

Dutch Caribbean Species Register

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On December 5, 2017, the launch of the Dutch Caribbean Species Register took place: www.dutchcaribbeanspecies.org. This website is intended to become a useful tool for nature conservation, biodiversity research, and education in the Dutch Caribbean!

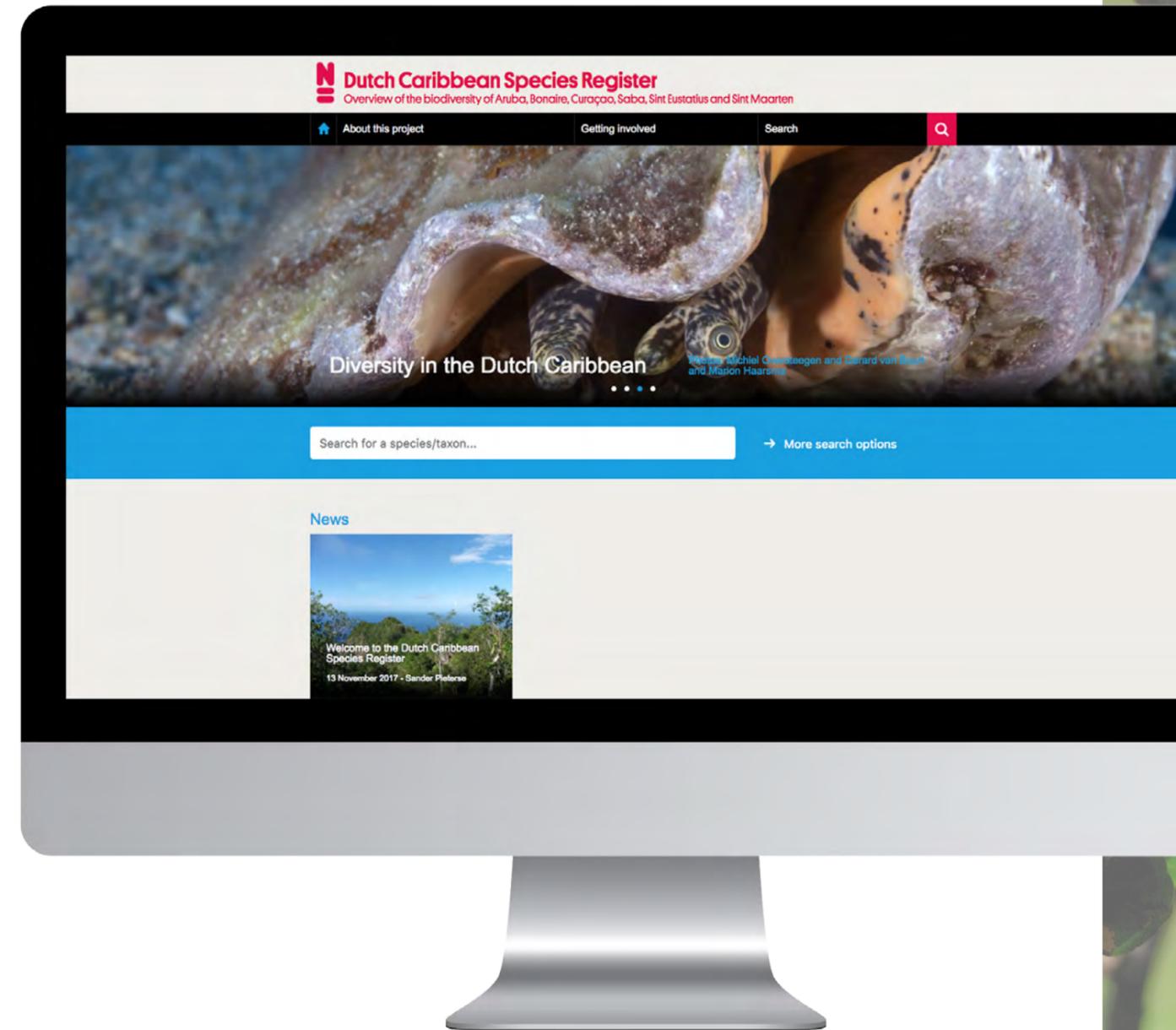
For the first time, an overview of the known biodiversity (animals, plants, fungi) of the Dutch Caribbean is presented: over 7.500 species. This online database is the result of an effort of Naturalis Biodiversity Center to gather all relevant records and publications on the biodiversity and natural history of the six islands of the Dutch Caribbean: Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, Sint Eustatius and Sint Maarten, together with the submerged Saba Bank. Naturalis is the Dutch national natural history museum, which has a long tradition in biodiversity research all over the world (terrestrial and marine), with the Dutch Caribbean as one of its focus areas.

The database contains a wide variety of information, which has been gathered from books, scientific articles, expedition reports, museum catalogues, web sites, species lists, and photographs. The database includes, but is not limited to presence status per island, photos, literature references, and common/local names. The checklist can be searched and filtered in several ways and can also

be navigated through a taxonomic tree. Species can also be searched by habitat, such as terrestrial, freshwater, brackish water, and marine environments. The presence status indicates per island which species are indigenous and which ones have been introduced. For species of the latter category also the natural distribution range can be found. For each island and for certain regions, such as the Leeward Islands and the Lesser Antilles, lists of endemic species can be generated and searched for additional information. So far, the checklist is illustrated by a growing photo archive of over 2.000 photos of nearly 10% of the species.

The species database is expected to grow over the coming years, as Naturalis processes the results of recent expeditions to, e.g., Sint Eustatius in 2015 and Curaçao in 2017. Species discovered on the islands as new to science and those representing new records are added after their publication as soon as possible. Photographic records can also be used as basis for new contributions.

We are looking for volunteers who are willing to supply documentation, photographs, and specimens that represent new species records for the islands. People with expert knowledge of the Caribbean fauna and flora are welcome to assist as validators. Those interested in contributing can contact us via speciesregister@naturalis.nl.



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