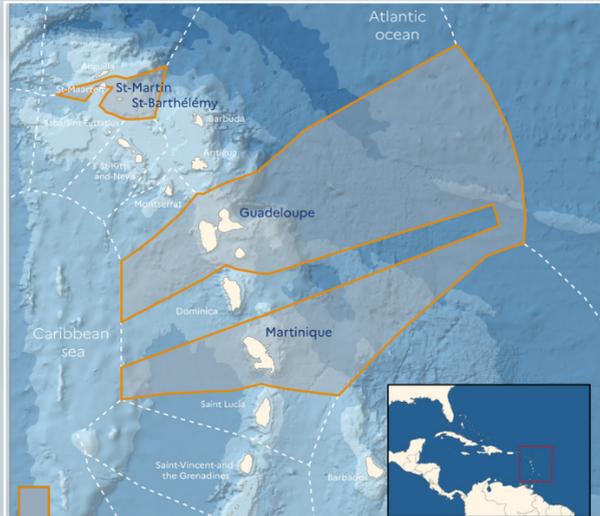


MARINE MAMMAL HABITATS

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.



Agoa Sanctuary (French EEZ limits in the West Indies)

CONTRIBUTIONS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



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.



Caribbean monk seal **EX**

Neomonachus tropicalis



Size
2 to 2.4m

Not to be confused

Bicolour:
dark grey back, dirty white belly

Black hood

Hooded seal **NA**

Cystophora cristata



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



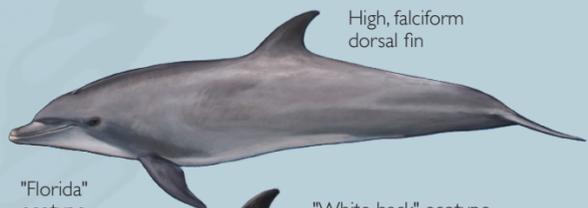
Size
2.7 to 4.5m

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

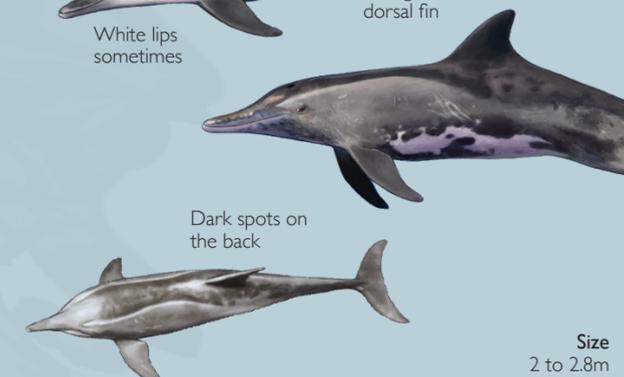
No demarcation between melon and rostrum



