




SCF Trail Advisory – December 2023 to February 2024

December to February marks the return of the entire Caribbean region to the **cool season**. Generally, more comfortable temperatures and decreasing humidity are the historical norm for this period. This year, a **strong El Niño** event has developed in the tropical Pacific Ocean. El Niño more is marked by **higher temperatures, a drier start to the dry season** in the Lesser Antilles. By contrast, near record-high temperatures in the North Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea also contribute to higher air temperatures, but also to **increased air humidity and rainfall** throughout the Caribbean, as well as the frequency of severe weather during the dry season. The unusually warm waters in these two ocean basins will **increase temperatures and humidity during the cool season**, but unlikely to the point of significant heat stress. Despite having cooled since the peak of the 2023 heat season in September, the more comfortable daytime and nighttime temperatures are still forecast to remain **up to 1-2 degrees Celsius higher than usual** on most days. The frequency of Saharan dust incursions into the Caribbean tends to be low during this period. Exposure to harmful **UV light on sunny days will be very high to extremely high**. **Hikers should apply high SPF sunscreen lotion regularly (preferably reef safe) and seek shaded areas between the hours of 10 AM and 3 PM**. Minimize skin exposure during these times, and wear sunscreen and protective clothing when outdoors. (Source: Caribbean Tourism Climatic Bulletin)

Caution goat hunting in progress – Signs indicate which trails are affected – Do not venture off the path!

	Trail / Status	Description	Notes
A.	The Ladder Distance: 0.43km/0.27mi Time: 1 hour round trip OPEN (with restrictions)	Access: From The Bottom, follow the road past the hospital towards Well's Bay. Bear left at the junction by the lookout gazebo. After a short distance down the steep road you will see the trailhead sign on the left. Special features: historic step road by which cargo was hauled up from Ladder Bay to The Bottom. Mahogany trees, Cinnamon trees, beautiful vistas.	Degree of difficulty: Strenuous (on the way up). Caution! The lower stairs , close to the sea, have been washed out by heavy swells and collapsed. No mobile phone connection.
B.	Crispeen Track Distance: 0.91km/0.56mi Time: 1 hour OPEN	Access: From the Mt. Scenery steps just below the end of the Mountain Road (at the first shelter) or from the road from The Bottom to Windwardside, just above The Bottom. Special features: Views of The Bottom and secondary rainforest.	Degree of difficulty: Moderate . Beware of loose rocks.
C.	Mas' Cohone's Trail Distance: 0.48km/0.29mi Time: 20 minutes one-way OPEN	Access: Look for the trailhead signboard on your left as you head up to Mt. Scenery from Windwardside. Special features: Dry forest, a short alternative for those who don't want to undertake the climb to the top.	Degree of difficulty: Moderate . Caution! Steep cliff on top of hill. No railing to hold on to. Slippery when wet!
D.	Mount Scenery Trail Distance: 2.39km/1.49mi from Windwardside Time: 2.5 hours round trip OPEN <i>Wet Season: Muddy and slippery trail to be expected. Use proper hiking gear, including hiking poles and a light raincoat.</i>	Access: From Windwardside opposite the Trail Shop. Alternative access is from the end of the Mountain Road (this will reduce hiking time by about 20 minutes) or from the Bud's Mountain Trail, which joins the Mt. Scenery trail at the highest shelter. Special features: 1,015 steps to the highest point in the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Unique cloud forest (Elfin Forest) vegetation at the top.	Degree of difficulty: Strenuous . No mobile phone connection on parts of the trail. Be cautious on the way down. Use hand railings where available! Walk down sideways and use hiking stick for balance. Interpretational signs at rest sheds. Use trail boxes for notes or to leave memories.

