



**National Institute for Public Health
and the Environment**
Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport

**Epidemiological report of SARS-CoV-2 on the Dutch Caribbean CAS- and BES-islands:
Week 11 (March 9th - March 15th, 2021)**

Produced by the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment of the Netherlands - RIVM
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For general information on surveillance of COVID-19 on the CAS-BES-islands, see the next page.

Summary

The number of SARS-CoV-2 infections has been rising on the CAS-islands and Bonaire since March 1st. Between March 9th and March 15th, 2021, 870 new COVID-19 cases have been reported on the CAS- and BES-islands: 294 on Aruba, 240 on Bonaire, 325 on Curaçao, and 11 on Dutch St Maarten.

Increased local transmission and circulation of variants play a strong role in the recent rise of infections. Surveillance on circulation of variants on Aruba shows 97 cases of the VOC 202012/B.1.1.7 (UK) variant on the island, 2 cases of the VOC B.1.351 (South African) variant, and 1 case of the Brazilian P.1 variant. Samples dating between January 7th and January 16th, showed 1 case of the B.1.1.7 variant (proportion VOC: 6.3%). The first Brazilian P.1 case was found in samples dating between February 14th and 15th. Samples dating between February 21st and March 1st contained the first 2 confirmed South African B.1.351 cases as well as 47 cases of the B.1.1.7 variant (proportion: 44.7%). These data show the proportion of VOC in Aruba has been increasing rapidly and various VOCs have been introduced over the past few weeks, suggesting introduction of variants by non-residents and local transmission are a potential cause of the rise of new SARS-CoV-2 infections on the island. On Aruba, the incidence rate increased to 224 cases per 100,000 persons in week 10. The number of active cases has increased to 268, of which 36 are tourists.

Increased local transmission and circulation of variants may also play a role in the recent rise of infections in Bonaire and Curaçao. Surveillance of variants on Bonaire shows 35 cases of the B.1.1.7 (UK) variant. Samples dating between February 6th and 17th showed a proportion of VOC B.1.1.7 of 54.5%. Samples dating between February 18th and March 3rd, showed a much higher proportion of VOC (87.5%), largely explaining the recent rise in new infections. Since last week, the number of active infections in Bonaire has rapidly increased to 253 and the incidence rate has increased to 1057 cases per 100,000 persons in week 10. Stricter measures have been taken on Bonaire to reduce local transmission.

Surveillance on circulation of variants on Curaçao shows 70 cases of the VOC B.1.1.7 (UK) variant on the island. Samples dating between January 25th and February 15th, 2021, showed a proportion of VOC of 28.2%. Samples dating between February 24th and March 1st, showed a higher proportion of VOC B.1.1.7 (78.6%). The increased local transmission and presence of variants have led to a higher hospitalization rate and incidence rate. In week 10, the incidence rate was 175 cases per 100,000 persons. As of March 15th, local authorities have taken stricter measures aiming to reduce transmission rates.

Mortality on the BES-islands has remained low until March 9th, when Bonaire reported 1 new COVID-related death. Aruba has reported an increased COVID-mortality rate since January 23rd. Since the start of the epidemic, 79 persons have passed due to or with COVID-19 in Aruba, 27 in Dutch St Maarten, 22 in Curaçao, and 6 in Bonaire. With hospital admissions increasing, Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao are seeing a rise in COVID-morbidity. On Curaçao, 7 patients are currently admitted to the general hospital ward, and 1 patient to the ICU. Aruba has been seeing a larger amount of patients requiring hospitalization in the past few weeks.

Currently there are 33 hospitalized patients, of which 9 are admitted to the ICU. In Bonaire, there are currently 5 patients admitted to the general hospital ward.

The number of new SARS-CoV-2 infections in Dutch St Maarten have remained low since the end of January. On March 15th, 10 active cases were registered on the island. The incidence rate lowered further to 21 cases per 100,000 persons in week 10. Surveillance of variants on Dutch St Maarten shows 1 case of the B.1.429 (Californian) variant, 1 case of the Brazilian P.2 variant, and 2 cases of the B.1.526 (New York) variant with E484K mutation, none of which a VOC. Both St Eustatius and Saba have not reported active COVID-19 cases since January 28th.

