

Wild Things! Animals of St. Martin



an Amuseum Companion

Learn the amazing stories of St. Martin's wildlife! Get to know the animals that only live here, new arrivals that are changing the island, the critters that call out in the night and much more!



ONLY ON ST. MARTIN

Our island's endemic species

It seems strange that such a small island can be home to animals found nowhere else in the world, but it's true. Although islands don't have as many different kinds of animals as continents, they often have a lot of unique species. It is one of the things that makes islands so special.

Above: The Bearded Anole lives only on St. Martin, mostly in forests and other well-shaded, plant-filled areas.



Bearded Anole (Anolis pogus)

Found only on St. Martin, this lizard is common in shady areas. It disappeared from Anguilla in the 1920s, perhaps due to lack of suitable habitat.

Ground Lizard (Pholidoscelis plei analifera)

While this species also lives on Anguilla and St. Barts, the lizards on St. Martin have distinctive markings and are considered a separate subspecies.



Endemic is a word that's used to mean "found only in a specific place." St. Martin is home to many animals that are endemic to the Caribbean or to the Lesser Antilles, and a smaller number that are endemic to just this island.

Island endemics are the product of many biological processes. First, an animal must spread to a new island, or "colonize" it. This is a chance event, like a tree sent out to sea by a storm with lizards clinging to it that survive long enough to reach another island.

If colonizing animals find habitat and food, they adapt to their new home. For example, lizards from a rainy island may need to adapt to life on a dry island. Isolated from their ancestors, the colonists begin to diverge into a new species.

On St. Martin, most of our endemic animal species are reptiles. Our Ground Lizard is a different subspecies than is found on neighboring islands. The Bearded Anole has lived only on St. Martin since it died out on Anguilla in the 1920s. And the Spotted Woodslave is unique to this island, although a closely-related species can be found in much of the Caribbean.

The progress of science improves our understanding of endemic species. St. Martin surely has endemic invertebrates, like insects and spiders, waiting to be discovered. Our Soapberry Bug may be an endemic species, as well as one that is new to science.

Skinks are shiny lizards with small legs. When scientists recently reorganized how Caribbean skinks are classified, they named many new species. One of these was unique to St. Martin. The species was described from museum specimens over 100 years old, and it had not been seen in recent memory. It may have been eaten right out of existence by the non-native mongoose.

When you know the animals that live only on St. Martin, you can experience something special every day. Like the culture and the people, these animals make St. Martin unique. They also depend on you. You can help make sure St. Martin always has wild spaces where these wild things can live.



Soapberry Bug (Family Serinethinae)
These tiny insects may be a new species. They feed only on the fruit of the soapberry vine.

St. Martin Skink (Spondylurus martiniae)
This lizard may have become extinct over 100 years before anyone knew it was a special species unique to St. Martin. But it is also possible that some survive even today. (Photo: Blair Hedges)





Leaf Mimic Katydid (Phoebolampta caeruleotergum)

Two katydids on St. Martin have similar leaf-shaped bodies. One is found on many islands, but this one, with its special red markings, is found only on St. Martin.



Souliga Wall Crab Spider
(*Selenops souliga*)
Discovered on St. Martin,
this spider was named after
the Arawak name for St.
Martin: Souliga. It is found
on only a few islands.



Small Whip Spider
(*Charinus* sp.)
St. Martin's smaller whip
spider is rarely seen. It may
be a new species found only
here, or perhaps a species
previously only found on St.
Barts.



Spotted Woodslave (Thecadactylus oskrobapreinorum)

This species is found only on St. Martin. It coexists here on the island with its close relative, the Turnip-tailed Gecko. By day, these lizards hide in stone walls and under tree bark.



THE INVADERS

The impact of new arrivals

St. Martin, like all islands, was populated gradually by plants and animals that arrived by chance on ocean currents, or on their own wings. A unique living community formed over millions of years, changing slowly as the occasional new arrival colonized its shores.

Above: Small Asian Mongoose (Herpestes javanicus) Arrival: 1888. Believed responsible for wiping out three native reptiles: the Lesser Antillean Iguana, St. Martin Skink and Leeward Islands Racer.