D.1	<p>The Bottom Viewpoint Distance: 0.21km/0.13mi from junction Time: 30 minutes OPEN (with restrictions)</p>	<p>Access: Turn left at the bench before the railing down to the valley on Mt. Scenery, follow narrow path until reaching a cliff / cavern, carefully climb the wooden stairs to the viewpoint. Great view of Torrens Point!</p>	<p>Caution - viewpoint not secured! Loose wire mesh on boardwalk can cause injury! Parts of the trail can be very muddy and slippery.</p>
D.2	<p>Windwardside Viewpoint Distance: 0.14km/0.08mi from junction Time: 5 minutes OPEN</p>	<p>Access: Turn right past the Communication Tower when reaching the top of the mountain. Special features: Great views of Windwardside, The Level and Sint Eustatius. Picnic table with a view of the summit to the left of the path.</p>	<p>Caution - slopes along viewpoint are not secured It is strictly forbidden to climb the tower. Rare orchids and Bladderwort near the maintower. Please don't touch or break flowers.</p>
D.3	<p>Hell's Gate Viewpoint Distance: 0.14km/0.08mi from junction Time: 10 minutes OPEN</p>	<p>Access: Turn left when reaching the top of the mountain. The path meanders through a muddy valley partially covered by boardwalks until reaching a cliff. Wooden stairs and a rope lead to the summit. Special features: Great views of Hell's Gate, the airport and St. Maarten. Selfie sign, the actual highest point in the KNL. Rare Guadeloupe Wild Coffee can be found at the east side. Please don't pick.</p>	<p>Caution! Steep cliff to all sides. Vegetation cover gives a wrong perception of safety. Hence, don't hold on to vegetation for balance. Beware of vent hole to the right of geographical marker. Not for people afraid of heights. Boardwalk and steps can be slippery.</p>
D.4	<p>Elfin Forest Trail Distance: 0.89km/0.55mi from junction Time: 45 minutes OPEN (with restrictions)</p>	<p>Access: From the Sandy Cruz Trail Head in Upper Hell's Gate. Turn left at junction in 350 meters, after passing through Deep Gut. Rest bench halfway of the trail. Special features: spectacular views of the airport and neighboring islands at the bench. Huge banana trees can be found in the Elfin Forest.</p>	<p>Degree of difficulty: Strenuous. Recommended for experienced hikers only. Not suitable for kids under 12 years of age. Upper trail is steep, muddy and slippery, good hiking boots recommended. Prepare to get dirty!</p>
E.	<p>Sandy Cruz Trail Distance: 2.86km/1.78mi Time: 2.5 hours one-way OPEN</p> <p><i>Respect the private banana farm in the middle of the trail. Don't pick the fruits!</i></p>	<p>Access: The trailhead is located near the end of the dead-end road in Upper Hell's Gate. If you are walking to the trailhead, signs will direct you from the main road. Or start from the road on Troy Hill, which will increase the hiking time by about half an hour. Special features: lush rainforest, abandoned farmland, great views.</p>	<p>Degree of difficulty: Moderate to strenuous (arduous ridge and tricky steps, frequent up- and downhill sections). Arguably, Saba's second most famous and hikers favorite trail! Bring a hiking stick for additional balance. Parts of the trail can be muddy and slippery. No mobile phone connection.</p>
F.	<p>Sulfur Mine Trail Distance: 0.51km/0.32mi Time: 40 minutes one-way OPEN (with restrictions)</p>	<p>Access: Going down from Upper Hell's Gate (Zion's Hill) towards the airport, follow the second side road (the one that branches sharply to the left); the trail starts at the end of the paved road. Special features: location of the old McNish Sulfur Mine; great views of cliffs and airport; seabird watching (bring your binoculars!).</p>	<p>Degree of difficulty: Moderate Inside the mine it is very hot and humid. Thus, exploration of the mine is presently not permitted. Keep a distance from the eroded edges near the old sulfur oven.</p>