Information on surveillance of COVID-19 on the CAS- and BES-islands

The Caribbean part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands entails the countries Curaçao, Aruba, and Dutch St Maarten (CAS-islands), as well as the overseas municipalities Bonaire, St Eustatius, and Saba (BES-islands). Surveillance data of SARS-CoV-2 cases is collected on each island in collaboration with local medical professionals, laboratories, and public health departments. These surveillance data are shared by the CAS- and BES-islands through daily updates and stored in the SARS-CoV-2 IHR Daily Overview Dutch Caribbean; an overview of the spread of SARS-CoV-2 on the CAS- and BES-islands.

This report has been generated using surveillance data registered at the RIVM between March 22nd 2020 and 15 March 2021. Sometimes surveillance data is reported to the RIVM one or multiple days later than documented on the islands. The data presented in this report are based on the date of registration at the RIVM. Because islands retrospectively correct surveillance data, the crude estimates in this report may differ slightly from the data shared by each island. The data reported here may lag behind in case more recent data has not yet been reported to the RIVM by respective islands.

Everyone with symptoms of COVID-19 can get tested. However, it is plausible that not all individuals with a SARS-CoV-2 infection are tested. The actual numbers of cases can therefore be higher than the numbers reported here. The CAS- and BES-islands also register when individuals with a positive SARS-CoV-2 test result have recovered. These data are used to report the current number of active cases in Table 3. The number of active cases refers to the number of individuals who tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 and who have not yet recovered at the time of producing this report.

Disclaimer

Though this weekly report has been produced with the utmost care, it could possibly contain errors. Feedback on this overview is welcome.

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1 Overview of reported SARS-CoV-2 cases on the CAS- and BES-islands

Table 1: Number of laboratory confirmed cases with a positive test result for SARS-CoV-2 over the past 2 weeks, as reported to the RIVM by the CAS- and BES-islands

Island	Date: from-until	Number of performed tests	Number of laboratory confirmed tests with positive test result	Positivity rate %
Aruba ¹	01-03-2021 - 07-03-2021	4013	219	5.5
	08-03-2021 - 14-03-2021	4160	285	6.9
Bonaire	01-03-2021 - 07-03-2021	343	99	28.9
	08-03-2021 - 14-03-2021	731	223	30.5
Curaçao ²	01-03-2021 - 07-03-2021	2152	77	3.6
	08-03-2021 - 14-03-2021	2525	303	12
Saba ³	01-03-2021 - 07-03-2021	-	0	-
	08-03-2021 - 14-03-2021	-	0	-
Sint Eustatius	01-03-2021 - 07-03-2021	50	0	0
	08-03-2021 - 14-03-2021	48	0	0
Sint Maarten ⁴	01-03-2021 - 07-03-2021	-	-	-
	08-03-2021 - 14-03-2021	-	-	-

¹ This estimate concerns a crude positivity rate for Aruba. The Directie Volksgezondheid Aruba reports a corrected positivity rate through: <https://www.facebook.com/desparuba>.

² The Public Health Department on Curaçao estimates a corrected positivity rate. Therefore, estimates presented here may differ from positivity rates reported by Curaçao.

³ A '-' value indicates insufficient data was reported to the RIVM to report in this table.

⁴ The positivity rate for Dutch St Maarten has been estimated using public data of the weekly number of tests analyzed. Therefore, estimates presented here may differ from positivity rates reported by Dutch St Maarten.

Table 2: Number of laboratory confirmed cases with a positive SARS-CoV-2 test result, number of hospital admissions¹ and number of deceased cases, cumulative and for the previous week, on the CAS- and BES-islands, as reported to RIVM

Island	Cumulative			Previous week ²	
	Number of cases	Hospital admissions	Deceased patients	Number of cases	Deceased patients
Aruba	8421	291	79	294	2
Bonaire	778	15	6	240	1
Curaçao	5138	147	22	325	0
Saba	6	1	0	0	0
Sint Eustatius	20	0	0	0	0
Sint Maarten	2085	126	27	11	0
Total	16448	580	134	870	3

¹ The number of hospital admissions cannot be displayed for the previous week due to a delay in reporting these data. The current number of hospitalized COVID-19 patients is reported in Table 3.