Black Rat (Rattus rattus)

Arrival: Pre-1600

Harmful to many native plants and animals, the Black Rat eats the eggs and chicks of seabirds and other ground-nesting species.

When humans arrived on the island, they brought an explosion of new animals and plants. Amerindian canoes likely carried the Red-footed Tortoise and Johnstone's Whistling Frog. The first European ships brought rats and mice along with domestic animals like goats and chickens.

Although most animal introductions are accidental—people don't bring pests on purpose—a few have been intentional. The Small Asian Mongoose was introduced on St. Martin in an attempt to control rats in the sugarcane fields. But instead of killing off rats, the mongoose helped kill off three of our native reptile species.

Vervet Monkey (Chlorocebus pygerythrus)

Arrival: Late 20th Century

The local impact of this species has not been studied. These monkeys primarily eat fruit, but are known to prey on bird eggs and chicks, and possibly native lizards and invertebrates.

Raccoon (Procyon lotor)

Arrival: Pre-1957

The timing and nature of the raccoon's introduction are unknown. Its diet probably includes the eggs of our native egrets and other wetland birds.



Island ecosystems are delicate and can be thrown out of balance by sudden changes. The impact of introduced species on islands can be disastrous. As global trade keeps increasing, the rate of new species introduced from around the world keeps getting higher.

Introduced species can also harm humans. Dengue, Chikungunya and Zika are diseases from the other side of the world, spread by a mosquito that was itself brought by humans from Africa. A caterpillar from Asia helped cause the collapse of Sea Island Cotton production on St. Martin.



Checkered Swallowtail (Papilio demoleus)

Arrival: 21st Century

A recent arrival to the Caribbean, their caterpillars feed on citrus leaves, which are also non-native.

Dengue Mosquito (Aedes aegypti)

Arrival: Pre-1600

This mosquito was brought from Africa by early colonists. It carries a number of diseases, including Dengue, Yellow Fever and Zika.



Pink Bollworm (Pectinophora gossypiella)

Arrival: 1922

These moth caterpillars live inside cotton bolls and eat cotton seeds. They chew through the cotton as it is growing, which ruins the crop.



Tropical House Gecko
(*Hemidactylus mabouia*)
Arrival: Unknown
One of the world's most effective human-enabled colonists, it is found in tropical areas around the world and may compete with native species on St. Martin.



Vietnamese Giant Centipede
(*Scolopendra subspinipes*)
Arrival: Unknown
This impressively large centipede may compete and displace native species. It's well-known for having a painful bite.



Sometimes new arrivals have some help from humans, but make part of the journey on their own. This is often the case with birds. Species that were first brought across the ocean from Europe by people have later made the smaller jumps down to Caribbean islands on their own.

Often the impact of invaders is unknown. We can imagine they compete with native animals for food and habitat. But without careful study, we can't be sure how they are changing local nature. Many of the non-native birds on St. Martin do co-exist with similar native species.

By learning to recognize non-native animals, we can watch how the island changes. We can try to protect native species if they are threatened by new arrivals. Limiting the arrival of new species helps local nature. It can also prevent the arrival of new pests that might damage farms and gardens, or even species that could carry disease.



House Sparrow (Passer domesticus)

Arrival: 1990s

Although introduced to North America in the 1850s, this species was not documented on St. Martin until 1999, after making part of the journey on its own.

Eurasian Collared Dove (Streptopelia decaocto)

Arrival: 1990s

Introduced in the Bahamas in the 1970s, this dove has expanded its range into the Lesser Antilles and North America.



Green Iguana

(*Iguana iguana*)

Arrival: Mid-1990s

The iguana population has exploded on St. Martin in the last decade. Presence of this invasive iguana is a threat to native iguana populations on nearby islands.



Red-eared Slider

(*Trachemys scripta elegans*)

Arrival: 20th Century

Common in Fresh Pond and the Great Salt Pond, it's a recent arrival to Grand Case. Its impact on local wetland ecosystems is unknown.



The Red-footed Tortoise

(*Chelonoidis carbonarius*)

The Red-footed Tortoise is surprisingly hard to find in the wild, but many live in gardens on St. Martin. How did they get here? Probably, Amerindian people brought them from South America, where this tortoise is native. Tortoises are a food that would be easy to transport alive in canoes. Released on an island, they would multiply and provide future meals. Records show that tortoises were already here by the 1650s.

