

Parke Marino Aruba

A SPAW listed protected area



Country: The Kingdom of the Netherlands

Management structure / authority: Fundacion Parke

Nacional Aruba

Date of establishment: 20 December 2018

Date of listing under SPAW: 16 October 2026

Size (terrestrial surface): 60,2 sq. km



Context:

The Parke Marino Aruba is a marine protected area surrounding Aruba in the southern Caribbean Sea, established in 2018 and covering approximately 6,020 hectares. It consists of four separate coastal sections extending up to 2 km offshore.

The park protects key ecosystems such as coral reefs, seagrass beds, and mangroves, which support species including sea turtles, seabirds, sharks, and marine mammals. It is managed as a multi-use area using an ecosystem-based approach.

Main fauna populations and/or those of particular importance present (resident or migratory) in the area:

Birds: Several species of migratory and coastal birds occur in the area, including roseate tern (*Sterna dougallii*), least tern (*Sterna antillarum*), osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) and other shorebirds.

Marine mammals: A diversity of cetaceans is present, including dolphins (*Stenella* spp.), pilot whales (*Globicephala macrorhynchus*), sperm whales (*Physeter macrocephalus*), and occasional large whales such as humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*).

Sea turtles: The area supports important nesting and foraging populations of green (*Chelonia mydas*), hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*), olive ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) and leatherback turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea*).

Other animals: Coral reefs (e.g. *Acropora palmata*, *Acropora cervicornis*) and invertebrates such as queen conch (*Strombus gigas*) are present, along with diverse fish communities including sharks and rays.



Main ecosystems in the area:

Marine and coastal: Habitats include coral reefs (20.1 km²; 68 reef-building species), seagrass beds (11.1 km²), sandy bottoms (9.5 km²) and rocky shores.

Mangroves and wetlands: Four mangrove species occur along several MPAs and reef islets, connected to wetlands such as Spaans Lagoen (Ramsar site).

Coastal and terrestrial: Adjacent ecosystems include beaches, reef islets (0.04 km²) composed of coral rubble and vegetation, and xerophytic coastal habitats forming interconnected systems with the MPAs.

Potential Threats:

Several key threats to the biodiversity of Parke Marino Aruba have been identified, including climate change as an overarching threat. Major pressures include residential and commercial development, unregulated marine recreation, unsustainable maritime and extractive activities, and pollution from land- and sea-based sources. Additional threats include invasive species and diseases (e.g. lionfish, coral bleaching, SCTLD), wildlife feeding, and natural disasters..

MANAGEMENT PLAN

Marine research and monitoring

- Baseline data collection
- Species and habitat studies
- Regular monitoring programs
- Oral history documentation
- Data analysis and reporting

Conservation and habitat restoration

- Habitat and species management
- Ecosystem connectivity actions
- Invasive species monitoring
- Mitigation measures implementation
- Pollution and climate monitoring

Stakeholder engagement and awareness

- Awareness campaigns and education
- Stakeholder meetings and workshops
- Community engagement programs
- Regional partnerships development

Sustainable use management

- Co-developed regulations
- Guidelines for user activities
- Impact reduction measures

Effective management capacity

- Staff recruitment and training
- Equipment acquisition
- Law enforcement support
- Financial plan and funding sources

Contact:

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The Parke Marino Aruba is part of the **SPAW protected areas managers network**.

For more information about it: <https://www.car-spaw-rac.org/?Protected-Areas>