

REEF SMART GUIDES



BARBADOS

SCUBA DIVE SNORKEL SURF



Acknowledgments

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About Reef Smart:

Reef Smart creates detailed guides of the marine environment, particularly coral reefs and shipwrecks, for recreational divers, snorkelers and surfers. Our products are available as printed guidebooks, waterproof slates, wall posters, dive briefing charts and 3D interactive maps, which can be used on websites and as apps. Reef Smart also provides additional services to resorts that are dedicated to offering an environmentally aware experience for their guests; these include marine biology training for dive professionals and resort staff, implementation of coral reef monitoring and restoration programs, and the development of sustainable use practices that reduce the impact of operations on the natural environment.

www.reefsmartguides.com

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How to use this book

Objective

The main objective of this guide is to provide a resource for people, particularly divers, snorkelers and surfers, who are interested in exploring the marine environment of Barbados. This guide is designed to be used alongside Reef Smart waterproof cards, which can be taken into the water. Although this guide includes some information suitable for the general traveler, such as places to eat and drink, it is not meant to be a definitive guide to the island of Barbados.

Mapping

We have attempted to catalogue all the island's beaches, surf spots and diving and snorkeling sites. However, only what we consider to be the top dive and snorkel sites on the island have been featured in more detail using Reef Smart's unique 3D-mapping technology. These maps provide useful information such as depths, currents, waves, suggested routes, potential hazards, unique structures and species information, which cannot be found in other guides. The maps are listed in the guide from north to south.

Disclaimer

Reef Smart guides are for recreational use only – they are not navigational charts and should not be used as such. We have attempted to provide accurate and up-to-date information for each site, as well as activities to enjoy in the surrounding areas. However, businesses close and new ones open, prices are adjusted and change is inevitable in the marine environment. The information contained in this guide is therefore accurate only at the time of publication. The size and location of structures may vary. Depths and distances are approximated in both metric and imperial units, and the suggested route is optional. Reef Smart assumes no responsibility for inaccuracies and omissions, and assumes no liability for the use of these maps.

ECO TIP

We hope this guide can enhance your in-water experience. Please pass on your passion for exploring the marine environment to others, because our oceans, and particularly coral reefs, need all the "likes" they can get. Coral reefs, as well as mangrove and seagrass ecosystems, are under serious pressure from a multitude of threats that include coastal development, pollution, over-fishing and global climate change. Some estimates put over half the world's remaining coral reefs at significant risk of being lost in the next 25 years; raising awareness can help protect them.

Information boxes

Additional information for the featured sites is provided in the form of special information boxes, which appear throughout the book:

DID YOU KNOW?

Interesting facts about the site or the surrounding area.

SAFETY TIP

Advice that aims to improve safety.

ECO TIP

Information that will help limit damage to the ecosystem or improve environmental awareness.

RELAX & RECHARGE

Information on where refreshments can be purchased, or where to unwind on land.