But could they have come on their own? Reptiles that colonized the Caribbean without human help have evolved into different species on each island, but Red-footed Tortoises are the same from island to island. Island tortoises also evolve to be giants. We know that there were giant tortoises in the Caribbean, just like in the Galapagos Islands. If the Red-footed Tortoise had come on its own and been here for millions of years, it probably would have evolved into a giant by now.



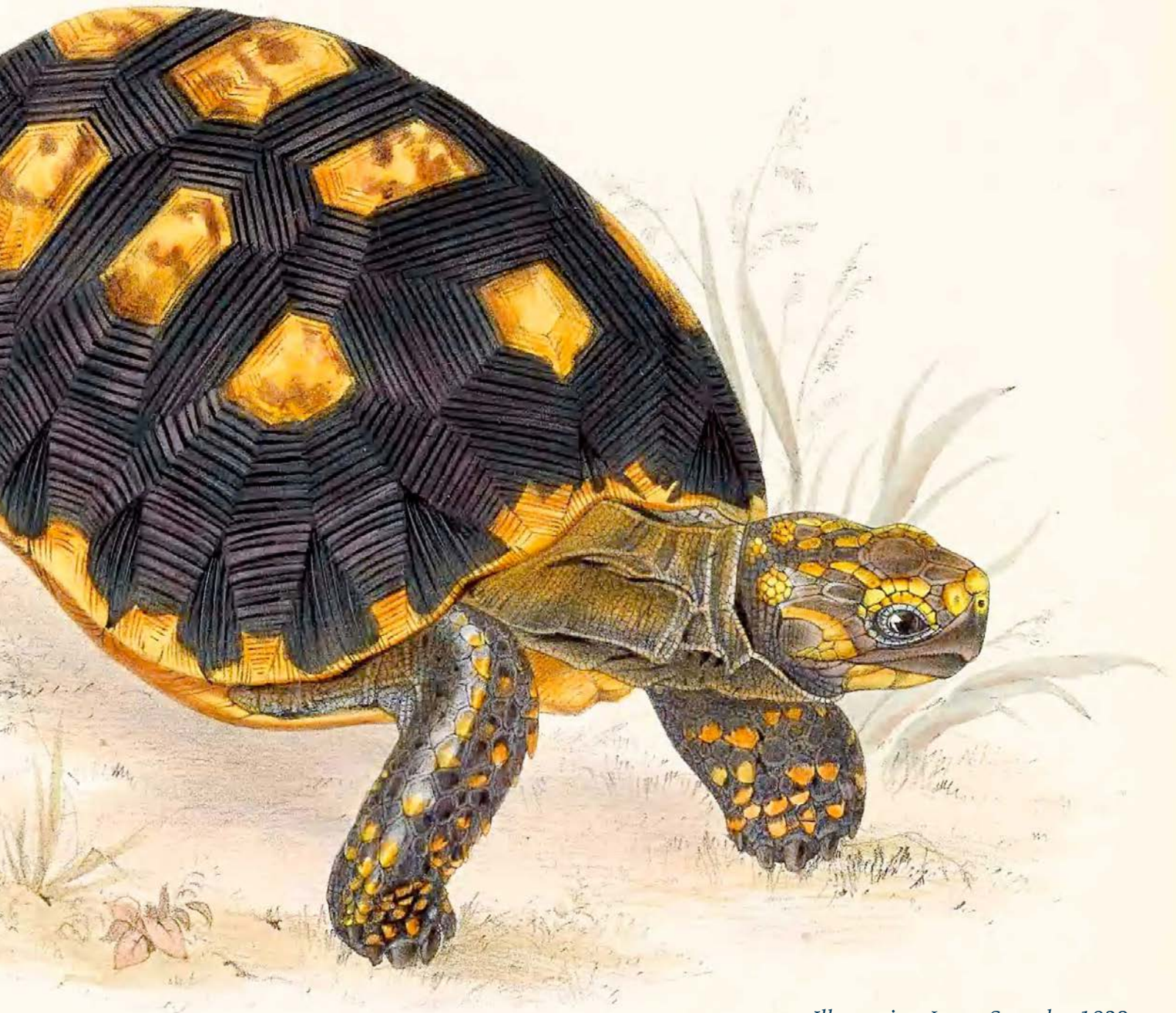


Illustration: James Sowerby, 1832



KINGDOM OF THE NIGHT

An island alive in the darkness

The island of St. Martin is divided in more ways than you might expect. When the sun goes down each evening, hundreds of different animal species are just beginning their day. If you've never set out into the scrub or forest with a flashlight, you've probably never seen most of them. By daybreak they've already returned to their hiding places, to rest until the next sunset.

