

# Le Conservatoire du littoral

OVERSEAS

## Saint Martin



Conservatoire du littoral

The maritime zones and land areas protected by le Conservatoire du littoral comprise over 300,000 acres, including more than 600 miles of shoreline in metropolitan France and its Overseas Departments and Collectivities.



# Le Conservatoire du littoral in Saint Martin

## Saint Martin: between land and sea

The island of Saint Martin, located in the Lesser Antilles, between the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean, measures 33 square miles. Part Dutch, part French, the island has 40,000 residents living in the 20 square miles that make up the French Territorial Collectivity. A popular tourist destination, Saint Martin attracts almost three million visitors per year, of which one million visit the natural terrestrial and maritime sites found on the French side of the island.

Although it was subjected to uncontrolled development, for years, the coastline still remains exceptional today and is worth preserving and sharing with the public: coastal brush forests, cliffs, coral reefs, mangroves, beaches...

## Le Conservatoire du littoral in Saint Martin

Thanks to an active land acquisition program, le Conservatoire du littoral ensures the protection of more than 800 acres of ponds,

and wooded, sandy, and rocky shorelines, found throughout the 15 natural sites along the French coastline of the island.

With the help of the elected members of the Collectivity and the National Nature Reserve Management Association, le Conservatoire has instituted a plan to improve certain areas of the coastline and to ensure their protection during usage by the following means: restoration of damaged ecosystems; management of sites and their public access: botanic trails, viewing points, instructive tours...

Additional endangered sites are under negotiation or are in process of being acquired.

## Integrated management

Managing and preserving the land, regulating marine protection, and site management are all essential, in order to protect vulnerable coastal areas. To implement and co-ordinate the shared management of the shoreline, the site administrators and the Saint Martin National Nature Reserve must work closely together in strong partnership.



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The Tintamarre islet

## Their role in the Overseas Zones

For over 30 years, goal of le Conservatoire du littoral has been to permanently protect the natural sites along the coasts of metropolitan France and overseas territories. It acquires natural areas that are later put under the management of local collectivities or various groups that use and maintain the sites: farmers, agriculturists, hunters, non-profit organizations, etc. In the Overseas zones, le Conservatoire's preservation to date includes close to 50,000 acres, divided among 135 natural sites in four departments —Réunion, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Guyane— and four collectivities — Mayotte, Saint Pierre et Miquelon, Saint Martin and Saint Barthelemy.

## The preservation of terrestrial zones



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Wooded site of Red Rock

Le Conservatoire du littoral protects 200 acres of coastline. The acquisition of this land makes it easier to maintain green zones along the coast as well as other areas on the island that have already been developed. The land around the salt pond in Orient Bay and Baie de L'Embouchure has been allocated to the Conservatoire.

Wooded areas around Orient Bay Point, Anse Marcel, Bell Point, and Point Bluff are also protected and the brush forests along the coastline, where remarkable botanical species characteristic of such dry areas grow: *Turk's Head cactus Melocactus intortus*; *prickly-pear cactus*.

## An exceptional site... Red Rock

Located on the north side of the island, the Red Rock site is one of the rare, large wooded massifs still in existence on the island. Culminating at 950', this landmass has very diverse scenery and flora: 182 species grow on the site, as well as brush forests, savanna, dry thickets, marshland... and cliffs, overlooking both sandy and rocky beaches. With 17 species of birds and eight species of reptiles, the fauna here is also remarkable.

A botanic trail links Anse Marcel to Grandes Cayes-Cul de Sac, where this undeveloped coastal area can be observed, while discovering the flora of Saint Martin along the way, stopping at exceptional spots, such as Pointe des Froussards and Eastern Point. Le Conservatoire already protects 70 acres at Red Rock and gives special priority to this unique site.

## Focus on Marine Turtles

Three species of marine turtles are found in Saint Martin: the Hawksbill Sea Turtle, the green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), and the leatherback sea turtle. Between March and October, these turtles lay their eggs on certain secluded beaches: Galion, Grandes Cayes, and Petites Cayes.



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## Focus on Turk's Head Cactus

Turk's head cactus (*Melocactus intortus*), a species endemic to the lesser Antilles, is protected by a governmental decree, that was issued on December 26th 1988. Characteristic of dry climates, this cactus has a globular stem with vertical ribs and a cylindrical cephalium, which can grow up to three feet high. The seeds inside the fruit it bears reproduce.



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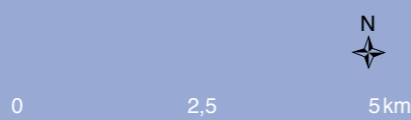
## Saint Martin



Conservatoire du littoral

## Map of protected zones and measures for the conservation of natural areas

- Land areas affected at le Conservatoire du littoral
- Maritime zones classified in National nature Reserve
- Natural areas of ecological, faunistic and floristic interest (ZNIEFF)



## Ponds protected by le Conservatoire du littoral and under the protection of a biotope protection order

- 1 Grand Étang
- 2 Étang Rouge
- 3 Étang du Bluff
- 4 Étang Guichard
- 5 Mare de l'Anse Heureuse
- 6 Étang du Cimetière
- 7 Étang de Grand-Case
- 8 Salines de l'aéroport
- 9 Étang de l'Anse Marcel
- 10 Étang de la Barrière
- 11 Étang Chevrise
- 12 Salines d'Orient
- 13 Étang aux Poissons
- 14 Mare de la Baie Lucas



