

**REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS**

**Ministry of Agriculture, Food Technology & Natural Resources**

*Development of a Management Plan for the Conservation and Management of  
Offshore Islets for the Republic of Mauritius*

**Management Plan for Ilot Flammant**

## ***Foreword***

This report represents a conservation management plan for the Mahebourg Islet, Ilot Flammants. Ilot Flammants is undesignated. It has been proposed by the Islets Task Force that Ilot Flammants be included in the Islets National Park. The Islets National Park Strategic Plan proposes that the islet has an Open Reserve status.

## ***Executive Summary***

- Ilot Flammant is the most northerly of the Mahbourg islets.
- It is a small sandbank of ~ 30m<sup>2</sup> formed from sand and broken pieces of coral.
- It is possible that the sandbank will expand, or possibly will disappear entirely.
- Ilot Flammant has no birds or animals living on it.
- Due to its small size, ephemeral nature, lack of any biodiversity value and lack of human use potential, no intervention management strategies are proposed.

### ***Introduction & General Information***

Ilot Flammant is the northern most islet of the Mahebourg group. It is situated at (S 20° 19.345, E 57° 49.244). It is covered by aerial photographs from 1997 and the Mauritius 1:25,000 map series (Ministry of Housing). It is presently undesignated.

In December 2003, it had an area of approximately 30m<sup>2</sup>. Access is easy to achieve with the use of a small boat.

### ***Environmental Information***

Ilot Flammant is a small sandbank, measuring approximately 15m x 2m, when visited in December 2003 (Fig. 1). The islet has no hard rock base, but is made up of sand and broken pieces of coral (Fig. 2). It has a central ridge of broken coral pieces, about 10-30cm above sea level at high tide, caused by waves reaching the islet from both sides. During most states of the tide the islet is frequently washed over by waves.

It has no plants or animals living on it. It is unlikely to be used by birds due to the frequent overtopping by waves.

**Fig. 1. View of Ilot Flammant (photograph taken from one end of the islet).**



**Fig. 2. View of coarse substrate of Ilot Flammants.**



### ***Evaluation***

It appears that Ilot Flammant has become smaller over the last few years, probably attributed to sand mining in the vicinity (Coastguard, pers comm.). Due to its small size, and low/submerged position it has no plants or animals living on it.

It is possible that Ilot Flammant will gradually grow, due to cessation of sand mining operations. However, it is also possible that the islet will disappear entirely due to small changes in the current and tidal system or cyclonic activity. The ephemeral nature of sandbanks is a common phenomenon.

Due to its small size and frequent overtopping by waves it has no potential value for conservation or human use.

### ***Management Strategies***

Due to its small size, ephemeral nature, lack of any biodiversity value and lack of human use potential, no intervention management strategies are proposed. The status of the sandbank may be monitored from time to time. The sandbank is within a coral reef semi-enclosed area together with another sandbank Ile aux Oiseaux it has been proposed that this reef area be declared as a Marine Protected Area, incorporating both sand banks. Further underwater surveys are needed to ascertain whether there is sufficient merit in giving the area such status.

## List of organisations consulted

1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Workshop delegates.

### WORKSHOP ON DEVELOPMENT OF A STRATEGY & MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE CONSERVATION & MANAGEMENT OF OFFSHORE ISLETS FOR THE REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS

Hilton Mauritius Resort, Flic en Flac, Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2004

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