*Above: The Forest Katydid (*Nesonotus tricornis*), also known as the Mountain Blacksmith.*



Antillean Stick Insect
(*Clonistria bartholomaea*)
These insects can be found feeding on Acacia (*Acacia* sp.) trees at night.

For many animals, a nocturnal lifestyle allows them to avoid predators. The Forest Katydid spends its days hiding in the hollows of trees, away from the sharp eyes of birds that would surely love to eat it. The Antillean Stick Insect, with no defense other than its excellent camouflage, stands still and hidden by day and waits until night to feast on leaves.

Moths fill the dark nighttime skies, sipping nectar from flowers just like butterflies do during the day. The Leatherleaf Slug roams the forest after nightfall, safe from predators and the drying rays of the tropical sun.

Southern Emerald Moth
(*Synchlora frondaria*)
This small green moth is often attracted to lights after dark.

Caribbean Leatherleaf Slug
(Family *Veronicellidae*)
This land slug sets out in the cool of night to eat plants.



Of course, there's no guarantee of safety for the creatures of the night. Hunters of all types have adapted to the darkness as well. The Tropical Orb Weaver builds a new web each evening to trap the insects that fly through the night. The Giant Crab Spider takes a more active approach, setting out on foot to capture insect prey. By day these hunters are much more timid, retreating to hiding spots they construct by binding leaves together with silk.

The Bark Scorpion and Spotted Woodslave hide by day as well, often under the peeling bark of large Tamarind trees. At night they hunt the island's smallest residents: insects, frogs and dwarf geckos.

Tropical Orb Weaver
(*Eriophora ravilla*)

The Tropical Orb Weaver spins a new web every night to snare flying insects.



Caribbean Giant Crab Spider
(*Olios antiguensis*)

No web needed! This night-hunting spider catches insects and small geckos with incredible speed.

Lesser Antillean Bark Scorpion
(*Centruroides barbudensis*)

This scorpion searches for prey at night, and usually passes its days underneath tree bark.



Spotted Woodslave
(*Thecadactylus*
oskrobapreinorum)
The Spotted Woodslave
takes shelter during the day,
and hunts at night.



Island Least Gecko
(*Sphaerodactylus sputator*)
Many predators spend the
dark hours hunting this
tiny gecko.



Communicating at night is a challenge of its own, but St. Martin's nocturnal animals have found many ways to do it. Sound is one of the most common, from the high-pitched tweet of Johnstone's Whistling Frog, to the rasping sound of the Money Bug, to the delicate buzz of the Snowy Cricket.



Money Bug
(*Neoconocephalus triops*)
When dark falls, you can hear the loud, rasping noise of the Money Bug.

Johnstone's Whistling Frog
(*Eleutherodactylus johnstonei*)

This tiny frog was named for its whistle-like mating call. It is not native, but its two-note tweeting sound is now a familiar part of St. Martin's night noises.



Snowy Cricket
(*Oecanthus niveus*)

Males rub their pearly wings together to create a unique chirping song. Females use special hearing parts called tympanum to sense the calls.





Striped Grass Looper Moth
(*Mocis latipes*)

Moths use scent signals called pheromones for communication at night.

Striped Firefly
(*Aspisma ignitum*)

Fireflies produce light in their bodies by a process called bioluminescence. They flash different patterns of light to communicate in the dark.



Red-headed Firefly
(*Photuris sp.*)

Photuris females are called “femme fatale fireflies” since they mimic the courtship flashes of other firefly species. This lures males in so they can eat them!



Scent is another way to communicate after dark. Moths release pheromones, special scents that send messages, into the air that can attract others of their species. We even have two species of firefly on the island, beetles that are able to generate their own light and signal to each other across the darkness.



