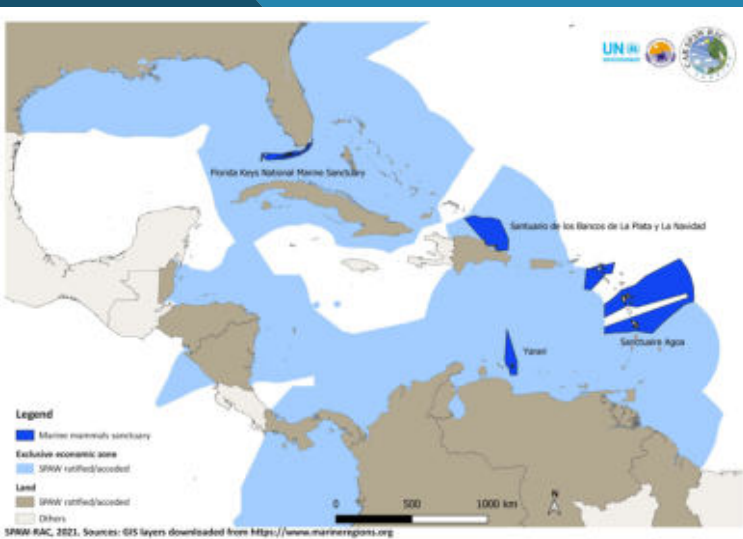## Conservation actions

An offshoot of the Cartagena Convention, the SPAW Protocol is dedicated to the protection of biodiversity in the Caribbean. Specifically, it represents :

- 18 signatory countries

- More than 200 protected species, including all marine mammals

- 35 sites listed with heightened protection

- A regional action plan for the conservation of all marine mammals in the Region.

In addition, several countries have created large sanctuary areas dedicated to marine mammals.

For more information, visit :
www.car-spaw-rac.org

Legend
- Marine mammals sanctuary
- Exclusive economic zone
- SPAW ratified/acceded
- Land
- SPAW ratified/acceded
- Others

SPAW-RAC, 2021. Sources: GIS layers downloaded from https://www.marineregions.org

Good news !
Thanks to the moratorium on whaling established in 1986, the humpback whale is making a comeback.
The species have reportedly recovered 93% of their original Southwest Atlantic population (Zerbini et al., 2019).

You too can help to preserve this incredible ecosystem with these simple gestures :

- In order to preserve the corals, use UV protective clothing and (or) an ocean-friendly mineral sunscreen.

- While underwater, do not touch anything to protect yourself from injury and to protect the oceans and their creatures from damage or contamination.

- Do not take any souvenirs from a wild site (sand, shells, starfish). They are also part of the ecosystem: they provide shelter and food for small animals and protect the coast from erosion.

- Choose reusable rather than disposable (water bottles, cups, bags.), sort your waste and say no to plastic.

- Just like anywhere else, don't leave any trash behind at the beach. No matter how minor the gesture, the damage can be considerable.

- Choose no-motorized activities and eco-labelled accommodation or tours.

Little Extra :
While on vacation, why not contribute to the conservation of marine mammals by using OBSenMER, the participatory science application that makes it easy to record observations at sea ?

www.obsenmer.org

Educational brochure
TO DISCOVER THE MARINE MAMMALS OF THE CARIBBEAN

Marine mammals of the Caribbean

Unlike fish, marine mammals have lungs and breathe at the surface. They have hair and the females nurse their young. Located at the top of the food chain, they are an essential link in the health of their ecosystem.

The Greater Caribbean Region is home to a great diversity of marine mammals with over **35 identified species !**

The following are the most common species :

- Toothed cetaceans (odontocetes), such as sperm whales and many species of dolphins such as pantropical spotted dolphins

- Baleen whales (mysticetes - filtering water to capture small prey), such as humpback whales.

- The sirenians comprise a lone, remarkable specimen, the Caribbean manatee.

