

Saba National Marine Park

A SPAW listed protected area



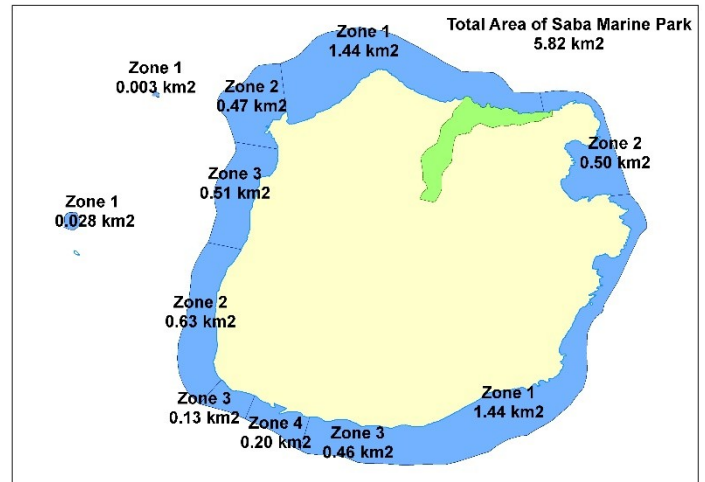
Country: The Kingdom of the Netherlands

Management structure / authority: The Saba Conservation Foundation

Date of establishment: 25 June 1987

Date of listing under SPAW: 09 December 2014

Size (Marine surface): 8 sq. km



Context:

Saba is located in the North Eastern Caribbean (17°38N, 63°14W). Saba National Marine Park, an 800 hectare (2,000 acres) protected area, was established in 1987 to safeguard the island's pristine coral reefs and the marine environment. The park extends from the high-tide mark to a depth of 60 meters (197 feet), circling the entire island.

A zoning plan divides the park between recreational and commercial uses and a system of permanent mooring buoys facilitates diving and prevents anchoring damage to the corals. The Saba National Marine Park is home to an abundance of fish as a result of restrictions on fishing and anchoring.

Main fauna populations and/or those of particular importance present (resident or migratory) in the area:

All four Caribbean species of turtle can be found in Saba National Marine Parks water. A number of Cetaceans are regular visitors both to the reefs and the waters around Saba. Reef sharks, nurse sharks and black tip sharks are the most common shark species in Saba National Marine Park, with occasional sightings of hammerhead sharks, bull sharks and tiger sharks. Manta rays and whale sharks are also seen on occasion.

The coral reefs are home to many fish species. In sandy areas garden eels, peacock flounder, stingrays and flying gurnard can all be seen. Near to the reefs in the blue water, crevalle jacks, bar jacks, shoals of barracuda, horse-eye jacks and wahoo meander looking to feed off the smaller reef fish.



Main ecosystems in the area:

Saba's reefs are characterized by its unique diversity in underwater topography. For simplicity, five types of reef structures can be determined: seamounts or pinnacles, deep patch reefs, encrusted boulders, walls, and true reefs.

Potential Threats:

A variety of factors are presently stressing coral reefs globally including bleaching, crown-of-thorns starfish, human activity—such as siltation from runoff, destruction for harbors and airports, and insensitive recreational diving and snorkeling.

MANAGEMENT PLAN

Research and Monitoring

- Monitoring
- Artificial reef projects

Education and communication

- Necessary rules, regulations, and information
- Enhance fisheries habitat and reduce impacts on natural reef and coral structures
- Preventing conflicts between different user groups

Tourism and Recreation Activities

- Diving with small groups
- Communication about the rules to the visitors
- Minimum impact diving practices
- natural environment modified for a variety of commercial and industrial uses

General Management, and Administration

- Management emphasizes sustaining natural ecological processes
- Enhance wildlife habitat

Field work and Maintenance

- Patrols instituted
- Emphasize sustaining and where necessary restoring conditions to allow natural processes to dominate

Contact:

Website: <https://sabapark.org/>

Email address:

The Saba National Marine Park is part of the **SPAW protected areas managers network**.

For more information about it: <https://www.car-spaw-rac.org/?Protected-Areas>