GUT LIFE

St. Martin's freshwater ecosystems

Freshwater ecosystems on St. Martin are surprisingly diverse. St. Martin is a dry island with no rivers, but the seasonal streams—known as guts—hold a variety of creatures, including fish, shrimp, snails and aquatic insects. Together with algae and aquatic plants, they create a complete ecosystem of herbivores, hunters and scavengers.

Above: Furry Claw Crayfish (Macrobrachium faustinum) A top predator in St. Martin's freshwater ecosystems.



*Water Scavenger Beetle
(Tropisternus lateralis)*

Their larvae, or young, are totally aquatic. Adults live mostly in the water, but can also fly and breathe air.

*Dragonfly Naiad
(Order Odonata)*

Like damselflies, dragonflies have a three-stage life cycle: egg, naiad, and adult. The naiads live underwater.



For a freshwater animal, St. Martin has only a few habitats: guts, roadside ditches, wells and fresh ponds. These areas are surrounded by places where they can't survive—the dry land and the salty sea—like oases in a desert. During the spring dry season, many freshwater habitats dry up entirely.

In order to colonize freshwater habitats, animals have a variety of adaptations. Most aquatic insects can fly during part of their life cycle. Dragonflies and aquatic beetles can fly to find a freshwater area where their young can grow. Young beetles are called larvae, and young dragonflies and damselflies are both called naiads.

*Rambur's Forktail Damselfly Naiad
(Ischnura ramburii)*

Damselfly naiads are predators. They snatch up tiny aquatic insects and animals with their scoop-like jaws.



Fish and crustaceans that have adapted to live in Caribbean freshwater environments can usually tolerate brackish or salty water. Many of these animals have a larval phase of their life cycle, where they live in the sea during their young larval form and return inland as they grow.

Snails often have the ability to seal their shells and become dormant, or inactive, during a dry period. This special dormant state is called aestivation. Some aquatic animals also have eggs that can remain dormant during dry periods and hatch when water is present again.



*Mozambique Tilapia
(Oreochromis mossambicus)
These African fish were introduced to St. Martin by
people in recent years.*

*Guppy
(Poecilia reticulata)
The female is large and plain colored, the male is
small and colorful.*



*Crested Goby
(Lophogobius cyprinoides)
This fish is named for the crest on its head, that starts
between its eyes.*





Spotted Sleeper
(*Eleotris picta*)

These non-native fish can live in fresh or brackish water.



Virgin Nerite
(*Neritina virginea*)

These native snails have a wide variety of beautiful patterns and colors in their shells.

Red-rimmed Melania
(*Melanoides tuberculata*)

This non-native freshwater snail is named for the rusty-red spots on its cone-shaped shell.



Apple Snail
(*Pomacea* sp.)

These snails can seal up their shells to keep from drying out during periods of drought.



Aquatic insects probably colonized St. Martin by flying, while some fish and crustaceans arrived via sea currents during the larval phase of their development. Snails may have arrived as eggs stuck to the muddy feet of migratory birds. Many species have also been brought by humans, usually by accident. Together they form a fascinating community that is rarely explored, but uniquely Caribbean.



Creeping Water Bug
(*Pelocoris* sp.)

Creeping Water Bugs store air under their wings to breathe when they're underwater.

Mosquito Larvae
(Family *Culicidae*)

Mosquito larvae live in water, eating algae and other tiny water plants and animals.



Cuban Tree Frog Tadpole
(*Osteopilus septentrionalis*)

Like all frogs now on St. Martin, the Cuban Tree Frog is not native to the island.



Crested Goby





TO THE BAT CAVE!

St. Martin's bats and cave critters

Many people don't know that there are caves on St. Martin. In fact, the limestone that covers much of the island is ideal for cave formation. Most of the world's caves are made where water has dissolved limestone over a long period of time.

Above: The cave in the Lowlands area is one of the few remaining caves on the island. It is home to Lesser Antillean Fruit Bats, Jamaican Fruit Bats and Fisherman Bats.



Bats Roosting in Cave

In the Lowlands cave, bats can be found roosting in groups of hundreds or even thousands. There are usually more bats during the rainy season, when more food is available for them.

