Man of War Shoal

Management Authority
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Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance
Safeguarding nature in the Dutch Caribbean

The Nature Foundation is part of the umbrella group Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance (DCNA), a non-profit and nongovernmental organization that places special emphasis on fundraising and strengthening the management of the protected areas within Dutch Caribbean.

Photographs by B.S. & R.D. Kirkby

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Protected Areas Management

The Nature Foundation manages the Man of War Shoal Marine Park, which was established December 31st of 2010. The designation of the marine protected area was a groundbreaking achievement for St. Maarten as it became the country’s first legally protected area.

The Man of War Shoal Marine Park is now a sanctuary for whales, dolphins, numerous species of sharks, sea turtles, coral reefs and a wide array of fishes. It is also a breeding site for three IUCN Red List species, 10 CITES Appendix I species and 89 Appendix II species.

Studies conducted by the Nature Foundation indicate high levels of biodiversity and particularly high coral reef coverage within the park. The conserved state of the Man of War Shoal increases the economic value of goods and services on St. Maarten with fifty million dollars annually.

Responsibilities

To successfully maintain the integrity of the marine protected area island legislation prohibits: the feeding of animals, sinking of vessels or other objects, any type of fishing, harassing marine life, removing live or dead animals or plants, discharging of chemicals or waste, placing, moving or removing anchor buoys and anchoring or use of anchors.

The purchase of your Man of War Shoal Entrance Tag is mandatory for entering the Marine Park. Income generated through the sale of the tags goes directly towards the management and maintenance of the marine protected area.

Any boat wishing to enter the Marine Park should register with the Nature Foundation and fly an alpha flag when divers are in the water. Vessels should be less than 15 meters (50 feet) overall length and up to 30 tons.

Our mission is to preserve and enhance the natural environment of St. Maarten through proper management, education, public awareness, law enforcement, scientific research and monitoring relating to all aspects of the terrestrial, wetland and marine surroundings.