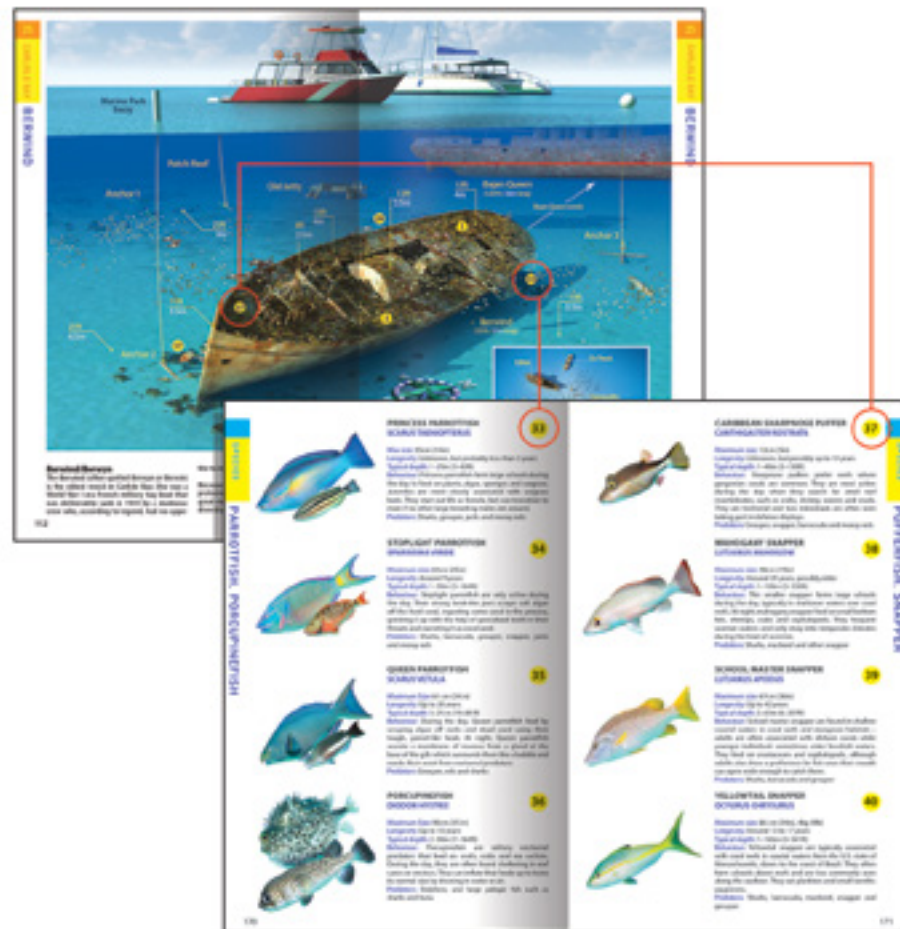
Map icons

-  Scuba dive
-  Snorkel
-  Wreck
-  Access by boat
-  Access by swim
-  Access by Atlantis Submarines
-  Surf
-  Kite surf
-  Wind surf

Species identification

The species listed for each location were chosen to represent the most unique and/or common organisms found at each site, as determined from personal observations, discussions with divers and snorkelers who have experienced these sites, and from scientific studies conducted in these

areas. Many of the species described in this publication are mobile and/or cryptic, and as such may not always be found where indicated. However, we have attempted to place key species on each map in the locations where they are most commonly found.



Species description

The species letter or number on each map links to the species descriptions located at the back of the book (pages 154-182). Reef Smart uses the most frequently cited common name for a species. As common names vary from place to place, we have also provided the scientific name for each species, which remains the same worldwide. Scientific names are usually of Latin or Greek origin and consist of two words: a genus name followed by a species name. By definition, a species is a group of organisms that can reproduce together such

that it results in fertile offspring; a genus is a group of closely related species.

The descriptions of each species are based on the scientific literature as it existed at the time of publication. Scientific knowledge often advances, however, and the authors welcome any information that helps improve or correct future editions of this guide book. In-depth species profiles, including images and videos, are available for free on our website – reefsmartguides.com.

Difficulty ● ○ ○ ○
 Current ● ○ ○ ○
 Depth ● ○ ○ ○
 Reef ★ ★ ★ ★
 Fauna ★ ★ ★ ★



Bridgetown
 Carlisle Bay

Access 2 minutes from shore
 5 minutes from shore

ECO TIP



The parking lot in front of the Barbados Government Information Service building has a fresh water tap and shower that can be used to rinse down gear and wash the salt out of your hair. A running tap uses about two gallons of water per minute, so

a five-minute gear rinse or shower can use as much as 10 gallons – that's the equivalent of 160 glasses of water! Fresh water is a valuable commodity in the tropics, so please try and conserve as much water as possible by limiting your use and always making sure the tap is fully turned off when you're done.



CARLISLE BAY

Location

Carlisle Bay, St. Michael

Closest dive centers

Various dive centers: <1km (0.6mi) inshore

Getting there

Carlisle Bay is a sheltered, natural harbour located in the southwest corner of Barbados, immediately adjacent to the capital of Bridgetown. The bay, which is the site of a marine park, is one of the most popular diving and snorkeling spots in the country. Many of the main roads in Barbados lead either to or from the city of Bridgetown. In fact, getting to Bridgetown often involves simply following the numerous bus stop signs that say "To City." Carlisle Bay is located on the southern edge of Bridgetown and is split by the estuary of the Constitution River. If you are arriving from the north, head through Bridgetown to Bay Street in the south. If you are arriving from the east, the coast road (Highway 7) becomes Bay Street as you enter the Parish of St. Michael.

Access

Most of the dive and snorkel sites in Carlisle Bay, with the exception of the bank reef, Brianna H and Trident, can easily be reached by swimming from Brownes Beach. The beach is just over 2 kilometers (1.3 miles) long, stretching from the Constitution River in the north to the Barbados Hilton Hotel at Needhams Point at the southern end of the Bay.

