

authors consider the genus as containing many keystone species (Nason *et al.* 1998, Kannan & James 1999), and *in-situ* species recovery programmes suggest conservation or planting of fig species to sustain or increase fig-eating bird communities (Evans 1979; Lambert 1991). *F. densifolia*'s presence on Reunion should be no excuse to allow the species and its ecological role to disappear from Mauritius.

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Partial albinism in the hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) on Cousine Island, Seychelles.

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During work on hawksbill turtles on Cousine Island in the Seychelles, 74020 hatchlings (1995-2004) were examined (Table 1). Two of these, from one nest, displayed partial albinism of the fore-fippers (Fig 1). These hatchlings displayed no other apparent morphological or deformities, and were released with their normally coloured siblings.

Albinism is apparently rare among sea-turtle, being reported from loggerhead turtles (*Caretta caretta* L.) for which PRICHARD (1979) reported that “in some areas it is not uncommon to find one or two non-viable albinos in a nest: this albinism is often correlated with mouth deformities and cyclopiism.” HUGHES *et. al* (1967) reported that

NOTES

albino hatchlings had been observed only rarely in Tongaland, South Africa. At least one such hatchling from Tongaland was a full albino, and was fully developed in the egg, but had not hatched. It had no apparent deformities (O. Bourquin, pers. com. 2001).

Aldabra hawksbill turtles often have “blonde” carapacial scutes, in which each scute has extensive unpigmented areas, and one such animal has also been found in northern Mocambique (PRITCHARD 1979). However, whether this constitutes albinism is not known. No other record of albinism or partial albinism was found in literature for hawksbill turtles, or other sea-turtles.

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Table 1. Numbers of hatchlings examined: 1995/1996 to 2003/2004 seasons

Season	No hatchlings examined	No with albinism	% of total
1995 – 1996	2749	0	
1996 – 1997	5119	0	
1997 – 1998	7841	0	
1998 – 1999	13002	0	
1999 – 2000	1869	2	0.1
2000 – 2001	10197	0	
Sub total	40777	2	0.005
2001 – 2002	8313	0	
2002 – 2003	11153	0	
2003-2004	13777	0	
Sub total	33243	0	
TOTAL	74020	2	0.003

Fig. 1. Partial albino hatchlings on Cousine island.