G.	<p>Flat Point "Tide Pools" Loop Distance: 0.58km/0.36mi Time: 30 minutes OPEN</p>	<p>Access: From the road below the airport to Cove Bay. Follow the yellow trailblazing marks on the rocks. Special features: lava flows; colorful saltwater pools with abundant marine life; ruins of an indigo boiling house.</p>	<p>DANGER Rough Seas - Riptide Advisory in effect! Don't climb down to the pools! Degree of difficulty: an easy walk to the bluff overlooking the tidepools; a steep scramble over rocks to get down to the pools.</p>
H.	<p>Spring Bay Heritage Trail Distance: 2.96km/1.84mi Time: 2-3 hours one-way OPEN (with restrictions)</p> 	<p>Access: From the Agriculture Center in English Quarter (along the road from Windwardside to Hell's Gate/Zion's Hill) or from Kelbey's Ridge (follow the orange markings) near the Airport. Special features: dry forest and dry scrub vegetation; beautiful vistas; ruins of a sugar cane boiling house.</p>	<p>Degree of difficulty: Strenuous. Take enough water and sunblock - this is a long and hot hike! No sign at junction to Spring Bay Flat. Beware of Manchineel trees along the trail. Beware of loose rocks and gravel, erosion in the section leading to Spring Bay Gut (ravine). Construction site on top of Kelbey's Ridge is blocking access to road and has to be circumvented.</p>
I.	<p>North Coast Trail Distance: 3.27km/2.03mi Time: 3.5 hours one-way Heavy erosion @ Goat Rock. Use cable for hold. CLOSED Guide Hikes Only</p>	<p>Access: From the main trailhead in Lower Hell's Gate. Special features: Spectacular ocean views, ruins of Mary's Point. Guide Hikes by certified SCF staff only.</p>	<p>Degree of difficulty: Exhausting Trail in many parts not visible; flagging tape and reflectors placed on trees to avoid disorientation; dangerous unstable areas, sudden landslide possible, loose rocks and steep, difficult to climb cliffs.</p>
I.1	<p>Mary's Point Trail Distance: 0.75km/0.47mi Time: 1 hour one-way OPEN</p>	<p>Access: Start from Well's Bay, through the Well's Bay Gut / ravine. Turn left when reaching the sign. Don't continue past ruins. Trail marked with reflectors. Special features: Great views of the north and Well's Bay from the Valiulis bench.</p>	<p>Degree of difficulty: Strenuous. Beware of falling rocks! Handrails and wooden steps from Well's Gut to the old village. No mobile phone connection. Be respectful of the historic ruins and graves. Don't remove any artifacts!</p>
I.2	<p>Torrens Point Trail Distance: 0.4km/0.24mi Time: 20 minutes one-way OPEN (Caution: trail not being maintained regularly)</p>	<p>Access: Start from the Mary's Point ruins in the middle of the village. Follow the ridge to the DP7 geographical marker. Special features: Cavern used by Amerindians as shelter. Great views of the north coast and Diamond Rock.</p>	<p>Degree of difficulty: Moderate. Path not clearly marked and signs absent. Steep cliffs to the sides of the ridge before reaching wide open area above Torrens Point. Edges could be undermined by erosion!</p>
J.	<p>All Too Far Trail Distance: 1.5km/0.93mi Time: 1-2.5 hours one-way (depending on hiking the trail up or down). OPEN</p>	<p>Access: From the junction at either the North Coast or the Sandy Cruz Trail. Special features: The trail meanders through dry scrub vegetation and lush rainforest (4 different eco-systems), with spectacular views of the Pirate Cliffs.</p>	<p>Degree of difficulty: Strenuous Beware of stinging nettles & Jack Spaniard wasps at the lower part! Upper section muddy and slippery. This trail connects the North Coast Trail with the Sandy Cruz Trail. No mobile phone connection.</p>
K.	<p>Bottom Mountain Trail Distance: 1.1km/0.68mi Time: 1.5 hours OPEN</p>	<p>Access: From the road opposite Queen's Gardens Hotel or the junction at Rendezvous. Special features: secondary forest, transition to rainforest, occasionally farmed land, Mammee Apple trees, and views of The Bottom. Brown Tremblers and Bridled Quail Doves can be found aside the trail.</p>	<p>Degree of difficulty: Moderate. Exercise caution when climbing down the ridge. Use provided ropes where available!</p>

