



COUSINE ISLAND
SEYCHELLES



May Newsletter

2021

Where nature thrives and man is a silent observer.

4° 20 MINS 55.73 SOUTH / 53° 38 MINS 53.24 EAST

A Conservation Sanctuary

Balance & Harmony

This month the conservation team is preparing for noddy season, which starts around May coinciding with the south-east trade-winds. Both Lesser and Brown noddy pairs have arrived on Cousine Island. Lesser noddies have been observed collecting nesting material such as wilted leaves from the forest floor, while Brown noddies collect seaweed from the beach. Some have even finished building their nests and are standing on them but have not yet laid. The usual nesting sites for the Lesser noddies are in the trees and they seem to prefer the *Pisonia* trees. In contrast, the Brown noddies will nest on the ground amongst vegetation, on rocks, or inside the fronds of coconut trees.

Pisonia (*Pisonia grandis*)

The Mapou tree of Seychelles can be found across the tropical Indo-Pacific. It has evolved in a way that its twice-yearly flowering and fruiting events coincide with peak seabird traffic to the islands. They are well adapted to grow on small islands that have seabird colonies, thriving in the acidic guano deposits produced by large numbers of nesting seabirds. The *Pisonia* is also known as the bird catcher. It produces clusters of resin-covered barbed seeds that stick firmly to the seabird's feathers, sometimes to the point where they can no longer fly and end up dying at the tree's roots. The main benefit for such an extreme adaptation seems to be long-distance dispersal.

