manner. The simple truth is, this is another waste stream we cannot handle. It is not surprising that UNEP's chief scientist, Jacqueline McGlade, has warned that biodegradable plastic bags are a "false solution" to the marine plastic problem. [Read more.](#)



CLIMATE ACTION

Climate Action Week 2019 (September)

Since Greta Thunberg, a Swedish 16-year-old student, bravely started the school strike for climate in 2018, millions of students across the world have since joined the movement. In September, these young global climate activists put out a global call for citizens across the world to declare a climate change emergency by taking action between 20th and 27th September and leading up to the UN Climate Change Summit. Over 150 countries, including Seychelles, showed their support during the week. In Seychelles, TOP (led by our project managers, Victoria and Zara) took the lead to put on a week of activities between 18th and 22nd September, with the aim of shining a light on the ways Seychelles is impacted and will be impacted as a result of the changing climate and to join the voices of global citizens to send out a strong message to our leaders that we need to act now to prevent a climate catastrophe. On the programme was landfill tours (23 people), climate action marches (400+ people), a climate action fair, a climate change Word Up open mic night, a mangrove planting and clean-up (32 people), a dive clean-up (32 people), mural painting and a climate change pub quiz (49 people). Waving placards from “Save Our Mangroves” to “No Oil Exploration in Seychelles”, over 400 people marched in the north and south of Mahe to call for climate action!

Why we march? Some of our demands to our leaders:

- Put climate change at the heart of every new decision
- A just transition to 100% renewable energy
- No oil and gas exploration in Seychelles
- Drastic reduction in solid waste
- Ban single-use plastics starting with govt and NA
- Eliminate food waste at landfill
- Stop destruction of our mangrove forests, trees and biodiversity
- Sustainable fish exploitation
- And more and more ...



Educational quizes at the TOP stall at the Climate Action Fair. Did you know that nearly every piece of plastic began as a fossil fuel and greenhouse gases are emitted at each stage of the plastic lifecycle?



Climate March from Bel Ombre to Peace Park, Victoria

CLIMATE ACTION WEEK 2019

18 SEPT
22 SEPT

18TH SEPTEMBER:
PROVIDENCE LANDFILL TOUR

21ST SEPTEMBER:
CLIMATE ACTION MARCH
CLIMATE ACTION FAIR
MURAL
CLIMATE WORD UP - OPEN MIC NIGHT

22ND SEPTEMBER:
MANGROVE PLANTING & CLEAN-UP
DIVE CLEAN-UP
CLIMATE PUB QUIZ

SEPT - OCT:
CLIMATE PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION

FOR MORE INFORMATION: SEE OUR EVENTS ON FACEBOOK / EMAIL: THEOCEANPROJECT.SEV@GMAIL.COM

CLIMATE STRIKE 20-27 SEPT

SEYCHELLES THIS WEEK
Local Lifestyle & Environment



Katy Beaver, environmental and climate activist, who conceived the project.



Some TOP members at the Climate Action March / Fair.



TOP member, Yannick Roucou, United Nations Nippon Foundation Alumni, in NY for Climate Action Week, speaking at roundtable discussion on climate change and small-scale fisheries at Explorers Club.

2020 TOPCAST

What's on the 2020 TOPcast?

(like forecast, get it? ;))

As we prepare for another busy year, TOP members met at Maison Marengo for a morning of brainstorming and role allocations. It was an exciting first as we welcomed many new members to the teams and planned for the upcoming year. As well as our existing programmes/projects, here are some projects you can expect in 2020 (and more...)

➤ **Anti-Littering Campaign.** Sadly, the littering situation in Seychelles is getting progressively worse; empty food wrappers and drink bottles are tossed carelessly while driving and the new normal is to see rubbish thrown on the ground instead of in a bin. With the aim of changing these attitudes by educating the population about the impacts of littering, TOP, with support from MCB Seychelles, is launching an anti-littering campaign. Look out for familiar faces on TV and signboards in Victoria telling you why you shouldn't be a litter bug!

➤ **Anti-Balloon Campaign.** As picnic parties at the beach become more popular, so does the amount of litter being left at the beach. Our latest campaign is aimed at protecting our marine environment from a seemingly innocent but extremely hazardous item – balloons. Though balloons have become synonymous with celebration, balloons pose a significant hazard to marine life, particularly turtles and seabirds which often mistake them for their favourite prey, jellyfish and squid, leading to choking and starvation. Even the most biodegradable of latex balloons can take months or even years to break down. In a small island nation like ours, balloons do not have to travel very far to end up in the marine environment and we cannot take that risk. Our anti-balloon campaign will be ready to launch soon. Stay tuned for all the reasons you shouldn't be using balloons (even the ones advertised as biodegradable) and what other, more ocean-friendly, reusable, decorating options you could be buying, or even making yourself!

➤ **Plastic Art Project.** Thanks to support under the GEF Small Grants Programme and the National Grants, TOP has been working with a group of artists (Jude Ally, Charles Dodo and the late Allen Ernesta) and students/teachers of the Plaisance and Independent School to create a large-scale art installation out of plastic debris collected on our clean-ups including the outer islands, to raise awareness about marine plastic pollution and to give viewers a first-hand understanding of the extent of the problem. Keep an eye out in Victoria for this really cool piece!



Members at TOPcasting session held at Maison Marengo, our valued sponsor, in December 2019.



After a morning of hard work (thank you to Maison Marengo for generously offering up the restaurant to us!), we indulged in a delicious pot-luck lunch, cooked by our TOP chefs! Obviously, we can't have a TOP picnic with single-use plastic, so here are some of our picnic rules (feel free to copy them!):



No single-use plastics – no plastic plates, cups, utensils, cling-film and no balloon decorations.



Bring your own plate, cup and utensils and take them back home for easy washing in your kitchen! If you bring Tupperware/ tiffin containers to eat in, you'll also have containers for leftovers – sneaky!



Bring food in serving dishes with lids or in cooking pots.



Opt for a planet-friendlier meal - no meat dishes but if you have to, opt for sustainably farmed/caught meat/fish instead; and use local ingredients as much as possible.



No loud music - enjoy the magical sounds of nature!

See you in 2020!

Read anything that interests you? Want to be part of the team?

Interested in being a partner or sponsor?

We'd love to hear from you – get in touch with us on theoceanproject.sey@gmail.com

Thank you to our 2019 sponsors!

