

Saba Bank National Park

A SPAW listed protected area



Country: The Kingdom of the Netherlands

Management structure / authority: The Saba Conservation Foundation (SCF)

Date of establishment: 12 December 2010

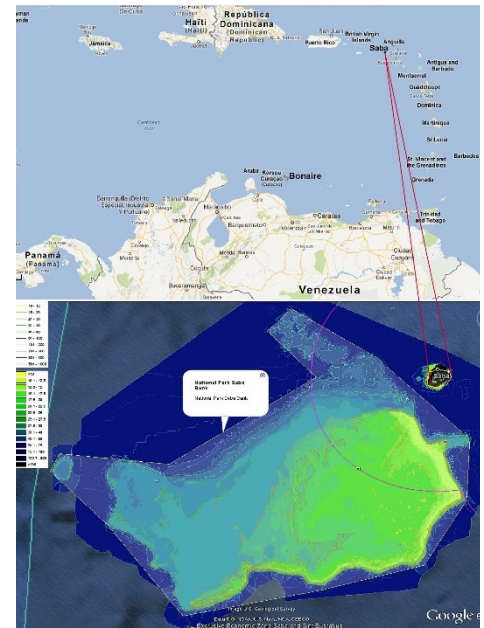
Date of listing under SPAW: 23 October 2012

Size (marine surface): 2679 sq. km

Context:

The Saba Bank National Park is a unique and highly significant area for the entire region. Biophysically it is a submerged atoll, the largest actively growing atoll in the Caribbean, and one of the largest atolls in the world.

The area is significant in terms of its unique ecological, socio-economic, scientific and cultural characteristics. Its extensive coral reefs, fishing grounds and algae beds are very vulnerable to damage from international shipping, in particular anchoring of tankers and other cargo ships. Large ships also pose a hazard to the artisanal fishery practiced on the Saba Bank. In addition, some of the shallowest areas of the Saba Bank pose a hazard to navigation.



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

The open water supports pelagic fish populations, most of which are highly migratory such as Tuna, Wahoo as well as Marlin and swordfish which are found primarily around the edges of the Bank. Different species of turtles can also be found

Several **Cetaceans** are present on the Saba Bank, including; Humpback Whales, Sperm Whales, Spinner Dolphins and Bottlenose Dolphins. Sharks are often spotted on the Bank, nurse shark, reef shark, blacktip shark, and tiger.

There are a number of **birds** that live almost exclusively in the open ocean environment, using Saba as a breeding ground or migratory stop over. These include Frigate Birds, Red Billed Tropicbirds, Brown Pelicans and Audubon's Shearwater.

Some of the **fish** present in the area are the snowy grouper, saddled moray, sharktooth moray, grey conger, and a deep body boarfish.



Main ecosystems in the area:

There are a variety of reef types on the Saba Bank, from patch reefs through spur and groove type reefs with sandy channels.

Distributed throughout the remaining available habitat, wherever there is hard substrate available, there are communities dominated by algae, sponges and/or gorgonians.

There is an exceptionally high diversity of macroalgae on Saba Bank. Perhaps a suite of conditions acts collectively to favor growth of macroalgae over other forms of benthic cover.

Potential Threats:

The four main threats to the Saba Bank are:

- Overexploitation of fishery resources
- Impacts from tanker anchorage on benthic communities
- Impacts of tanker traffic on fishermen and traps
- Global climate change

MANAGEMENT PLAN

Communication

- Promote conservation management activities
- Emphasize the need for practical hands on conservation effort
- Educate about conservation management

Research and Monitoring

- Stimulate research into the Bank to explore biodiversity and other areas of interest, e.g. geology
- Implementing monitoring program
- Collecting fish catch records
- Producing reports

Education and Outreach

- Visiting schools
- Training volunteers
- Giving talks and presentations to local users, industry, scientific fora, tourists
- Press releases, giving interviews to media
- Meeting with users

Law enforcement

- Developing and providing advice on the issuing of permits, exemptions, guidelines, rules
- Writing and pursuing prosecutions, summonses
- Staff training in legal issues, special police powers

Administration

- Time planning
- Staff meetings
- Checking reports, evaluating projects and programs
- Budgeting, payments/disbursements accounting, reporting, purchasing, sales, inventory, Bookkeeping

Field work and Maintenance

- Coordination of enforcement of the anchoring prohibition, surveillance
- Patrolling on sea
- Attending meetings, workshops, conventions, including DCNA
- Maintaining vehicles, boats equipment, computers

Contact:

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

Email address:

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

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