Conical head with long, thin rostrum

Triangular to falciform dorsal fin

White lips sometimes



Dark spots on the back

Size
2 to 2.8m

Fraser's dolphin **LC**

Lagenodelphis hosei

Short rostrum



Male

White or pink ventral side

Female

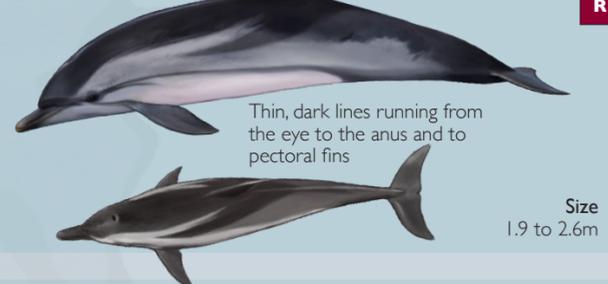
Dark stripe from eye to anus

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

Dark line from eye to base of pectoral fin



Long and thin rostrum

Dark grey back, light grey flank, white belly

Size
1.3 to 2.4m

Spinning leap, characteristic of this species

Pantropical spotted dolphin **LC**

Stenella attenuata

Light grey mask



Light grey belly spotted with black

White rostrum tip

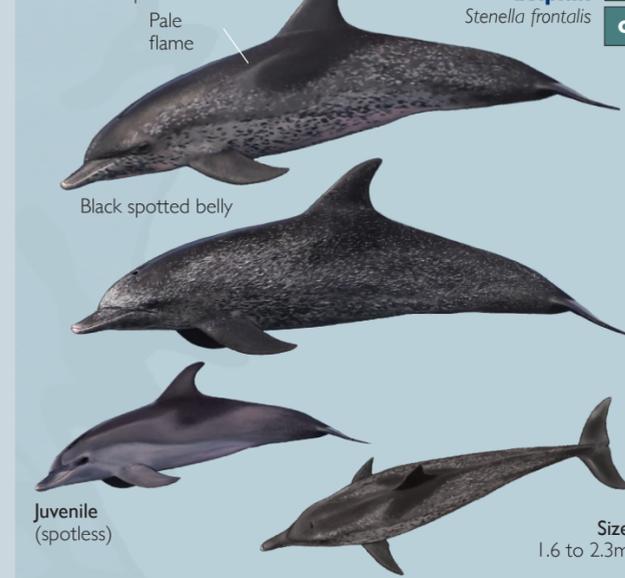
White lips

Size
1.6 to 2.6m

Atlantic spotted dolphin **LC**

Stenella frontalis

Dark grey back with white spots



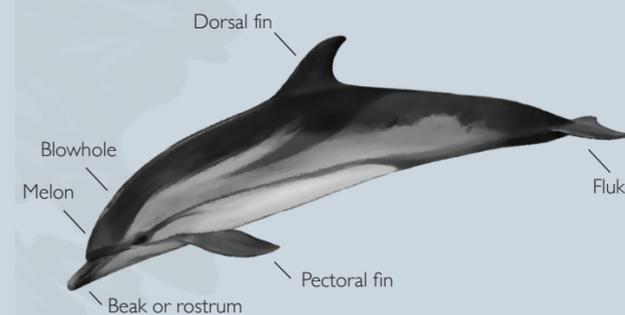
Pale flame

Black spotted belly

Juvenile (spotless)

Size
1.6 to 2.3m

ANATOMY OF A CETACEAN



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



Logo of République Française

Logo of OFB (Office Français de la Biodiversité)

Logo of AGOA (Association pour la Gestion de l'Océanographie et de la Biodiversité des 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

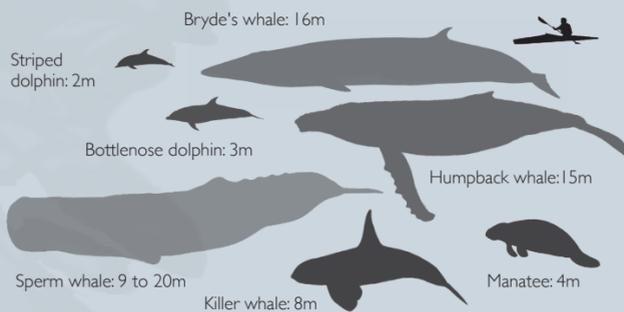
In general, marine mammal species are extremely discreet. In addition to the fact that they occupy an immense maritime domain, many species spend most of their time below the surface, and it is anecdotal to observe them. Nevertheless, some marine mammals are more "detectable" than others, and therefore 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 **VU**
Balaenoptera edeni **R**

Size: 15 to 16.5m

Teeth

Cuvier's beaked whale **LC**
Ziphius cavirostris **R**

Male

"Goosebill"

Female

Size: 4.5 to 7.5m

Spyhopping behaviour

White patch behind the eye

Large dorsal fin in males, up to 2m high

Rounded pectoral fins

Male

Female

Grey patch behind the dorsal fin called "saddle"

Killer whale **DD**
Orcinus orca **O**

Size: 5 to 9.8m

Pointed, triangular head with small rostrum

Minke whale **LC**
Balaenoptera acutorostrata **R**

White stripe on upper side of pectoral fin

Size: 6.5 to 10m

Teeth

Gervais's beaked whale **DD**
Mesoplodon europaeus **R**

Male

Long rostrum

Flattened melon

Size: 4.5 to 7m

Dorsal fin with very wide base

Short-finned pilot whale **LC**
 Male *Globicephala macrorhynchus* **O**

Bulging melon

White saddle

Spyhopping behaviour

Size: 4 à 7,3 m

No discernable rostrum

White lips

Melon-headed whale **LC**
Peponocephala electra **R**

Size: 2 to 2.75m

Tubercles

Humpback whale **LC**
Megaptera novaeangliae **C**

January to May

Very long, white pectoral fins

Hump

Fluke (ventral side)

Size: 11 to 18m

Square head

Pygmy sperm whale **LC**
Kogia breviceps **R**

Small dorsal fin

Gill-like mark on the head

Pectoral fin far forward of the body

Size: 2.1 to 2.7m

Falciform dorsal fin

False killer whale **NT**
Pseudorca crassidens **R**

Prominent melon

Upper jaw longer than the lower

S-shaped pectoral fin with marked elbow

Size: 3.5 to 6.1m

White patches in front of pectoral fins

Some individual can be very white

Risso's dolphin **LC**
Grampus griseus **R**

No rostrum, prominent head

White scars, but body extremities often remain greyer

Very tall falciform dorsal fin

Size: 2.6 to 5m

Massive square head

Blowhole on the left

Hump-shaped dorsal fin

Succession of small knuckles behind the dorsal fin

Sperm whale **VU**
Physeter macrocephalus **O**

Size: 9 to 20m

Square head

Dwarf sperm whale **LC**
Kogia sima **R**

Large dorsal fin

Size: 2.7 to 3.4m

No discernable rostrum

Pygmy killer whale **LC**
Feresa attenuata **R**

White lips

Pectoral fins with rounded tips

Size: 2 to 2.6m