² These have been reported to the RIVM between March 9th and March 15th, 2021.

Table 3: Current number of active SARS-CoV-2 cases and status of COVID-19 hospital admissions on the CAS- and BES-islands, as reported to RIVM^{1,2}

Island	Number of active cases	Number of hospitalized patients on general hospital ward	Number of patients hospitalized in the ICU
Aruba	268	24	9
Bonaire	253	5	0
Curaçao	397	7	1
Saba	0	0	0
Sint Eustatius	0	0	0
Sint Maarten	10	0	0
Total	928	36	10

¹ These have been reported to the RIVM between March 1st and March 8th, 2021.

² The number of active cases is defined as the number of COVID-19 infected persons who have not been confirmed to have recovered from COVID-19 infection at the time of reporting these data to RIVM. These data may lag behind when islands have limited public health capacity to confirm recovery among infected cases.

Table 4: SARS-CoV-2 incidence rate per 100,000 residents on the CAS- and BES-islands¹, as reported to RIVM

Island	Incidence per 100,000 residents	
	Previous week ²	Previous two weeks ³
Aruba	192.4	380.9
Bonaire	990.9	1616.4
Curaçao	167.3	218.4
Saba	0.0	0.0
Sint Eustatius	0.0	0.0
Sint Maarten	14.1	37.5

¹ The calculated incidence rates include the estimated number of undocumented migrants on each island, see Table 5.

² The incidence rate per 100,000 persons, for the previous week, has been calculated from 9 maart 2021 until 15 maart 2021.

³ The incidence rate per 100,000 residents, for the previous two weeks, has been calculated from 2 maart 2021 until 15 maart 2021.

Table 5: Number of residents and acreage of the CAS- and BES-islands¹

Island	Capital city	Residents	Acreage	Political status
Aruba	Oranjestad	106.800	180 km ²	Country within the Kingdom of The Netherlands
Bonaire	Kralendijk	20.900	288 km ²	Dutch municipality
Curaçao	Willemstad	164.100	444 km ²	Country within the Kingdom of The Netherlands
Saba	The Bottom	1.915	13 km ²	Dutch municipality
Sint Maarten	Philipsburg	44.000	34 km ²	Country within the Kingdom of The Netherlands
Sint Eustatius	Oranjestad	3.138	21 km ²	Dutch municipality

¹ Each island counts a substantial population of undocumented migrants. The reported incidence rates include the estimated population of undocumented migrants. On Aruba, Curaçao, and Dutch St Maarten the population size is estimated around 20,000 migrants. On Bonaire the population size is estimated around 1,000 migrants. These data are relevant to include as these populations are difficult to reach for local public health services and often have less access to curative care.

