



**AGENCE FRANÇAISE
POUR LA BIODIVERSITÉ**

Établissement public du ministère de l'Environnement

Dear competitor,

Reserve Naturelle Nationale de Saint-Martin and Agoa marine mammal sanctuary would like to make you aware that there's a **high risk of a large whale (humpback or sperm whale) strike** by a vessel during the 2020 Caribbean Multihull Challenge - SXM.

The risk of collision is a serious concern. The St. Maarten Heineken Regatta and Agoa marine mammal sanctuary share with you some key recommendations in case of encounter.

Maintain visual watch at all times. Whales are air-breathing mammals that must surface to get the air they need. At sea, marine mammal can be spotted by their blows - exhalation of water through the blowholes that looks like a small cloud of water and air from 1 to 2 m high.

In case of a last-minute encounter, reduce your speed and sail away from the animal bypassing it from the rear.

If you are less than 300 m from them please follow the guidelines:

Sail away from the precautionary area at gradual speed and constant heading. If several vessels are in the area do not surround the animals; all vessels should be positioned on the same side and never separate a group. It is forbidden to approach a resting or jumping animal.

Animals should be approached from an oblique angle from the rear, your approach path gradually drawing parallel to that of the animals without ever overtaking them.

Manoeuvres should be done at less than 5 knots when entering, inside, or leaving the precautionary area (300 m around the group).

Put the vessel into neutral if the animals approach.

Stop watching if any individual shows signs of agitation.

Please be aware that in France, marine mammal are protected by law –

Failure to comply with these rules disturbs the animals and offenders may be penalized

(Ministerial Order 211 & Prefectural Order 2013-065-0007, Art. 3)



