

### Moorings on St. John

Be sure to obtain a copy of the free full-color **Mooring & Anchoring Guide** from the National Park Service. The National Park Service maintains moorings at these locations:

- ↓ Francis Bay
- ↓ Greater Lameshur
- ↓ Hawksnest
- ↓ Jumbie Bay
- ↓ Leinster Bay
- ↓ Lind Point
- ↓ Little Lameshur
- ↓ Maho Bay
- ↓ Rams Head
- ↓ Reef Bay
- ↓ Salt Pond

**Eagle Shoal**, a lovely coral grotto housing nurse sharks and stingrays, has numerous crevices.

Offshore from Cruz Bay, **Steven Cay** features sea fans, mountain and star corals, and large numbers of triggerfish and angelfish.

**Others** include Fishbowl at Cruz Bay, Johnson Reef on the N coast, and Horseshoe and South Drop (a fairly narrow ridge of seafloor cracks and fissures which is a good place to spot large fish)

A well developed reef structure between Grassy Cay and **Grassco Junction** offers seven towers around which turtles, octopi, and stingrays gather.

**SNORKELING SPOTS:** Superior snorkeling is found at Trunk Bay, Jumbie, Peter Bay, and Waterlemon; other locations include the East End (Hanson Bay, Long Bay, Brown Bay, Privateer Bay, and at Haulover on the Drake's Passage side).

From Cruz Bay you may walk to and then snorkel at **Salomon Beach, Honeymoon Beach,** and **Caneel Bay.**

Between the first two is a headland which has brain coral the size of basketball as well as other species. The W side of Honeymoon has snorkeling in water 10 ft. or less in depth. It boasts a variety of pillar, elknorn, and other corals. There are also fringes of reef near the shoreline to the E of Honeymoon and W from Salomon. Landlubbers will want to arrive at hours other than 10 AM–3 PM (when tour boats arrive) so they can have the area all to themselves.

**Caneel's main beach** has a small area of fringing reef off the NE end. You'll find gorgonians, hard corals, and finger corals. Watch for sea urchins here.

**Hawksnest Bay** offers shallow reefs which are a bit shallow—some of which is too shallow, in fact, to snorkel above. This reef has been damaged in the past by storms and development, but it is under recovery. Watch for elkhorn coral. The best area is off the E side.

**Jumbie Bay** has a shallow reef to the R which extends across cliffs to Trunk Bay. Deeper water hosts brain coral. To the L, there is a bit of coral.

**Trunk Bay** has a heavily used underwater trail. (Admission \$4). This beach can be very crowded between 10 AM–4 PM.

Windy but offering good visibility, **Cinnamon Bay** has a ledge area between the beach and Cinnamon Cay. Watch for invertebrates. Rest in sandy spots before snorkeling around the cay. (Gorgonians congregate at its rear). On the W end, in the direction of Little Cinnamon, is a section of besilted reef which has a portion of an airplane propeller. The E end has dead coral but fish galore. Watch for coral heads scattered through other areas.

Sheltered **Maho Bay** has seagrass beds which green sea turtles know and love.

### Park Rules and Regulations

- ▶ Fires are permitted only on grills in designated picnic areas.
- ▶ Pets must be kept on leashes and are prohibited from entering picnic areas, beaches, or the campground.
- ▶ Fishing is prohibited in swimming areas.
- ▶ Camping is prohibited outside the campground.
- ▶ Cans should be placed in recycling bins.
- ▶ Boats longer than 210 ft. are not allowed to anchor within park waters, and those ranging from 125–210 ft. may anchor only in Francis Bay, in sandy areas and in depths greater than 30 ft.
- ▶ Boaters must use moorings in Reef Bay, Greater and Little Lameshur bays, and in Salt Pond Bay.

Watch for them in early morning or late afternoon. A bit of coral and fish may be seen offshore near the rocky tips of the bay.

**Francis Bay** is a good place to snorkel for beginners; head to your L in the direction of Maho. Hardier souls will appreciate the rocky section at the other end. Sea turtles, jacks, and tarpon also inhabit these waters.

**Leinster Bay** offers snorkeling halfway to Waterlemon Beach. Hurricane Bertha turned some of the coral heads here on their side, but they are still alive. Watch for parrotfish. Leinster Bay's **Waterlemon Cay** (an islet) is a long swim but has great snorkeling. Traverse the unofficial trail that runs along the E shoreline to get closer in. (Watch for coral while exiting). Orangish-brown cushion sea stars live here.

You must hike or take a boat to **Brown Bay**. Explore coral and seagrass here. Head out to the L to find a thick fringing reef; it heads toward Waterlemon Cay. A short swim to the R finds a reef where gorgonians have set themselves up. Watch for conch,

baby fish, and even turtles in the seagrass beds directly offshore.

Set on the N side and sometimes confusing to find, **Haulover Bay** has good snorkeling off of the reefs to the L. On its E end, Haulover Bay has a narrow, short, hard-to-find trail which terminates in a rocky beach. Snorkel straight out to find large coral. However, the water is deep and the wind is often strong, so weaker swimmers should confine themselves to the area on the R. The Coral Bay side offers smoother swimming but less coral and moreurchins.

Set on the SE, **Salt Pond Bay** has a sun drenched beach with good snorkeling along its L around the point. If you swim out to the boat moorings, you can find a set of rocks which has some great coral formations. Watch for sea turtles. You may also hike to Ram Head from here.

**Little Lameshur Bay** has a small cluster of coral offshore to your R. A great reef is found out at the tip of **Yawzi Point**. Head out from the rocky beach which is to the L  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way down; this is faster than swimming from the beach at the end.

You may snorkel in seagrass in **Chocolate Hole** which is two mi. from Cruz Bay along Rte. 104. Watch for conch and rays. This is a good alternative when there are N swells.

You may snorkel in a mangrove environment at **Princess Bay**.

## The Virgin Islands National Park

Practically synonymous with the island itself, the Virgin Islands National Park is the island's most valuable resource. Remember that this is a trust held in perpetuity and one which visitors years hence will wish to find in the same shape it is today. Act accordingly.

**THE MAKING OF A NATIONAL PARK:** In 1939, a National Park Service study compiled by Harold Hubler recommended that