2 SARS-CoV-2 progression over time

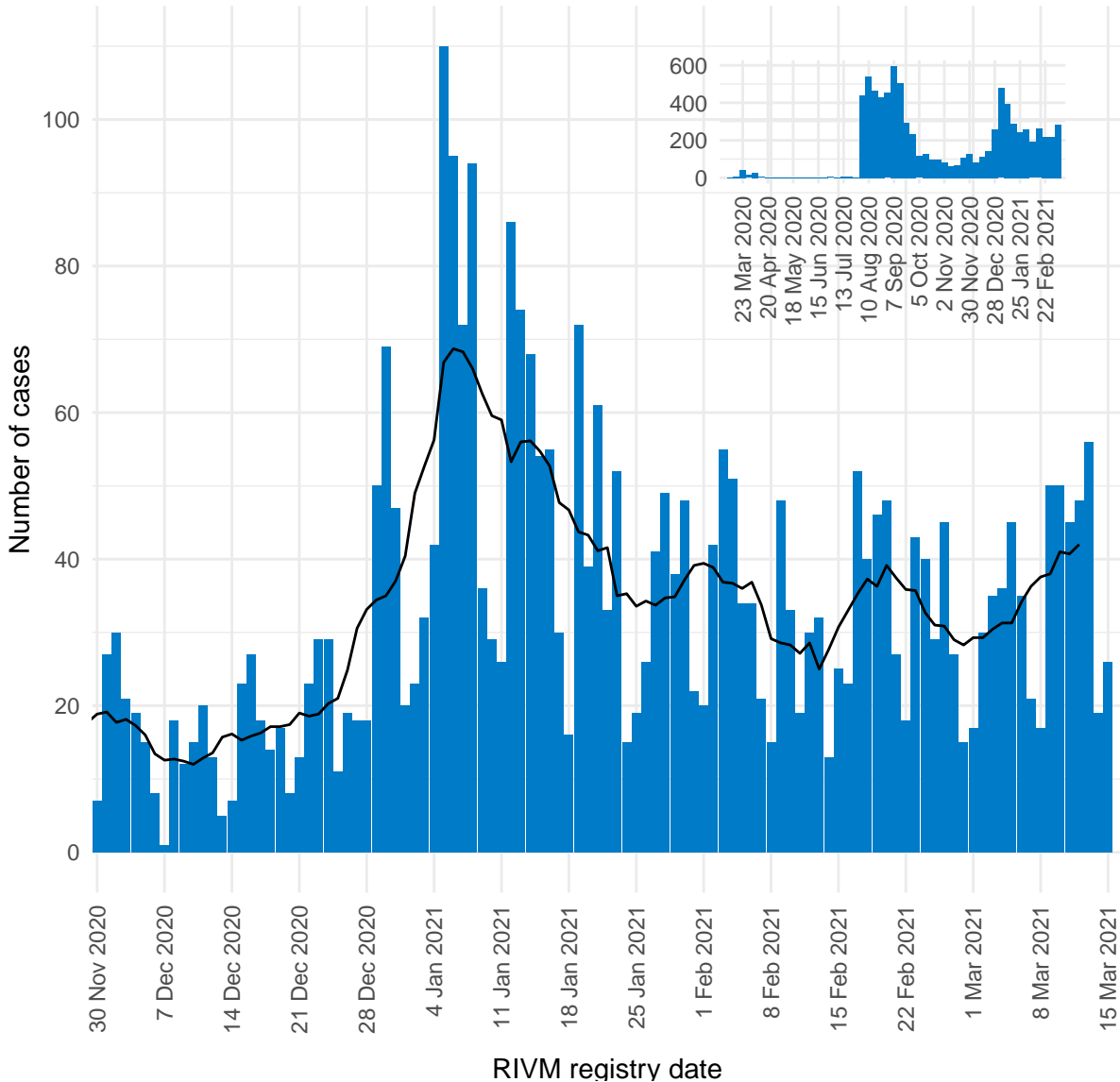


Figure 1: Number of daily reported SARS-CoV-2 cases on Aruba, presented by RIVM registry date^{1,2}.

¹ This figure displays the daily number of new SARS-CoV-2 by date of reporting to the RIVM. The black line represents the 7-day moving average of new infections. The vertical axes of figures 1-6 differ due to dissimilarities in the quantity of cases between the islands.

² The reported data has been presented by the date of reporting to the RIVM. These numbers can lag behind when the most recent data has not yet been reported to the RIVM.