If arriving by car, the best place to stop is in the parking lot immediately in front of the Barbados Government Information Service building on Bay Street, between Chelsea Road and Beckles Road. The Carlisle Bay wrecks lie on a flat, sandy stretch of seabed, approximately 200 meters (0.12 miles) directly offshore from this location.

Carlisle Bay and Marine Park



Milan Portfolio/Shutterstock ©

Description

Carlisle Bay Marine Park has something for every level of experience, whether diver or snorkeler. The site has a total of six wrecks, as well as the remains of an old jetty and several large anchors and cannons. All of the sites support a great deal of marine life and are incredibly entertaining to explore. What's more, the currents and wave action are usually low, so the visibility in the Bay

is typically great for spotting marine life. Some of the many rare and cryptic species found at this site include frogfish, seahorses, rays, barracuda, octopuses and moray eels, as well as plenty of colourful schooling fish.

DID YOU KNOW?



Carlisle Bay was named after James Hay, 1st Earl of Carlisle. He was granted the title of Lord Proprietor of all the Caribbean Islands, including Barbados, by King Charles I of England in 1627.

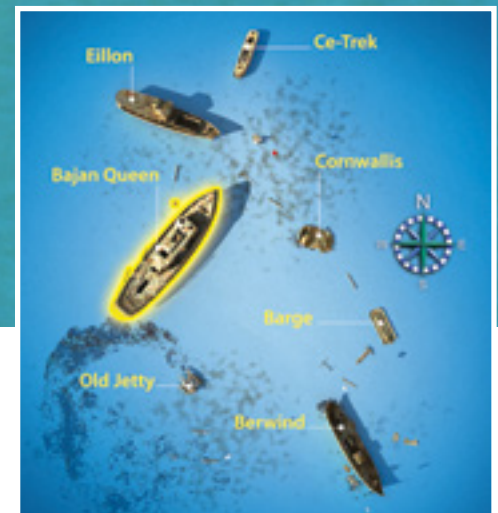


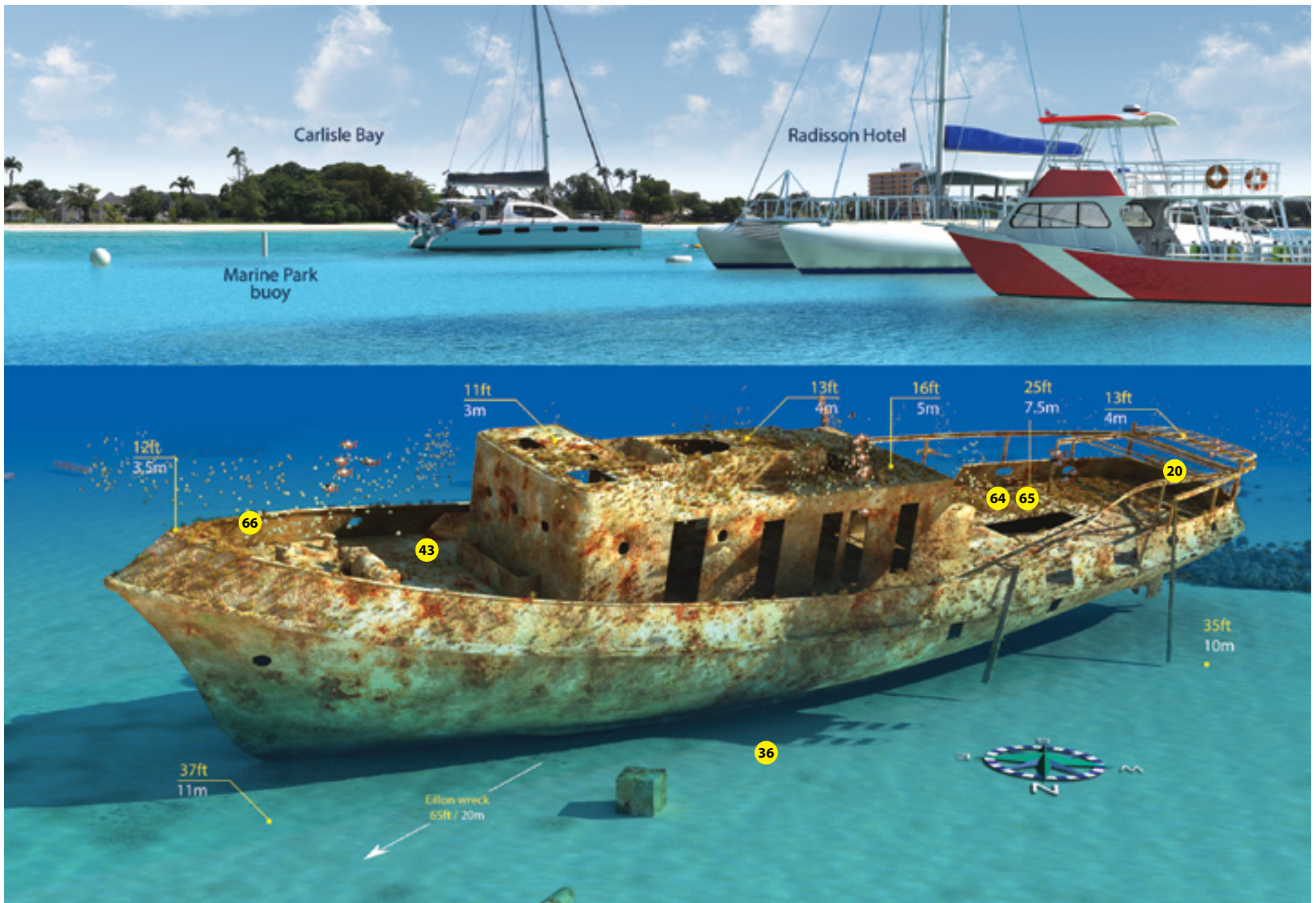
Bajan Queen

The *Bajan Queen* lies at a depth of about 10 meters (35 feet), but is tall enough that her upper deck almost touches the surface. The *Bajan Queen* was one of Barbados' first tugboats and played a part in the construction of Bridgetown Harbour in the

1960s. After a decade of active service, she was refitted as a party boat to take locals and visitors alike on rum- and sun-soaked cruises up and down the coast. She was finally donated to the Coastal Zone Management Unit, cleaned up and deliberately sunk as an artificial reef and dive

and snorkel attraction in 2002. The *Bajan Queen* supports a lot of fish life, including parrotfish, grunts, snapper, squirrelfish, sweepers and a large resident porcupinefish, not to mention small corals and sponges.





Route

Most people explore the outside of this wreck, but experienced divers and snorkelers can penetrate the structure both above and below deck. The bridge and the washrooms are located above deck, with the toilets still in place. A popular

route below deck involves descending into the stern hold and heading toward the bow. You will pass through the engine room before ascending, often through a school of glassy sweepers, up the spiral staircase in the bow that leads back up to the deck.