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Pointe des Froussards, Red Rock site



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All the sites in this category

- Pointe du Bluff 39 acres (RNN)
- Bell Point, Bell Hill 39 acres (RNN)
- Baie de l'Embouchure 42 acres (RNN)
- Pointe des Froussards 9 acres (RNN)
- Red Rock 19 acres (RNN)
- Eastern Point 22 acres (RNN)
- Grandes Cayes 24 acres (RNN)
- Area around Salines d'Orient 34 acres (RNN)



## Protecting and enhancing the ponds and mangrove forests



Pond at Grand-Case

The island of Saint Martin comprises many ponds and lagoons, most of which are surrounded by mangroves. These areas play an important role in the ecology of the island: canalization of rain water; filtering of alluvial silt, water purification, and a refuge and breeding ground for marine fauna and birds... 85 species of birds frequent these humid areas for reproduction, feeding, or resting during periods of migration. These zones have been, and continue to be damaged by the thoughtless activities of mankind: landfill, dumping of dirty water, trash collection, sewage and bad drainage, and clearing land of trees....

To reduce the pressure put on these natural sites, the ponds at Salines d'Orient and the étang aux Poissons were classified for protection by the National Nature Reserve in 1998. Since 2007, decrees have been issued for the protection of the biotope and regulating human activities on the 16 ponds on the French side of the island. On February 2, 2007, 14 ponds were transferred to le Conservatoire du littoral via a governmental decree to reinforce their protection. The establishment of a path raised on stilts in the mangrove at the Barrier at Cul de Sac pond allows continued observation of this remarkable and fragile ecosystem.

### ✦ Among the sites... The pond of étang aux Poissons and its mangrove forest

Located on the eastern side of Saint Martin, the étang aux Poissons covers an area of 186 acres, and features the last large mangrove forest remaining on the island. A typical forested ecosystem found in tropical tidal areas, a mangrove forest is made up of dense vegetation adapted to

brackish water, and includes various members of the mangrove family.

Especially dense around the étang aux Poissons and the Salines d'Orient, both of which are classified as Natural Reserves, the mangroves comprise an essential habitat for birds, fish, and shellfish: the mangroves serve as a place of refuge, feeding, and reproduction.

All the sites in this category

- Étang Rouge • 9 acres
- Grand Étang • 39 acres
- Étang Guichard • 32 acres
- Étang de Grand-Case • 20 acres
- Grand-Case Aéroport • 54 acres
- Étang Chevrise • 57 acres
- Étang de la Barrière • 6.2 acres
- Salines d'Orient • 70 acres (RNN)
- Étang du Cimetière • 2 acres
- Étang de l'Anse Marcel • 2 acres
- Étang de la Pointe du Bluff • 32 acres
- Étang de l'Anse Heureuse • 0.70 acres
- Baie Lucas • 2 acres
- Étang aux poissons • 186 acres (RNN)

## The islets, isolated ecosystems



The Pinel islet

Le Conservatoire du littoral also protects seven small islands, five of which are classified as Natural Reserves. Their protection is important as they contain isolated ecosystems that house extremely rich ecosystems. These islands are also representative of important marine environments –and we must fight against those who seek to develop them. They feature such characteristics as coastal forests, dunes and beaches, coconut groves, sea grapes, manchineel trees, almond trees, tamarinds, and, on the island of Tintamarre, the very rare Gaïac.

### ✦ Among the sites... the Pinel islet

A remarkable natural site that covers 32 acres, Pinel has a combination of rocky coasts, beaches, open fields, and dry, scrubby forests. There are many rare trees here, many of which are located along the edge of the beaches. Buildings completed on this site before it was under the aegis of le Conservatoire are today considered part of a sustainable development project, which will integrate these structures into the environment, with an ecologically responsible approach toward the human activities that take place in them. The evaluation of this natural site also includes a project to create a discovery trail across the island.

### Focus on marine mammals



N. MASLACH/RNN

Of the 33 species of marine mammals that frequent the waters of the Caribbean, some are occasionally seen in the shallow, protected zones around Saint Martin: humpback whales— *Megaptera novaeangliae*— come to reproduce from January to May, along with the bottlenose dolphin, or *Tursiops truncatus*. In 2009, Saint Martin should become part of a marine mammal sanctuary that will encompass the entire Caribbean archipelago.

### Focus on plant beds, marine flowering plants, and coral



N. MASLACH/RNN

Marine flowering plants create veritable "underwater prairies" that are of primordial importance since they oxygenate the water through the process of photosynthesis. They also help maintain the clarity of the water thanks to the trapping of sediment. Coral creates a nursery zone for many different species, especially conch, white sea urchins, and a variety of fish, such as the surgeonfish, the parrot fish, and perch...

All the sites in this category

- Grand Ilet (Simson Bay) 14 acres
- Ilet Requin or Rocher de l'Anse Marcel 0.9 acres
- Rocher Créole 2.2 acres (RNN)
- Ilet Tintamarre 116 acres (RNN)
- Caye Verte 13 acres (RNN)
- Petite Clef 3.2 acres (RNN)
- Îlet Pinel 32 acres (RNN)

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