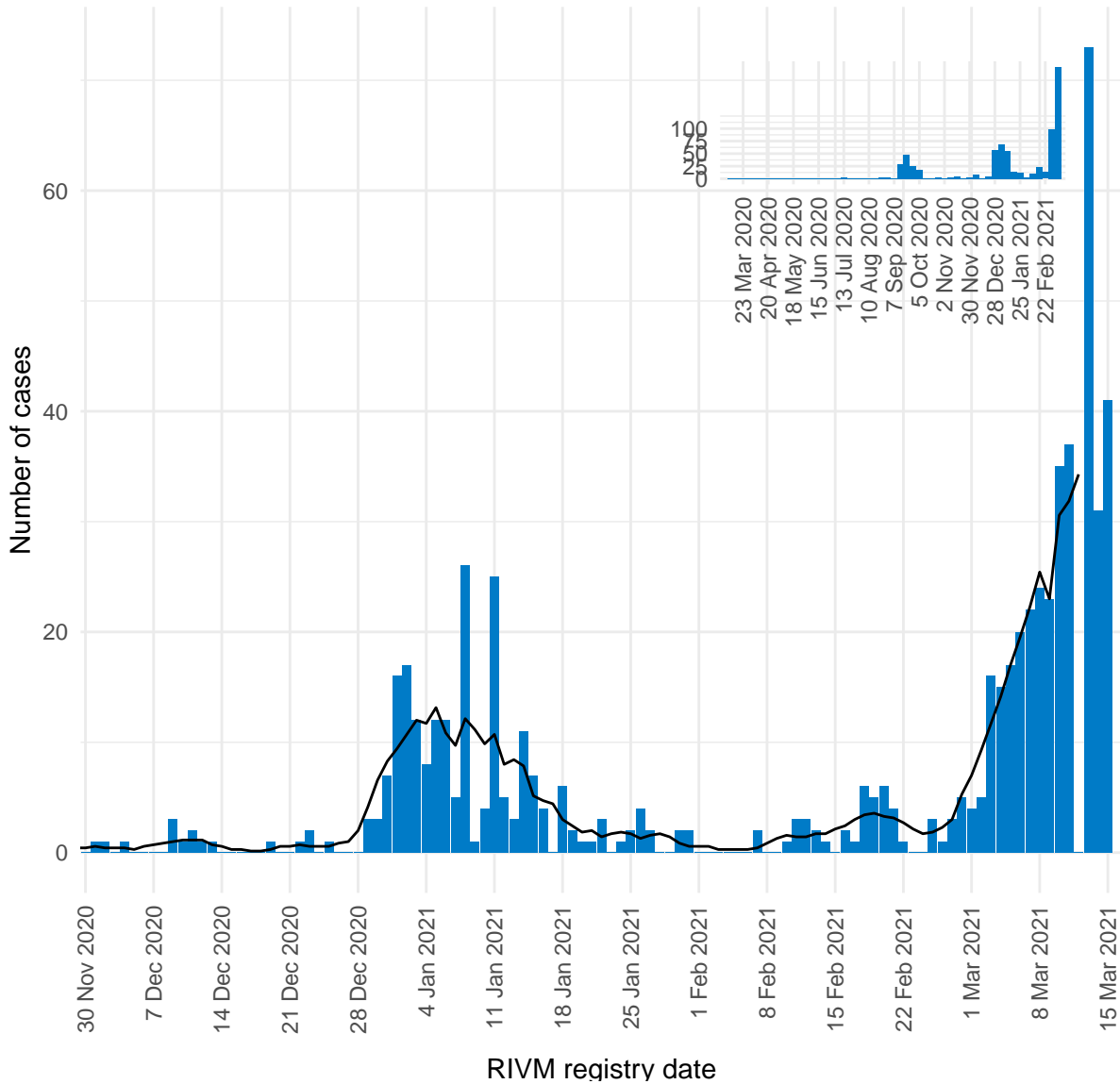


Figure 2: Number of daily reported SARS-CoV-2 cases on Bonaire, presented by RIVM registry date^{1,2}.

¹ This figure displays the daily number of new SARS-CoV-2 by date of reporting to the RIVM. The black line represents the 7-day moving average of new infections. The vertical axes of figures 1-6 differ due to dissimilarities in the quantity of cases between the islands.

² The reported data has been presented by the date of reporting to the RIVM. These numbers can lag behind when the most recent data has not yet been reported to the RIVM.

