

# St. Eustatius joins Yarari Marine Mammal and Shark Sanctuary

**Excellent news: St. Eustatius has now become part of the "Yarari" Marine Mammal and Shark Sanctuary. St. Eustatius joined Bonaire and Saba when the Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality Mrs Carola Schouten and the Government Commissioner of St. Eustatius, Mr Marcolino Franco signed the Yarari declaration on September 20, 2018.**

The number of Caribbean territories establishing a marine mammal and shark sanctuary is growing as the importance of these sea creatures becomes better understood. The next step is to implement monitoring and conservation practices. St. Eustatius National Parks Foundation (STENAPA)'s Marine Park Manager Jessica Berkel and Marine Park Ranger Francois Mille are eager to use their training to protect the various marine mammals and shark species found in the Dutch Caribbean waters.

*"Marine mammals and sharks play an important role in the marine environment. Where there are more sharks, there are – contrary to what you might expect – more fish as well. That makes the established sanctuary important for the fishermen on the island", says Berkel.*

The "Yarari" Marine Mammal and Shark Sanctuary was established in the Caribbean Netherlands on September 1, 2015. The name of the Sanctuary "Yarari" is an Taíno Indian word, meaning "a fine place". The Yarari Sanctuary comprises all the waters of Bonaire, Saba and St. Eustatius and is intended to provide "a fine place" for marine mammals and sharks, where they will receive the necessary attention to ensure they are optimally protected.

The Yarari Sanctuary will also participate in the CARI'MAM project, which kicks off in October this year and aims to develop a network of marine protected areas dedicated to the conservation of marine mammals in the Greater Caribbean and beyond. This network will aim at strengthening managerial skills and developing common tools for management and evaluation purposes. Furthermore, the proposed network includes a focus on the development of respectful, sustainable commercial operations for the observation of marine mammals (whale watching) across the Caribbean, compatible with marine mammal conservation.



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