Lesser Antillean Fruit Bat (Brachyphylla cavernarum)

This fruit-eating bat is found in most of the Lesser Antilles. Below is a maternity colony with mothers, and young bats that are still relatively hairless.



The small caves on St. Martin are hidden in the scrub, and almost impossible to find unless you know exactly where they are. You can hear and smell these caves before you see them, because of the bats that live inside.

St. Martin's caves are home to several species of bats, which are the island's only native mammals. Mammals are animals that breathe air, have hair or fur, and produce milk to feed their young—like humans, cows, cats and bats. The Lesser Antillean Fruit Bat, with its pig-like nose, and the Jamaican Fruit Bat, with its prominent nose-leaf, are the most common bats here. At the Grotte du Puits, a cave in The Lowlands, hundreds of these species can be seen. The floor of the cave is littered with the pits of almonds and palm fruit brought back to the cave by these fruit-eaters.

Jamaican Fruit Bat (Artibeus jamaicensis)

This fruit-eating bat is common in caves on the island. It has a prominent noseleaf. This wrinkled structure on the snout is thought to help them with echolocation, which means using sound to locate objects.



Other unusual creatures also live in St. Martin's caves: spiders of several kinds, cave crickets, cockroaches and the whip spider, which is menacing-looking but harmless. Birds and Jack Spaniard wasps sometimes build their nests in caves, where they're protected from the rain.

In many ways, caves are like islands. Ideal habitats for cave-dwelling animals can be separated by miles, just like the sea separates islands from each other. Many species of animals and insects are cave specialists, meaning they live only in caves and cave-like environments. There are even some animal species that only exist in one specific cave.

Cave Cricket
(*Amphiacusta* sp.)

These crickets are found in caves, and also on the forest floor, where they hide beneath rocks during the day. In dark caves, they're active during the day.



American Cockroach
(*Periplaneta americana*)

Cockroaches are attracted to the food left behind by the bats on the cave floor.

Antillean Whip Spider
(*Phrynus goesii*)

Fearsome looking, but harmless to humans, the whip spider hunts crickets and cockroaches.





Jack Spaniard Wasp
(*Polistes crinitus*)

Jack Spaniards need a dry place to build their nest, so caves are perfect for them.



Ensign Wasp
(*Evania appendigaster*)

The ensign wasp is often seen near cockroaches. It is a parasite of cockroach egg cases. It lays an egg inside a cockroach egg case. When the wasp larva hatches, it eats the cockroach eggs.

Caribbean Hermit Crab
(*Coenobita clypeatus*)

Hermit crabs scavenge food left on the cave floor by the bats. The cave is also a shady place where these nocturnal animals can rest during the day.



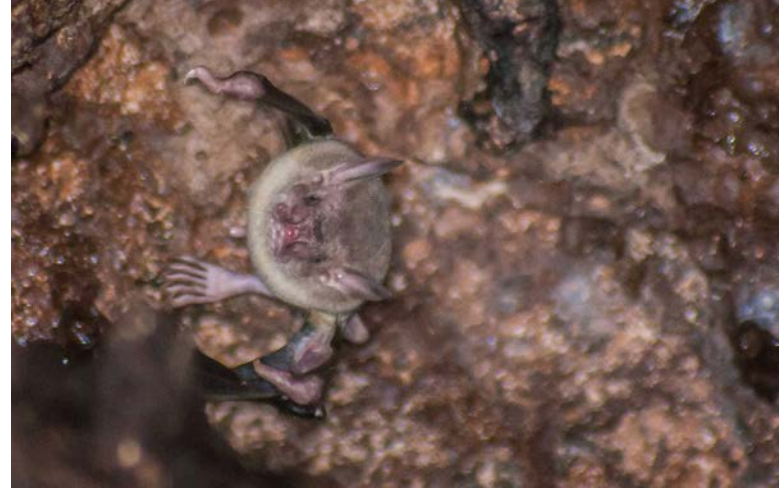
Brown Recluse Spider
(*Loxosceles caribbaea*)

Lots of different spider species are found in the caves of St. Martin. Many are cave specialists, and some species are found almost exclusively in caves.



There are only a few caves left on St. Martin—the rest have been destroyed by development. Some of the last remaining caves are the Grotte du Puits in The Lowlands and a series of small caves located near the top of Billy Folly in Simpson Bay.