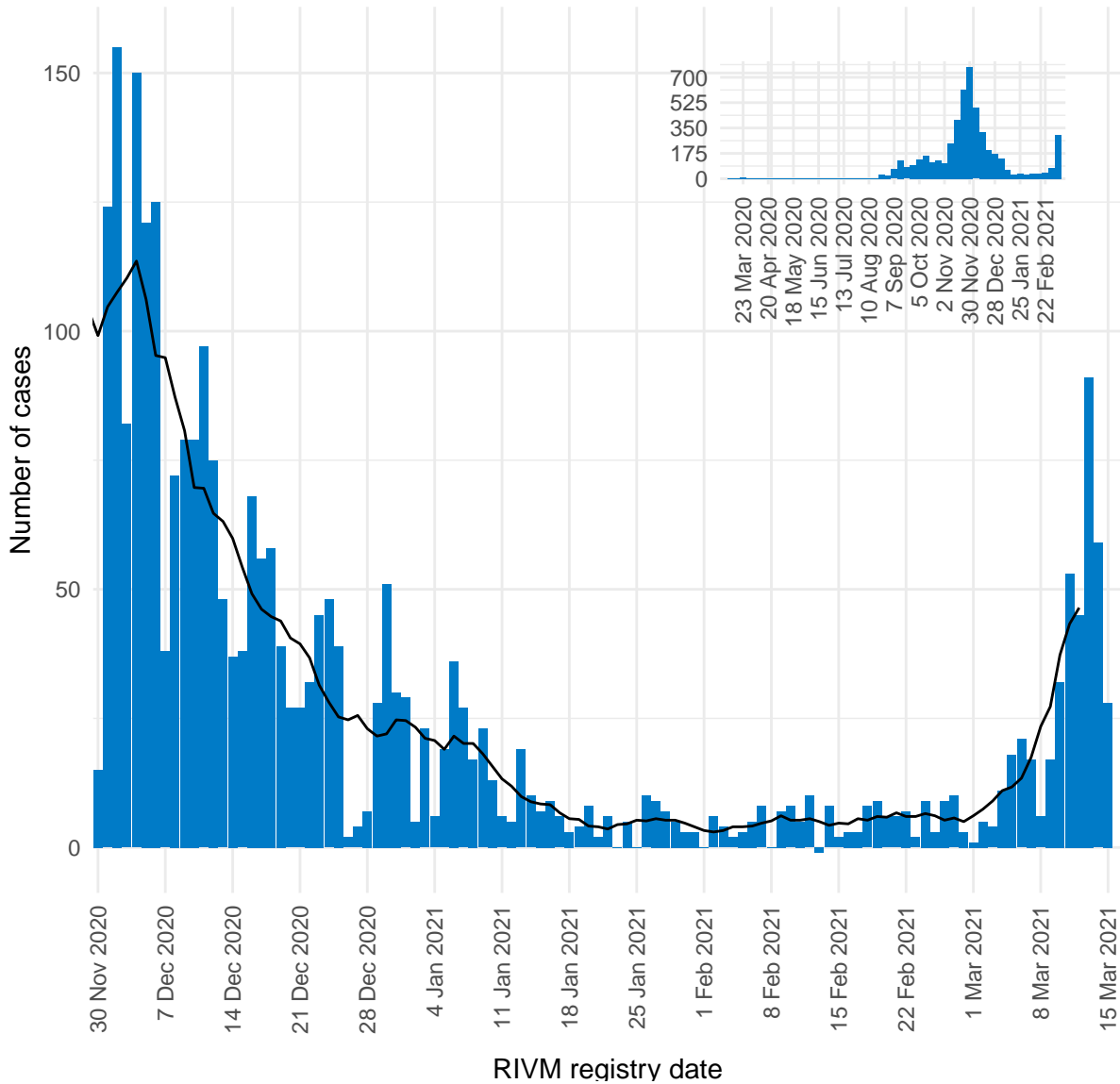


Figure 3: Number of daily reported SARS-CoV-2 cases on Curaçao, presented by RIVM registry date^{1,2}.

¹ This figure displays the daily number of new SARS-CoV-2 by date of reporting to the RIVM. The black line represents the 7-day moving average of new infections. The vertical axes of figures 1-6 differ due to dissimilarities in the quantity of cases between the islands.