L.	<p>Buds Mountain Trail Distance: 1.47km/0.91 Time: 1.5 hours uphill OPEN</p>	<p>Access: From the Bottom Mountain Trail opposite the last (3rd) rest shed on the Mt. Scenery Trail. Special features: good example of secondary rainforest.</p>	<p>Degree of difficulty: Moderate. This trail is a nice alternative on the way down from Mount Scenery. The upper part can be muddy and slippery.</p>
M.	<p>Tara's Ground Trail Distance: 0.69km/0.43mi Time: 45 minutes OPEN</p>	<p>Access: From the Bottom Mountain trail. Time: 45 minutes from the junction on the Bottom Mountain trail to the junction on the Crispeen Track. Special features: dense secondary forest with large mango trees and historical farm ruins.</p>	<p>Degree of difficulty: Moderate-easy Trail hard to find in the valley, because of dense canopy, fallen leaves and branches. Trailblazing: Follow the orange markers along the path.</p>
N.	<p>Parish Hill Trail/Loop Distance: 1.01km/0.68mi Time: 1.5 hours OPEN (with restrictions) No sign at Health Care Center access.</p>	<p>Access: The trail starts at the beginning of the road from The Bottom down to Fort Bay, next to the Radio Station. Erosion between Bunker Hill and the forested section of Parish Hill. For safety, get a local guide to rock climb the "Whale's Tail" on Great Hill. Special features: Parish Hill is one of the younger volcanic domes (less than 100,000 years old); great views of The Bottom and St. John's; deep caves.</p>	<p>Degree of difficulty: Moderate. Loose rocks during ascent to the hill. Keep away from Pinguin cacti. They have razor-sharp leaf edges and spines! Beware of loose rocks & gravel. Caves should only be entered with an experienced guide and adequate equipment. Signage absent. Middle part of outer loop may be hard to find.</p>
O.	<p>Giles Quarter Trail Distance: 3.49km/2.17mi Time: 3 hours OPEN (with restrictions)</p>	<p>Access: From the Dancing Place Trail on top of the ridge or the dirt road below the stone crusher at the eastern end of Fort Bay. Special features: great ocean vistas along the coastline, impressive view of The Road from below, old farming structures, including a functioning well near the beach at "Hole in the Corner".</p>	<p>Degree of difficulty: Strenuous. Take enough water and sunblock - this is a long and hot hike. Trailblazing: Follow the orange markers along the ridge. Markers and signs absent at lower section. Beware of Jack Spaniard wasps, spiny cacti and Manchineel trees!</p>
P.	<p>Dancing Place Trail Distance: 0.4km/0.24mi Time: 20 minutes one-way OPEN</p>	<p>Access: From the road from Windwardside to St. John's at the Lion's club sign or from "The Road" monument between Windwardside and St. John's. Special features: great views of the south coast and St. Eustatius.</p>	<p>Degree of difficulty: Easy Beware of Jack Spaniard wasps in the side walls! Tamarind tree will collapse soon. Because of crumbling wall, Lambee's Monument has been closed!</p>
Q.	<p>Middle Island Trail Distance: 1.1km/0.68mi Time: 40 minutes one-way CLOSED Landslide blocked middle part at ravine and cannot be bypassed</p>	<p>Access: From The Bottom towards Well's Bay, turn down to the left at The Gap and continue past The Ladder turn into drive way to the left until you reach the trailhead after about 100 yards. Special features: heritage trail, remains of an old open cistern, impressive farm stone walls, a cavern, dry forest and great views across Ladder- and Well's Bay.</p>	<p>Degree of difficulty: Easy/moderate Beware of Jack Spaniard wasps Alternative viewpoint before sea grape tree (4 small steps) 10 meters below cistern. No mobile phone connection.</p>
R.	<p>Thai's Hill Distance: 0.4km/0.25mi Time: 15 minutes OPEN (with restrictions)</p>	<p>Access: Between 2 houses at the main road in St. Johns, just before the first junction to the village when coming from The Bottom. Special features: Great views of Fort Bay, the Bottom and neighboring islands.</p>	<p>Degree of difficulty: Easy A short walk to enjoy gorgeous views and sunsets on top of the hill. Old radio station ruins. Path needs trail blazing and entrance is not marked.</p>