Name: *Bajan Queen*
Type: Tugboat
Previous names: *Pelican*
Length: 36.5m (120ft)
Tonnage: 378grt
Construction: United Kingdom, 1961

Last owner: Coastal Zone Management Unit, Barbados
Sunk: May 19, 2002

Species

Identifying coral reef organisms is an enjoyable part of any underwater adventure. Not only can you appreciate the diversity and wonder that surrounds you on a reef, but you'll be better able to understand the story that is unfolding right before your eyes.

For example, you will know where and when to look for certain species, as well as what they eat, who eats them, how big they get and for how long they will live. But more specifically, you will understand certain behaviours that can be observed on coral reefs, such as why damselfish attack larger creatures, or which creatures form symbiotic relationships and why.

Many times, behaviours are an integral part of the identification process. In some cases, understanding how a particular fish behaves

SAFETY TIP



The section on dangerous species (see page 158) is intended to provide the information you need to recognize the handful of species that can cause injury. These species should not be considered "active threats," but rather organisms that have the potential to cause harm. Most injuries occur because the organism in question has felt threatened and because a diver or snorkeler has not recognized the warning signs. By engaging in safe and conscientious diving and snorkeling practices, and by keeping in mind a few key safety tips, you can avoid having your experience ruined by an unpleasant sting or bite.

– such as whether it is active during the night or day, or whether it is an ambush predator or active forager – can be more useful in determining its identity than its colour or shape.

Many reef organisms may appear very similar at first glance, and the wide diversity of species on coral reefs can appear to be a chaotic jumble. But by combining an understanding of animal behaviour with some basic identification information, you can start to tease apart that puzzle.

Green moray eel



Alexandra HB/Shutterstock ©



Queen angelfish

Amy Cox ©

The information provided in this guide represents the most up-to-date scientific knowledge available at the time of publication. It covers some of the most common reef species you will find during your time in the waters of Barbados. However, it should be noted that coral reef ecologists continue to discover new information about species, their behaviors and their interactions. Later editions of this book may contain modifications that reflect new knowledge.