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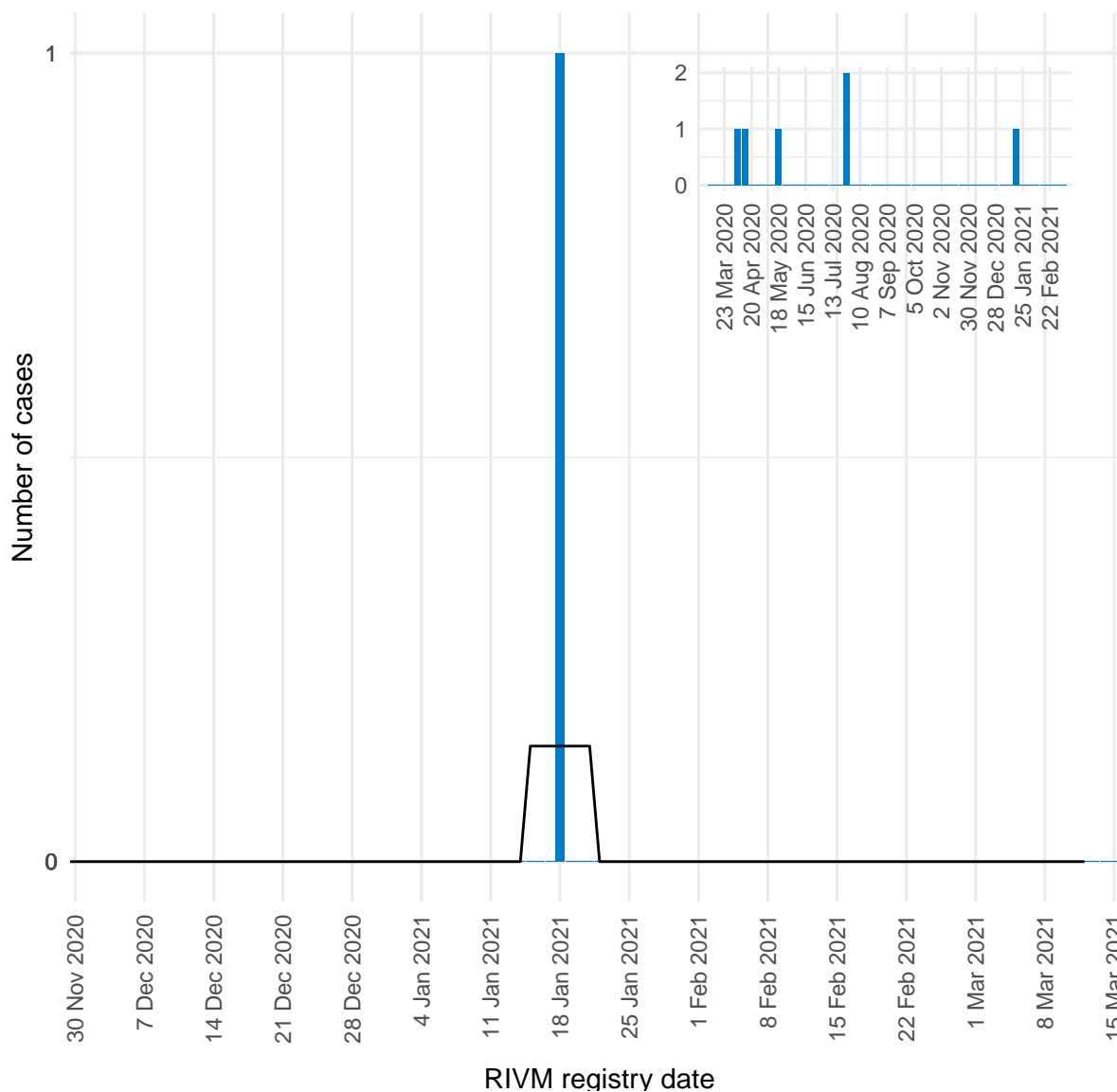


Figure 4: Number of daily reported SARS-CoV-2 cases on Saba, presented by RIVM registry date^{1,2}.

¹ This figure displays the daily number of new SARS-CoV-2 by date of reporting to the RIVM. The black line represents the 7-day moving average of new infections. The vertical axes of figures 1-6 differ due to dissimilarities in the quantity of cases between the islands.

² The reported data has been presented by the date of reporting to the RIVM. These numbers can lag behind when the most recent data has not yet been reported to the RIVM.

