

The Virgin Islands Consortium

National Park Service Announces Closure of Buck Island Until Further Notice

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Buck Island, St. Croix By. ERNICE GILBERT

The National Park Service — citing recent boating incidents along with the "rapid growth" of Covid-19 and public health advisories and guidance — has announced the immediate closure of Buck Island for public use of vessel anchoring and mooring until further notice.

Along with the reasons cited above, the Park Service said it has scheduled maintenance repairs around both the anchoring and moorings areas, according to a release issued Thursday. This temporary closure will help mitigate the risks of park employees and/or contractors from potential exposure of the virus while operating at limited capacity and

following CDC and territorial guidance, NPS said.

"Only National Park Service staff, National Park Service concessionaires and contractors, U.S. Coast Guard, Government of the Virgin Islands emergency and law enforcement agencies, and other agency partners will be authorized during this temporary closure," said NPS. "Unauthorized vessels will be turned around and prevented from entering the monument, and from anchoring or mooring."

"We encourage people who choose to visit Buck Island Reef National Monument during this pandemic to continue to adhere to guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Territorial and local public health authorities to protect visitors and employees," the NPS said. "We thank everyone for their understanding and patience during this period of uncertainty, and we appreciate your cooperation."

For questions please contact Supervisory Park Ranger Gabriel Laurencin, (340) 773-1460, x 234 or 247 or Park Superintendent Gregory Camacho at (340) 773-1460, x 222.