The Marine Community

Mangroves, seagrass beds, and coral reefs are interrelated ecosystems. Fish and shellfish depend on these habitats for food and shelter. Coral reefs are among the most diverse, productive, and complex ecosystems in the world. Corals are fragile, living organisms. Most grow only a fraction mature. Seagrasses are flowering marine ecosystems in the world. Corals are fragile, to deeper water and offshore reefs as they mature. Seagrasses are flowering marine plants that spread primarily through root growth. These roots also help to retain sediments and reduce shoreline erosion, resulting in improved water quality. When anchors rip up seagrasses, what’s left is a scarred sea floor that may take years to recover. Important food sources for marine animals are also destroyed and crystal clear water becomes cloudy with sediment.

More Information

Cruz Bay Visitor Center
Open Daily 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
(340) 778-6201 ext. 238
www.nps.gov/viv
www.nps.gov/viort

Please help keep the moorings safe by reporting any damage immediately to the Bay Host or phone (340) 693-8900 ext. 241.

Additional mooring and anchoring information is available at:
http://www.nps.gov/viv/PlanYourVisit/PlanYourVisitIndex.htm

Emergency

Park Headquarters: 911 or 1-866-995-8467
Marine-related: VHF Channel 16 for U.S. Coastguard and Virgin Islands Radio

Using the National Park Mooring System

Moorings have been installed and protected areas have been established around the more sensitive reef and seagrass areas to allow visitors to use these areas while protecting resources from anchor and chain damage. This guide helps boaters preserve the park’s marine resources so that future generations will have the opportunity to enjoy them.

Private Vessel Size Limits and Locations

Mariners must use moorings in park waters if they are available and the vessel is of appropriate size. Size is based on length overall (LOA). LOA is defined in 30 CFR 69.2 as the centerline longitudinal distance, rounded to the nearest foot, measured between:

1. The outside foremost part of the vessel visible above the waterline, including bulwarks (a section of the vessel’s side extending above main deck), but excluding bowsprit and similar fittings or attachments;

2. The outside aftermost part of the vessel visible above the waterline, including bulwarks but excluding rudders, outboard motor brackets, and similar fittings or attachments.

For larger vessels or when moorings are full, vessels anchoring must use one of three designated anchorages for their vessel size as follows:

- Francis Bay Anchor Area: Private vessels less than 210 feet LOA may anchor in this area. To anchor, do not approach the mooring area at more than 5 knots, more than 30 feet from any park buoy, and shoreward (east) between the line created between the GPS points: 18° 22' 0" N, 64° 45' 5" W and 18° 21' 36" N, 64° 45' 3" W. No buoys mark this area.

- Lind Point Anchor Area: Private vessels up to 125 LOA may anchor: 18° 20' 22" N and 64° 48' 8" W, 18° 20' 34" N and 64° 47' 48" W, 18° 20' 34" N and 64° 48' 8" W, 18° 22' 0" N and 64° 45' 3" W, 18° 22' 0" N and 64° 45' 5" W. No buoys mark this area.

- Cruz Bay-NPS Anchor Area: Vessels less than 60 feet LOA may anchor in NPS waters (north of green channel markers along northern part) of Cruz Bay Harbor (former sea plane ramp area), for up to three hours. Hours of anchoring are 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Overnight anchoring in this area is prohibited.

How to Moor Your Boat

1) Approach the mooring painter line (pickup line with small surface float) by heading into the wind or current at a very slow speed. Shift engine into neutral before reaching the mooring.

2) Pick up the eye of the mooring painter with your boat hook.

3) Thread your bow line through the painter line eye. Do not tie off eye at the boat stem or cleat.

4) Bring your line back to the boat and cleat it off on the same side. DO NOT put the painter line eye over your bow cleat.

5) When leaving a mooring, engine into neutral before reaching the mooring.

6) To moor a large catamaran, feed a line from each side of the front (bow) through the thrimble, then cleat the line to the cleat from which it originated. (Two lines pass through the thrimble, one from each side of the bow). This helps reduce chaff at the thrimble.

7) Securing vessels to moorings using stem cleats is prohibited.

Warning: Johnson’s Reef

Large yellow buoys mark Johnson’s Reef, a shallow reef one-half mile north of Trunk Bay. Stay outside of the ring of yellow warning buoys in this area. Dangerous reef lies two feet beneath the surface and many vessels have struck the reef and run aground.

Types of Mooring Buoys

For vessels on moorings with a tender, greater than 16 feet LOA, the combined LOA of the two (2) vessels must not be greater than the mooring (length) rating, either <60 feet or <100 feet.

Types of Mooring Buoys

- Larger White moorings with red stripes (Big Boat Moorings) can be used by vessels less than or equal to 60 feet in length overall (LOA) for overnight use; unless labeled “day use only.”

- Orange mooring buoys with blue stripes are for vessels engaged in snorkeling or SCUBA diving (commercial and non-commercial activities).

Yellow moorings for commercial use authorization (CUA) permits and vessels with CUA have priority.

Blue moorings with blue stripes and red stripes are for permitted hardnose fishing and are located offshore of Caneel Bay Resort. Two green buoys with a black reflective stripe with float lines mark the dinghy bents for vessels 16 feet or less. They are found at Trunk, Little Cinnamon, Little Maho, Maho/Trunk, Hawksnest Bay, Honeymoon Beach, and Waterlemon Cay.

Private vessel size limits are 125 feet LOA.

Anchoring is prohibited elsewhere in the park and in the monument.

Please help keep the moorings safe by reporting any damage immediately to the Bay Host or phone (340) 693-8900 ext. 241.

Proper approach and pickup of mooring.

Virgin Islands National Park
Virgin Islands Coral Reef National Monument
U.S. Virgin Islands

Copyright 2015
NPS-Marine Guide 12415 PRESSREADY.indd 1