

THE YARARI MARINE MAMMAL AND SHARK SANCTUARY

The “Yarari” Marine Mammal and Shark Sanctuary was established in the Caribbean Netherlands on September 1, 2015. The name “Yarari” is a Taino 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, sharks and rays, where they will receive the necessary attention to ensure they are optimally protected.

PAY YOUR NATURE FEE

The non-profit local nature management organizations are dedicated to safeguard our unique natural resources. They depend on your financial contribution. Nature fees are mandatory so please check with the nature management organizations and tour operators for local regulations.

SHARKS AND RAYS

More than 100 million sharks and rays are killed each year as a result of fishing and shark finning activities, which is far above the rate that they can reproduce. The demand for fins and other shark and ray products has driven a number of species close to extinction. Sharks and rays are especially vulnerable to overfishing and habitat degradation as they grow slowly, mature late, and produce few young. The two main threats to sharks and rays in our waters are accidental bycatch and the risk of a shark and ray fin market developing, leading to illegal, targeted fishing of sharks and rays.

RESPECT, NOT FEAR, SHARKS

Sharks are some of the most misunderstood species. For generations sharks had an undeserved bad reputation. People tend to see them as terrifying animals that pose a danger to everything that swims in the ocean, including humans. But we now know that is very far from the truth; these magnificent creatures are essential to healthy oceans.

WE NEED HEALTHY OCEANS AND HEALTHY OCEANS NEED SHARKS

Sharks keep our oceans healthy. These top predators remove sick or weak members of their prey populations. A decrease in number of sharks leads to a disturbed natural balance in the sea. This can affect the overall fish population, and healthy fish stocks are not only important for fishermen that depend on fishing but also for (dive) tourism and the local community.

Within the “Yarari Marine Mammal and Shark Sanctuary” sharks and rays are protected and conservation groups are working with local fishermen to reduce the catch of sharks and rays. It is only the 11th shark sanctuary of its kind in the world!

MARINE MAMMALS

More than 20 species of whales and dolphins are known to inhabit the waters around these islands. Like sharks, these charismatic species are a magnet for tourism. The Sanctuary is intended to focus research on the various marine mammal populations to learn more about their biology and behaviors, the threats they are exposed to and how best to protect these fascinating animals.



A SAFE WHALE NURSERY

Humpback whales spend the winter months in the warm

Caribbean waters where they calve and suckle the baby whales during their first few months until they are strong enough to begin the trek to their feeding grounds in the cold Northern Atlantic waters off the Eastern shore of the US and Canada, around Greenland and Iceland, as well as Northern Europe.

TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER!

