

Ti Joe the Seal in Rodrigues

Tuesday 18th of August 2009, on this very fresh morning at 5h30 am, a strange animal was found along the road of Pointe La Gueule, Rodrigues. It was found by a man doing his jogging very early in the morning. He didn't want to leave the animal unattended; he waited to give the alert. A Fisheries Officer who was on his way to work, stopped and inspected the animal.

The animal was identified as a seal, a baby seal of about 1.5m long and weighting approximatly 100kg. There were no physical signs of injuries and for unknown reasons, the animal had stranded onto the beach. It was promptly baptised 'Ti Joe', after Joe the Elephant seal that came ashore in Mauritius many years earlier.

The crowd started to grow as the news of Ti Joe spread faster than sound in the nearby villages.

It was low tide and there was no possibility to take Ti Joe back to deep water, so it was decided to wait for the tide to come in. The seal was never left unattended as there were always people there to look after it. However at some stages it was apparent that Tio Joe was disturbed by the crowds.

At high tide the animal swam away. Everyone thought it had been able to find its way out to the open sea, a few days later it was found in the mangroves at Baie Malgache some 3km from where it was first discovered.

The staff of Shoals Rodrigues were solicited to help the seal to find its way back home. Two staff came and helped to remove the seal from the mangroves and at high tide guided it out to the high seas.

Thus Ti Joe left Rodrigues on this Saturday 22nd of August 2009. We all wished him a nice trip home. However it would be interesting to know why these animals are lured ashore so regularly! This being the second seal to visit Rodrigues this year. A few months ago a big male seal came ashore for a short while in the North of Rodrigues.

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