The following pages are divided into three sections, featuring information about **SEA TURTLES**, which have a rather unique life history; **DANGEROUS SPECIES**, including details on the kind of threat they pose and how to treat injuries caused by them; and finally, a general **SPECIES** section that helps you identify and learn about the most common species found at the Barbados sites featured in this guide.

5

OCEAN SURGEONFISH ACANTHURUS BAHIANUS

Maximum size: 38cm (15in)
Longevity: Up to 32 years
Typical depth: 2–40m (7–130ft)
Behaviour: Adult surgeonfish often form large schools to graze on benthic algae and seagrasses in shallow coral reefs and inshore rocky areas. Juveniles rarely school, sheltering instead in the back reef. Researchers have observed spawning aggregations of up to 20,000 individuals in the winter months off Puerto Rico.
Predators: Sharks, grouper, barracuda and snapper



6

FOUREYE BUTTERFLYFISH CHAETODON CAPISTRATUS

Maximum size: 15cm (6in)
Longevity: Around 8 years
Typical depth: 2–20m (6–65ft)
Behaviour: Four-eye butterflyfish are active during the day, when they feed on small invertebrates. Their pointed mouth allows them to pull prey from small crevices. They are often found in pairs, and males and females bond early in life and form long-lasting monogamous pairs.
Predators: Barracuda, grouper, snapper and moray eels



7

BANDED BUTTERFLYFISH CHAETODON STRIATUS

Maximum size: 16cm (6in)
Longevity: Unknown, but probably around 10 years
Typical depth: 3–20m (10–60ft)
Behaviour: Banded butterflyfish are most active during the day when they search the reef for food, which includes polychaete worms, zoanthids, anemones and fish eggs. Banded butterflyfish are often found in monogamous pairs and they defend a joint territory together with their mate.
Predators: Moray eels and large carnivorous fish



8

BERMUDA CHUB KYPHOSUS SECTATRIX

Maximum size: 76cm (30in), 6kg (13lbs)
Longevity: Unknown
Typical depth: 1–10m (3–330ft)
Behaviour: Bermuda chubs are a schooling fish found in shallow waters above sandy areas and seagrass beds, and near coral reefs. They feed on benthic algae, but also on small crabs and molluscs. Juveniles often associate with floating sargassum mats, letting them disperse across great distances.
Predators: Sharks, barracuda, snapper, moray eels and scorpionfish



1

FRENCH ANGELFISH POMACANTHUS PARU

Maximum size: 60cm (24in)
Longevity: Up to 15 years
Typical depth: 3–100m (10–330ft)
Behaviour: French angelfish dine primarily on sponges, but may also feed on gorgonians and algae. Juveniles often act as cleaners, eating the parasites from other reef fish. At dusk, French angelfish find shelter from nocturnal predators in reef cracks and crevices.
Predators: Large grouper and sharks



2

QUEEN ANGELFISH HOLACANTHUS CILIARIS

Maximum size: 45cm (18in)
Longevity: Up to 15 years
Typical depth: 1–70m (3–230ft)
Behaviour: Queen angelfish are often found swimming gracefully between seafans, seaweeds and corals, alone or in pairs. They feed almost exclusively on sponges, but have been known to snack on algae and tunicates as well. Young Queen angelfish also clean parasites off the scales of larger fish.
Predators: Large grouper and sharks



3

ROCK BEAUTY HOLACANTHUS TRICOLOR

Maximum size: 35cm (14in)
Longevity: Up to 20 years (in captivity)
Typical depth: 3–35m (10–115ft)
Behaviour: Adult rock beauties are often found on rock jetties, rocky reefs and rich coral areas, while juveniles tend to be found near fire corals. These angelfish aren't picky eaters, and will feed on tunicates, sponges, zoantharians and algae.
Predators: Grouper, snapper and sharks



4

BLUE TANG ACANTHURUS COERULEUS

Maximum size: 40cm (16in)
Longevity: Around 20 years
Typical depth: 2–40m (1–130ft)
Behaviour: Blue tangs are often found grazing on algae during the day, either individually or as part of a large school that may also contain surgeonfish, doctorfish, goatfish and parrotfish. At dusk, they settle into a reef crack or crevice to hide for the night.
Predators: Grouper, snapper, jacks and barracuda





The ultimate guide for beach and marine activities in Barbados. Our detailed descriptions and illustrations are ideal for divers, surfers and snorkelers, or anyone wanting to make the most of their time on the island and in the water.



- The best locations for diving, snorkeling and surfing, and how to access them

- Detailed 3D maps, graphics and information to help you plan your time in and out of the water



- Species guides to help you identify and understand the marine creatures you'll encounter in Barbados

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