Nature Seychelles wins innovation prize

Title Nature Seychelles (BirdLife Partner) has won the 2011 International Innovation Prize from the World Leisure Organisation (WLO). The Prize was given for innovative efforts to use the environment for ?edutainment? programs at the Sanctuary at Roche Caiman. These include Green Health, Heritage Garden and Outdoor Classroom. This is not the first time the association has won a prize - it has collected international awards in several fields ranging from education to ecotourism. The World Leisure International Innovation Prize recognises creative solutions that foster leisure opportunities for the benefit and development of individuals and communities. Activities at the Sanctuary at Roche Caiman are targeted at improving participant well-being by nurturing and harnessing the power of nature. The WLO has informed Dr Nirmal Shah, the Chief Executive of Nature Seychelles, who made the submission on invitation, that, ?The international Committee was greatly impressed by your application and looks forward to honouring you in a special Award Ceremony on 17th November 2011 during the 2nd World Leisure Expo and Forum, which is being held in Hangzhou, China?. Mr Pat Nanty, the Chair and CEO of the Seychelles Heritage Foundation and a member of the International Jury for the Prize has said, ?I am extremely delighted at this achievement more so as since my association with the WLO this is the first time that the Prize has been won by an entry from a small country. This is a prestigious award from a serious organization as it recognizes accessibility to leisure as a Human Right and highlights its educational and life-enriching values. Entries for the competition come from many countries and include big budget national programmes. The fact that Nature Seychelles won the Prize, despite competing with a massive tourism project from China and against entries from European countries, India, Australia etc.., is a significant achievement and one for which we must wholeheartedly congratulate the organization.? And in a congratulatory message Mr Barry Faure, Secretary of State, Office of the President said, "I would like to join the community to express to you the appreciation and congratulations of the President and our office for this excellent achievement?
?The best way to promote protection of the environment is to get people to value nature. We have been implementing environmental programs that provide values of one kind or another to various groups over the years. Recently we have focused on linking nature to people?s physical and mental well being. It?s wonderful that a leading international organization has recognized this innovation. This is a team effort and the coordinators of our various programs need to be congratulated for their hard work?, Nirmal Shah said.

This project was supported by the Aage V. Jensen Charity Foundation. The first Jensen-funded project restored the wetland. The follow up project constructed the Activity Centre which is now the focus of ?edutainment? programmes that won the prize.