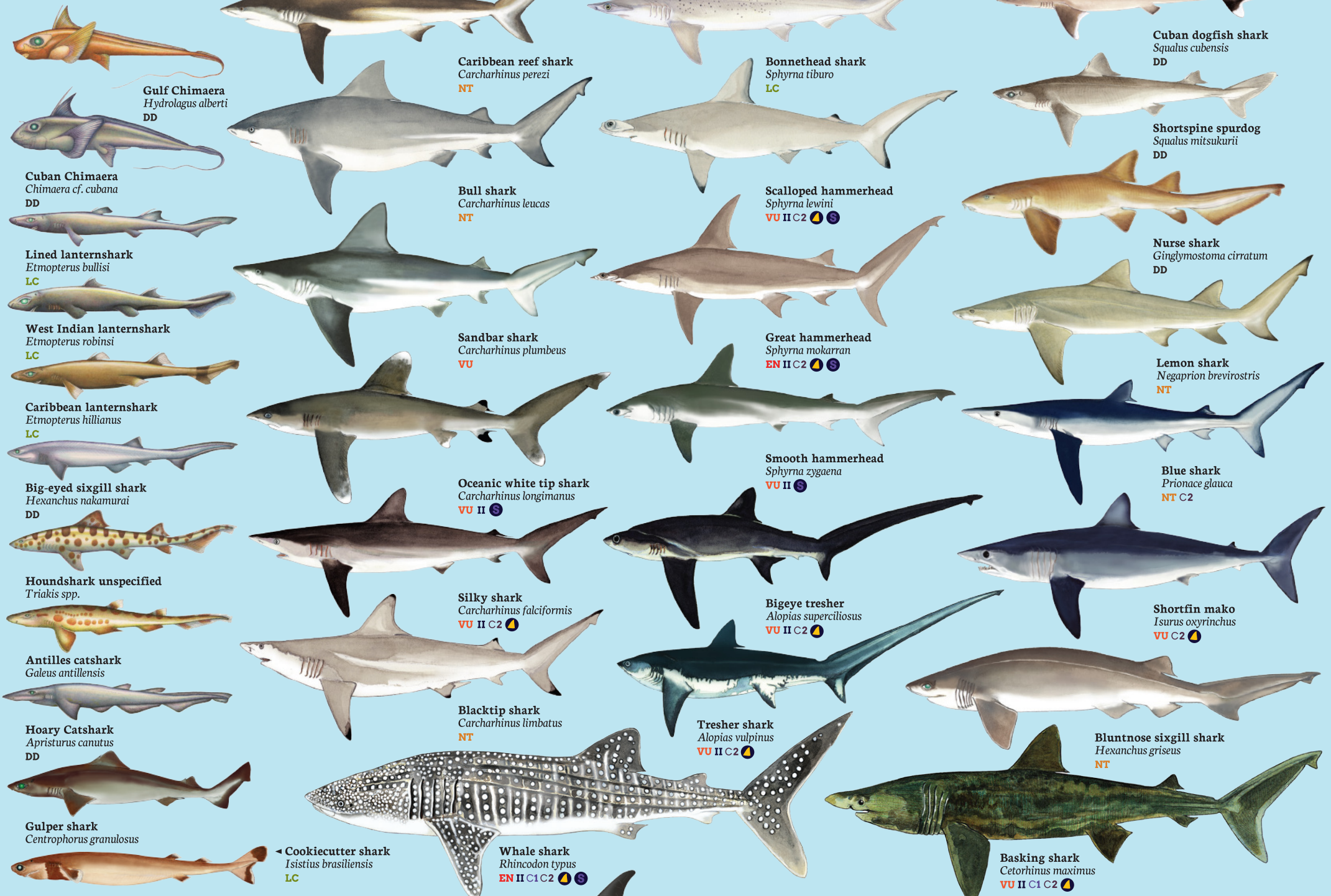
Migratory marine mammal species rely on a network of interlinked habitats throughout their journeys. Breeding and feeding grounds and migratory routes are especially important for conservation. Therefore, cooperation agreements were signed between the Yarari Sanctuary and the French Caribbean Agoa Sanctuary and US Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary. The Yarari Sanctuary also participates in the CARPMAM¹ project, which aims to develop a network of marine protected areas dedicated to the conservation of marine mammals in the Greater Caribbean and beyond. All of this fits within the framework of the region-wide Marine Mammal Action Plan adopted by the SPAW Protocol.²



THE YARARI SANCTUARY PROTECTS A TOTAL AREA OF 25,390 SQ KM

¹ Caribbean Marine Mammals Preservation Network
² Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife, a regional treaty that implements the requirements of the global Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in the Caribbean.

THE DUTCH CARIBBEAN WATERS ARE HOME TO ABOUT THIRTY SPECIES OF SHARKS.



THE YARARI SANCTUARY HAS A RELATIVELY HIGH DOCUMENTED MARINE MAMMAL SPECIES RICHNESS IN THE WIDER CARIBBEAN REGION.



INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION
In addition to national conservation legislation, sharks and marine mammals benefit from a number of agreements negotiated between and among nations.

CMS
www.cms.int
C1 Appendix I Endangered migratory species
C2 Appendix II Migratory species conserved through Agreements

CITES
www.cites.org
I Appendix I Includes species threatened with extinction. Trade in specimens of these species is permitted only in exceptional circumstances. Import and export or re-export permits are required, issued by the Management Authority of the State of Import, Export or Re-Export.
II Appendix II Includes species where trade is allowed but restricted. An export or re-export certificate is required, but no import permit is needed unless required by national law.
III Appendix III are species in which trade is allowed but monitored. An export permit must be issued by the Management Authority of the State that included the species in Appendix III.

CMS SHARKS MOU
www.cms.int/sharks
The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks is the first global instrument for the conservation of migratory species of sharks. The Sharks MOU has defined general objectives for the conservation and management of species and populations listed in Annex 1 of the MOU.

IUCN RED LIST OF THREATENED SPECIES
www.iucnredlist.org

DD Data Deficient
LC Least Concern
NT Near Threatened
VU Vulnerable
EN Endangered
CR Critically Endangered
EW Extinct in the Wild
EX Extinct

SPAW PROTOCOL
http://www.cep.unep.org/cartagena-convention/spaw-protocol

ANNEX II Endangered Animal species. These species are subject to the highest level of protection.
ANNEX III Protected plants and animals to be maintained at a sustainable level.

DUTCH CARIBBEAN CONFIRMED SPECIES

The overview does not include species that are possibly occurring (no confirmed sightings). There are no confirmed sightings of minke whales but it is probably quite common for the windward islands, based on confirmed acoustic detections. The species illustrations are not to scale.

Report your marine mammal and shark sighting to your local dive shop or nature organization.
Humpback whale photos can be submitted to the CARIB Tails' program: <http://www.caribtails.org/submit-photos.html>