These caves are a critical habitat for our native bats and for a whole host of creatures that are adapted to a cave-dwelling lifestyle. They deserve protection and study as some of St. Martin's most unique natural features.



*Fisherman Bat
(Noctilio leporinus)*

This bat uses echolocation to sense ripples on the surface of the water. Then it swoops down and catches the fish with its large feet. It stores food in its jowls so it can continue fishing.

*Velvety Free-tailed Bat
(Molossus molossus)*

This small bat is an insectivore, or insect-eater, and often roosts in buildings. If you see bats in an urban area of St. Martin, they're probably this species. A single bat may eat hundreds of insects per hour.



Rock Formations

Water dissolves limestone to create caves. It also creates cave formations by leaving mineral deposits inside caves, often in beautiful and unusual shapes.



Limestone Cave in the Lowlands





TEAM CLEAN

Returning life to the earth

The life of an animal is part of a greater cycle, where nutrients flow from the earth to plants and animals and back to the earth to be reused again. From the soil beneath our feet, grass grows and is eaten by the grasshopper, which is eaten by the lizard, which is eaten by the bird.

Above: An adult carrion fly.



At life's end, the body of an animal is broken down by animals specialized in this process: Team Clean. They're mostly insects, like flies and beetles, but crabs and other animals may be part of this important group as well. By eating the flesh of dead animals, also called carrion, they keep the island clean and return nutrients to the soil so plants can grow and the cycle can continue.

The First Step

When an animal dies, carrion flies are often the first to arrive. They use their powerful sense of smell to detect carrion from as far away as 1.5 km.

Carrion Flies

(Family Calliphoridae)

Carrion flies lay their eggs on dead animals that their larvae will eat. There are over 1,000 Calliphoridae species in the world and several live on St. Martin.

Fringed Larder Beetle

(Dermestes frischii)

The larvae of this beetle feed on dry carrion, skin, hair and feathers that may be left behind by other insects. Amuseum staff found that they also eat museum specimens.





*Red-legged Ham Beetle
(Necrobia rufipes)*

This beetle can be seen finishing carcasses that are already almost clean. It also eats dried meats.



*Fiddler Crab
(Uca sp.)*

These crabs usually sift organic matter from sand, but they also feed on animal carcasses in or near the water.

*Ants
(Family Formicidae)*

Many ant species will also eat carrion, especially smaller animals not big enough to attract other scavengers.



To the Bone

While much of the scavenging process happens in the first days and weeks, it can take months for Team Clean to finish the job, leaving clean white bones.





Painting by Sélénia Sanner



SECRET NESTS

Hidden treasures on beaches and ponds

Not all birds make their nests up in trees. Many of the birds you see around ponds and beaches make their nests right on the ground. With their nests out in the open, they are masters of hiding and defending them. Here is how three St. Martin birds keep their nests safe.

Above: A Black-necked Stilt on her hidden nest.



Killdeer make a shallow nest and fill it with bits of shell and fish bones. If an animal comes near, the parents try to distract it. They pretend to have a broken wing and lead the threat away from the nest.

Killdeer parents protect their nest by luring threats away from the nest. This species is famous for its broken wing act.

Killdeer chicks are able to walk around on their own almost as soon as they hatch. Birds that can do this are called precocial birds.



Killdeer nests are made on the ground with bits of rock, shell, or whatever materials are handy.



Least Terns nest right on the beach. It's almost impossible to see their nests. Their eggs and chicks look just like the sand. Camouflage is the only protection for these eggs and chicks.



Least Terns will make noise and fly at you if you get near their nest. If this is happening to you, you should very carefully go somewhere else.

Least Tern nests are almost invisible. They are incredibly easy to step on or drive over by accident. Least Terns do nest together in colonies, so it is best to avoid areas where they are nesting.



Least Tern chicks are speckled, and look a lot like the eggs they just hatched out of. They wait in the sand for their parents to bring them fish to eat.





Black-necked Stilts nest near ponds and on old salt pan walls. This helps them see predators before they get close. The birds call out to warn each other when there is danger. They chase away animals by flying right at them.

Black-necked Stilts will do elaborate dances to distract predators away from their nest. They may pretend they are injured. They will also make loud warning cries to alert other birds.