Marine mammals are extraordinary animals, perfectly adapted to life underwater. For example, to find their bearings or to hunt, they use echolocation, by emitting sounds that bounce off obstacles and return to them.
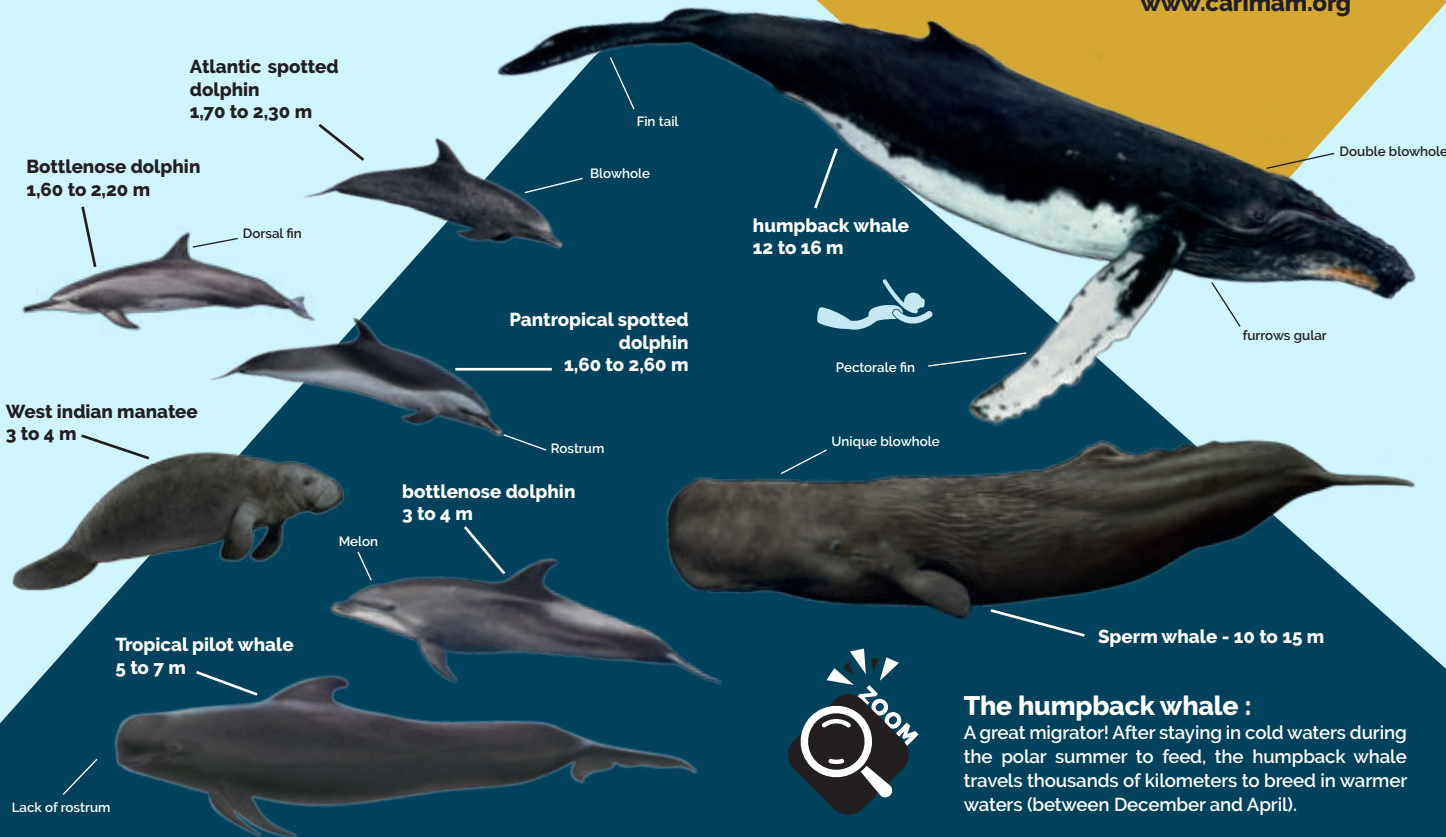
Some species communicate through low frequency sounds that can travel hundreds of kilometers. Others can dive to a depth of several thousand meters.

Threats to marine mammals

Marine mammals are subject to numerous risk factors, mainly related to human activities (accidental fishing, collisions with ships, pollution, disturbance, etc.)

Among the 35 species living in the Caribbean, 7 are included on the red list of threatened species of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
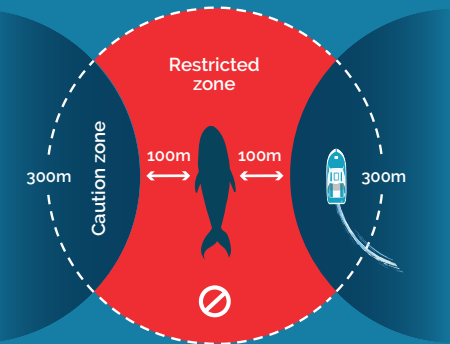
For more information, visit :
www.carimam.org

Observe without disturbing

In order to ensure a quality visit respectful of the animals, the SPAW Protocol proposes a guide of good practices for the approach of marine mammals.

Here are some of its recommendations :

- Stay calm (don't yell, don't bang on the hull of the boat)
- Do not throw anything in the water
- Do not feed the animals
- Do not separate, disperse, surround animals or get in the middle of a group
- Do not chase the animal
- Do not pass over the animal
- If you see their offspring, keep your distance
- Swimming with animals is not recommended

Atlantic spotted dolphin
1,70 to 2,30 m

Fin tail

Blowhole

Bottlenose dolphin
1,60 to 2,20 m

Dorsal fin

humpback whale
12 to 16 m

Double blowhole

furrows gular

Pectorale fin

Pantropical spotted dolphin
1,60 to 2,60 m

Rostrum

West indian manatee
3 to 4 m

Melon

bottlenose dolphin
3 to 4 m

Unique blowhole

Sperm whale - 10 to 15 m

Tropical pilot whale
5 to 7 m

Lack of rostrum

ZOOM

The humpback whale :
A great migrator! After staying in cold waters during the polar summer to feed, the humpback whale travels thousands of kilometers to breed in warmer waters (between December and April).

Restricted zone

Caution zone

100m 100m

300m 300m

Approach the animal from the side and slightly to the rear, respect the safety zones, put your motor in idle.

For more information, ask your guide