

Aldabra Islands

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Location and area

The Aldabra Islands are a dependency of the Seychelles in the Indian Ocean, about 1,100 km southwest of Mahé and 420 km northwest of Madagascar. (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

Topography

The islands are volcanic in origin and rise from a seabed about 4,000 m deep to no more than 10 m above sea level. The Aldabra Islands form the world's largest atoll. The oval coral atoll is 31 km long and 13 km wide, and consists of four main islands (South Island, West Island, Polymnie, and Middle Island) that together surround a large lagoon, as well as several smaller coral islands. (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

Land use

The Aldabra islands are of great scientific interest because of their unique wildlife, including the Aldabran giant tortoise, the Aldabran brush warbler (the world's rarest bird), and the white-throated rail—a flightless bird. There are no permanent residents, and the fragility of the ecosystem has meant that few visitors are permitted.

Despite some forestry and, in the 1950s, the removal of guano, for making fertilizer, the islands remain comparatively unharmed by human activity. The Aldabra Islands were designated a World Heritage Site in 1982. (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

Peatlands

No peatlands are known from the Aldabra Islands.