

Man O War Shoal Marine Park

SPAW listed protected area



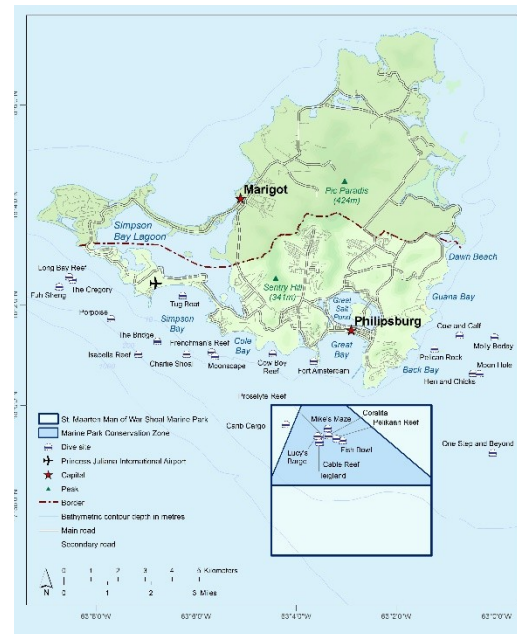
Country: St. Maarten (constituent country of The Kingdom of the Netherlands)

Management structure / authority: Nature Foundation St. Maarten

Date of establishment: 31 December 2010

Date of listing under SPAW: 09 December 2014

Size (marine surface): 31 sq. km



Context:

The area was chosen to be a priority for conservation because of its intrinsic ecological, economic and cultural value. The MPA includes a large area varied bathymetry and underwater formations. From rocky reef at 3m depth to deep patch reef over 35m deep and beyond to benthic habitats in excess of 80m deep.

Through extensive consultations and meetings between Nature Foundation St. Maarten and many stakeholders during 2009, an agreement was reached to implement marine conservation on St. Maarten in stages. The first and most important step was the establishment of the Man of War Shoal Marine Park in December 2010, with Nature Foundation St. Maarten being the organization responsible for its management.

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 St Maarten's water: Hawksbills, Green Turtles, Leatherbacks and Loggerheads are a very occasional visitor.

A number of **cetaceans** are regular visitors both to the reefs and the waters around St Maarten, including; humpback whales, spinner dolphins, bottlenose dolphins.

At least 522 wild **plants** are known from St. Maarten, divided in 506 seed plants and 16 ferns.

Birds are the most numerous vertebrates, with 184 species in total. There are 38 resident bird species on St. Maarten and 146 species of visiting birds.

170 **invertebrates** are known to live on St Maarten.



Main ecosystems in the area:

Terrestrial: St. Maarten is irregular in form because of the many bays and lagoons. Steep rocky coasts alternate with sandy beaches.

Marine: Open water: supporting planktonic and pelagic sea creatures including fish and migratory species such as dolphin and turtles.

Sea bed (benthos): supporting coral reefs, sea grass beds and including surface dwelling animals and plants and fauna (burrowing creatures like mollusks and crustacean), invertebrates, reef and bottom living fish.

Potential Threats:

The main threats to the Marine Park are: development / conversion of land use; pollution; boating; yachting; jet skiing; anchor damage; fishing; sport fishing; invasive species; nutrient enrichment; cruise boats; ferries; commercial shipping; wastewater influx; sunscreen chemicals; trash and single-use plastics; and climate change.

MANAGEMENT PLAN (2011)

Marine Park

- Manage dive fee/tag structure
- Implement Marine Park Management Plan

Research and Monitoring

- Create a species database
- Sea turtle nesting
- Manage bird watching cabins
- Create a floating bird platform
- Coral reef health monitoring program (GCRMN)

Information and Education

- Education program materials
- Educational worksheets
- Development of lesson boxes
- Junior Nature Foundation Club
- Website
- Printing Annual Reports
- Set up an electronic information system

Law enforcement

- CITES permits
- Special agent police training for Marine Park Staff
- Patrolling

Travel

- DCNA
- Trainings
- Conferences

Office operational Costs

- Salaries (Staff Manager, Chief Ranger, Science Officer)
- Transportation
- Office
- Maintenance
- Insurance

Contact:

Website:

<https://naturefoundationsxm.org/preservation/marine-park/>

Email address: info@naturefoundationsxm.org

The Man O War Shoal Marine Park is part of the **SPAW protected areas managers network**.

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