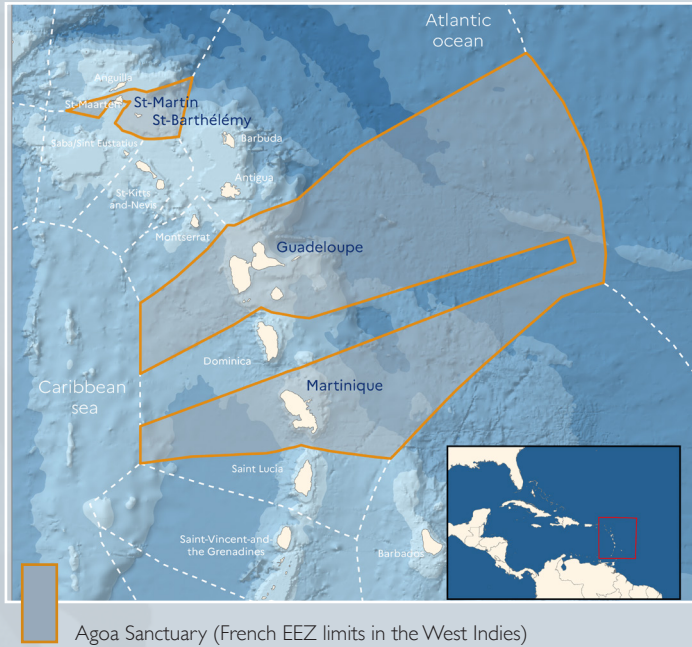


MARINE MAMMAL HABITATS

The French West Indies encompass a vast exclusive economic zone covering 143,256 km². This entire maritime area forms the Agoa Sanctuary, dedicated to the protection of marine mammals. This marine protected area covers a wide variety of habitats, from the coasts of the islands to the vast oceanic domain. Some islands are grouped together in shoals: vast areas where the seabed does not exceed 100m, and where humpback whales, in particular, stay during the breeding season. But these shoals are sinking abruptly to the depths (3,000 to 4,000m), in favour of the continental slope, furrowed by underwater canyons. Beyond, the great ocean opens up, reaching depths over 5,000m, the habitat of choice for deep divers such as sperm whales.



CONTRIBUTIONS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Interreg Caribbean
European Regional Development Fund
CARI'MAM



The CARI'MAM project is co-financed by the Interreg Caribbean program under the European Regional Development Fund.

This booklet was produced by Maël DEWYNTER (design, illustrations), Amandine BORDIN (GEOG), Margot VANHOUCHE (GEOG), Gérald MANNAERTS (OFB) and Jérôme COUVAT (OFB). The contents of this guide are the fruit of years of collaboration between cetacean specialists working either in public institutions or in non-governmental organisations (associations): Laurent BOUVERET, Jaime BOLANOS, Angiolina HENRIQUEZ, Claire PUSINERI, Monica BOROBIA, Marijke DE BOER.



Reserve Naturelle
ILE DU GRAND-CONNETABLE



Reserve Naturelle
SAINT-MARTIN



Caribbean monk seal **EX**
Neomonachus tropicalis

Size
2 to 2.4m

Not to be confused
Bicolour:
dark grey back, dirty white belly

Hooded seal **NA**
Cystophora cristata

Black hood
Young
Mature female

The last sightings of the Caribbean Monk Seal date back to 1952, and the species has been considered officially extinct since 1986 by the IUCN. Since 1952, a few recurrent reports of seals in the Caribbean, mainly in the Greater Antilles, have suggested that a few relict populations are discreetly maintaining. But the few records available indicate that these are young, erratic Hooded Seals, far from their Arctic range.

American manatee **RE**
Trichechus manatus

Size
2.7 to 4.5m

The manatee subspecies *Trichechus manatus manatus* is historically present throughout the Caribbean basin. It is found on prehistoric engravings and Amerindian artefacts on several islands. It disappeared from the Lesser Antilles between the 18th and 20th centuries, mainly due to hunting. Nowadays, it is only found in Puerto Rico and the Greater Antilles to the north, and Trinidad and Tobago to the south. A few nomadic individuals can sometimes be seen as far away as Saint-Martin or the Leeward Islands.

Bottlenose dolphin **LC**
Tursiops truncatus

Small, stocky rostrum, well-demarcated from the melon

High, falciform dorsal fin

"Florida" ecotype
"White back" ecotype

White back

Size
2.3 to 3.8m

Rough-toothed dolphin **LC**
Steno bredanensis

No demarcation between melon and rostrum

Conical head with long, thin rostrum

White lips sometimes

Triangular to falciform dorsal fin

Dark spots on the back

Size
2 to 2.8m

Fraser's dolphin **LC**
Lagenodelphis hosei

Short rostrum

Male
Female

White or pink ventral side

Dark stripe from eye to anus

Size: 2 to 2.7m

Striped dolphin **LC**
Stenella coeruleoalba

Pale "flame" rising towards the dorsal fin

Thin, dark lines running from the eye to the anus and to pectoral fins

Size
1.9 to 2.6m

Clymene dolphin **LC**
Stenella clymene

Black rimmed eyes

Tricolor coloration

Black "mustache" line on the rostrum

Size
1.8 to 2m

Spinner dolphin **LC**
Stenella longirostris

Triangular dorsal fin

Dark line from eye to base of pectoral fin

Long and thin rostrum

Dark grey back, light grey flank, white belly

Spinning leap, characteristic of this species

Size
1.3 to 2.4m

Pantropical spotted dolphin **LC**
Stenella attenuata

Light grey mask

Light grey belly spotted with black

White rostrum tip
White lips

Size
1.6 to 2.6m

Atlantic spotted dolphin **LC**
Stenella frontalis

Dark grey back with white spots

Pale flame

Black spotted belly

Juvenile (spotless)