It is common to see Black-necked Stilt nests on the salt pan walls that divided ponds into separate areas for salt production.



If a threat is nearby, Black-necked Stilt chicks will stay perfectly still to avoid being noticed.





BIRDS IN PARADISE

Unique to the Caribbean

Birds can fly from island to island. So with many islands nearby, there are no birds that are found only on St. Martin. However, many of our common birds are found only in our region. There are also birds here that are widespread, but have a distinctive variety or subspecies in our region.

Above: The Sugar Bird is one of the unique birds found only in the Caribbean. It is also known as the Bananaquit and Yellow Breast.



Sugar Bird (Coereba flaveola bartholemica)

Species range: Caribbean

Subspecies range: Northern Lesser Antilles

This bird is incredibly diverse. 41 different subspecies are recognized on different islands and the Caribbean shores of Central and South America.

Caribbean Elaenia (Elaenia martinica riisii)

Species range: Caribbean

Subspecies range: Northern Lesser Antilles

This small flycatcher is only found in the Caribbean. Known for its beautiful song, it's usually seen in scrubland areas.

Black-faced Grassquit (Tiaris bicolor)

Species range: Caribbean

Locally known as the Tobacco Seed, Chee-chee Bird, or Sparrow, the male is brown with a black face and belly. Females and juveniles are a drab olive-brown, similar to the female Lesser Antillean Bullfinch, but much smaller.

Lesser Antillean Bullfinch (Loxigilla noctis ridgwayi)

Species endemic to: Lesser Antilles and Virgin Islands

Subspecies endemic to: Northern Lesser Antilles

This seed-eating bird is common on St. Martin. The male is black with orange markings and the female is brown. They are commonly seen in coastal scrub areas on the island.





Antillean Crested Hummingbird
(*Orthorhyncus cristatus*)

Species range: Lesser Antilles to Puerto Rico
The male of this species has a crest of feathers on its head. They are very tiny, even for hummingbirds. They have a small, straight bill. Females have a light gray breast, while males are dark all over.



Green-throated Carib (Eulampis holosericeus)

Species range: Lesser Antilles to Puerto Rico
The larger of our two commonly-seen hummingbird species, the Green-throated Carib can be identified by its size and long, curved bill. It can be seen all over the island.

Purple-throated Carib (Eulampis jugularis)

Species range: Lesser Antilles
This hummingbird is similar to the Green-throated Carib, but is larger and has a purple throat patch. It is rarely seen here because it prefers forests on mountains taller than the hills of St. Martin.



Pearly-eyed Thrasher (Margarops fuscatus)

Species range: Caribbean
This is one of two thrashers found on St. Martin and both live only in the Caribbean. The local name for this bird is Thrush or Trush. They eat many things: lizards, insects, fruit and even leftover human food.





Mountain Dove (Zenaida aurita aurita)

Species range: Caribbean

Subspecies range: Lesser Antilles

This Caribbean dove is also known as the Zenaida Dove. It is the national bird of Anguilla, where it is called the Turtledove.



Blue Pigeon (Patagioenas squamosa)

Species range: Caribbean

This pigeon is also called the Scaly-naped Pigeon because its neck feathers look like scales. It is not very common on St. Martin because people hunt it.

Carib Grackle (Quiscalus lugubris guadeloupensis)

Species range: Lesser Antilles and South America

Subspecies range: Lesser Antilles

Although they are common today, they were first seen on St. Martin in the early 1970s. The male is black, and the female and juvenile are gray-brown.



White-crowned Pigeon (Patagioenas leucocephala)

Species range: Caribbean

Once rare to see, this pigeon has been spotted more often on St. Martin since Hurricane Irma. They may have been brought here from Barbuda, one of the few islands where they are common.





This book was developed as a companion to Amuseum Naturalis, St. Martin's free museum of nature, heritage and culture. The Amuseum, and this book, were created by Les Fruits de Mer.

Les Fruits de Mer is a non-profit association based in St. Martin whose core mission is to raise awareness about nature, culture, and heritage. The organization carries out this mission through a free museum, publications, films, and public events. Learn more at lesfruitsdemer.com and amuseumnaturalis.com.