Trail Etiquette & Park Rules

Plan Ahead and Prepare

- Before starting your hike, please inform the SCF Office (+599 416 3295 or send an email to info@sabapark.org). Let a friend or somebody at your hotel know your hiking plan. Cell phones won't have reception in most areas of the park, especially the north coast.
- Always bring plenty of water and use a hiking stick (especially useful downhill). High quality hiking poles are available for rent at the Trail Shop.
- On the hot, open trails, also wear a hat or a cap. Long-sleeved shirts and long pants are recommended. Use sunblock.
- Wear good hiking shoes that provide ankle protection. Many trails have wet, muddy parts, even during the dry season. Hence, slippers or sandals are not recommended.
- In the unfortunate event of an injury, take a compass bearing or GPS coordinates before notifying the medical response team or when leaving somebody behind to seek help. Emergency number: **911 or +599 416 3237** (from 8:00 to 16:00)

Dispose of Waste Properly

- Pack it in, pack it out. Whatever is brought into the park, should be taken out of the park.
- Help protect nature by taking a bag with you on any trip and simply collect any litter you come across. It's one thing to leave the park as you find it, but how much better to leave it ever so slightly cleaner?
- Dog owners must pick up after pets.

Leave What You Find

- Preserve the past: examine, but do not touch, cultural or historic structures and artifacts.
- Leave rocks, plants and other natural objects as you find them.
- Avoid introducing or transporting non-native species.

Respect Wildlife

- Observe wildlife from a distance. Do not follow or approach them.
- The endangered endemic [Red-bellied Racer](#) snake (*Alsophis rufiventris*) is very shy, sensitive to sound and completely harmless to humans.
- Never feed animals. Feeding wildlife damages their health, alters natural behaviors, and exposes them to predators and other dangers.
- Avoid wildlife during sensitive times: mating, nesting or raising young.
- Please leave all plants and flowers for others to enjoy.
- Pets must be on a leash at all times.

Be Considerate of Others

- Stay on the designated trails; most trails pass through private lands. Do not cut switchbacks or take shortcuts. Respect the rights of the landowners. Camping is not allowed.
- Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience.
- Be courteous. Yield to other users on the trail. If you're descending a steep trail and you see hikers coming up, step off the path to let them pass. Since gaining elevation requires more energy than going down, it's polite to give way to the person burning more calories. Keep to the right side of the trail when you are being passed.
- Step to the downhill side of the trail when encountering pack stock.
- Let nature's sounds prevail. Avoid loud voices and noises.



Be Aware

- During the early summer months when grass, weeds, and other vegetation are heaviest, Chigger mites can cause an itchy rash. Avoid brushing with bare skin on hanging vines, branches or ferns. Wear long-sleeved shirts and pants.
- **Beware of Jackies** ([Jack Spaniard - Polistes lanio](#)). The wasp stings can be very painful and people who are allergic to bee stings should carry an [EpiPen](#) (available at the local hospital).
- The flying of UAVs (drones) is not permitted in the Mount Scenery Park without express permission from the relevant authorities.

Brown Trembler (*Cinlocerthia ruficauda pavidia*)

The Brown Trembler is a species of bird in the family Mimidae, the mockingbirds and thrashers. Tremblers derive their name from a typical behavior in which the wings both are drooped and angled slightly away from the body, making very rapid vertical and lateral motions.

Habitat

It frequents wet forest, especially with bromeliads and Araceae.

Behaviour in the Wild

The Brown Trembler feeds from ground level up to the top of large forest trees, 40 meters above the ground or higher. Its diet consists of various arthropods, insects, spiders, scorpions, cockroaches, Coleopteran and Orthoptera. It also feeds on small vertebrates such as tree-frogs and lizards, as well as snails. It also consumes seeds, fruits and berries. It forages among epiphytes and probes into bromeliad clumps, cavities in tree trunks and branches, hollows in trees. It also forages on the ground, hopping with cocked tail. It removes the dead leaves with the bill, and probes into the wet earth.

The “trembling” behaviour of the Brown Trembler is not well understood. Both sexes perform this display regularly, but more often when they are in group. This display could be a way to communicate between mates, because this species lacks a contact call.

They are monogamous and territorial, and both sexes usually share the nesting duties.