Size
1.6 to 2.3m

ANATOMY OF A CETACEAN

Dorsal fin
Blowhole
Melon
Beak or rostrum
Pectoral fin
Fluke

GoodID

24 species frequenting the waters of Martinique, Guadeloupe, Saint-Martin and Saint-Barthélemy

ILLUSTRATED GUIDE TO THE MARINE MAMMALS OF THE FRENCH WEST INDIES

October 2021

RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE
Ministère de l'Écologie
Ministère de la Mer

OFB
OFFICE FRANÇAIS
DE LA BIODIVERSITÉ

AGO
AGORA
ANTILLES FRANÇAISES

IUCN CONSERVATION STATUS

The IUCN Red List is the world's most comprehensive inventory of the global conservation status of plant and animal species. It uses a series of precise criteria to assess the extinction risk of thousand of species. Based on a solid scientific foundation, the IUCN Red List is recognized as the most reliable reference tool for assessing the level of threats to species. Although assessments of the national conservation status of marine mammals for Martinique and Guadeloupe have recently been carried out, we present in this document the global conservation status (worldwide assessment). The manatee, extinct in the French West Indies, is an exception.

- DD

Data deficient / Insufficient data for threat assessment.
- LC

Least concern / Not a threatened species.
- NT

Near threatened / Not endangered but to be monitored.
- VU

Vulnerable / Threatened species. Alarming situation but not critical.
- EN

Endangered / Very alarming situation.
- CR

Critically endangered / Threatened species close to extinction.
- RE

Regionally extinct / Extinct species in the region.
- EX

Extinct / Extinct species (definitively)

SIGHTING PROBABILITY

In general, marine mammal species are extremely discreet. In addition to the fact that they occupy an immense maritime domain, many species spend most of their time below the surface, and it is anecdotal to observe them. Nevertheless, some marine mammals are more "detectable" than others, and therefore appear relatively common. The following indicator therefore expresses the probability of observing a species - once its habitat has been explored - rather than a true population abundance.

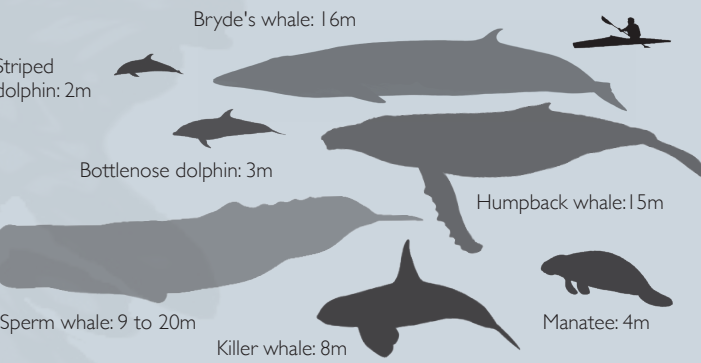
- C

Common species
- O

Occasional species
- R

Rare species

RELATIVE SIZE OF MARINE MAMMALS



Three parallel ridges on the head

Bryde's whale

Balaenoptera edeni

VU

R

Size

15 to 16.5m

Pointed, triangular head with small rostrum

Minke whale

Balaenoptera acutorostrata

LC

R

White stripe on upper side of pectoral fin

Size

6.5 to 10m

Tubercles

Humpback whale

Megaptera novaeangliae

LC

C

January to May

Size

11 to 18m

Hump

Fluke (ventral side)

Massive square head

Sperm whale

Physeter macrocephalus

VU

O

Blowhole on the left

Size

9 to 20m

Hump-shaped dorsal fin

Succession of small knuckles behind the dorsal fin

Teeth

Cuvier's beaked whale

Ziphius cavirostris

LC

R

Male

Size

4.5 to 7.5m

"Goosebill"

Teeth

Gervais's beaked whale

Mesoplodon europaeus

DD

R

Male

Size

4.5 to 7m

Long rostrum

Flattened melon

Square head

Pygmy sperm whale

Kogia breviceps

LC

R

Small dorsal fin

Size

2.1 to 2.7m

Gill-like mark on the head

Pectoral fin far forward of the body

Square head

Dwarf sperm whale

Kogia sima

LC

R

Large dorsal fin

Size

2.7 to 3.4m

Spyhopping behaviour

Killer whale

Orcinus orca

DD

O

White patch behind the eye

Size

5 to 9.8m

Large dorsal fin in males, up to 2m high

Male

Female

Rounded pectoral fins

Grey patch behind the dorsal fin called "saddle"

Dorsal fin with very wide base

Short-finned pilot whale

Globicephala macrorhynchus

LC

O

Male

Size

4 à 7,3 m

White saddle

Bulging melon

Spyhopping behaviour

No discernable rostrum

Melon-headed whale

Peponocephala electra

LC

R

White lips

Size

2 to 2.75m

Falciform dorsal fin

False killer whale

Pseudorca crassidens

NT

R

Prominent melon

Size

3.5 to 6.1m

Upper jaw longer than the lower

S-shaped pectoral fin with marked elbow

White patches in front of pectoral fins

Risso's dolphin

Grampus griseus

LC

R

Some individual can be very white

Size

2,6 to 5m

No rostrum, prominent head

White scars, but body extremities often remain greyer

Very tall falciform dorsal fin