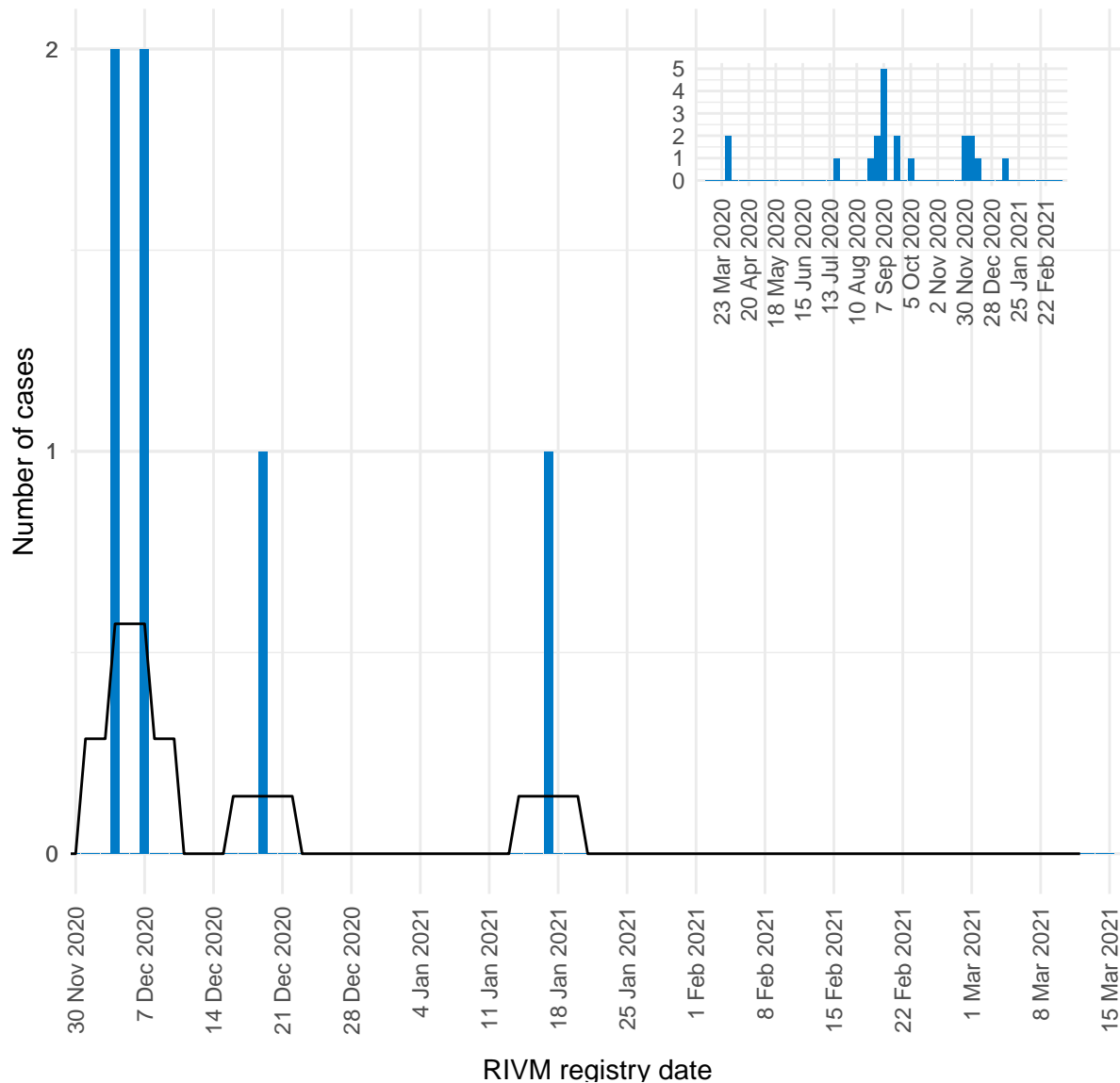


Figure 5: Number of daily reported SARS-CoV-2 cases on St Eustatius, presented by RIVM registry date^{1,2}.

¹ This figure displays the daily number of new SARS-CoV-2 by date of reporting to the RIVM. The black line represents the 7-day moving average of new infections. The vertical axes of figures 1-6 differ due to dissimilarities in the quantity of cases between the islands.

² The reported data has been presented by the date of reporting to the RIVM. These numbers can lag behind when the most recent data has not yet been reported to the RIVM.

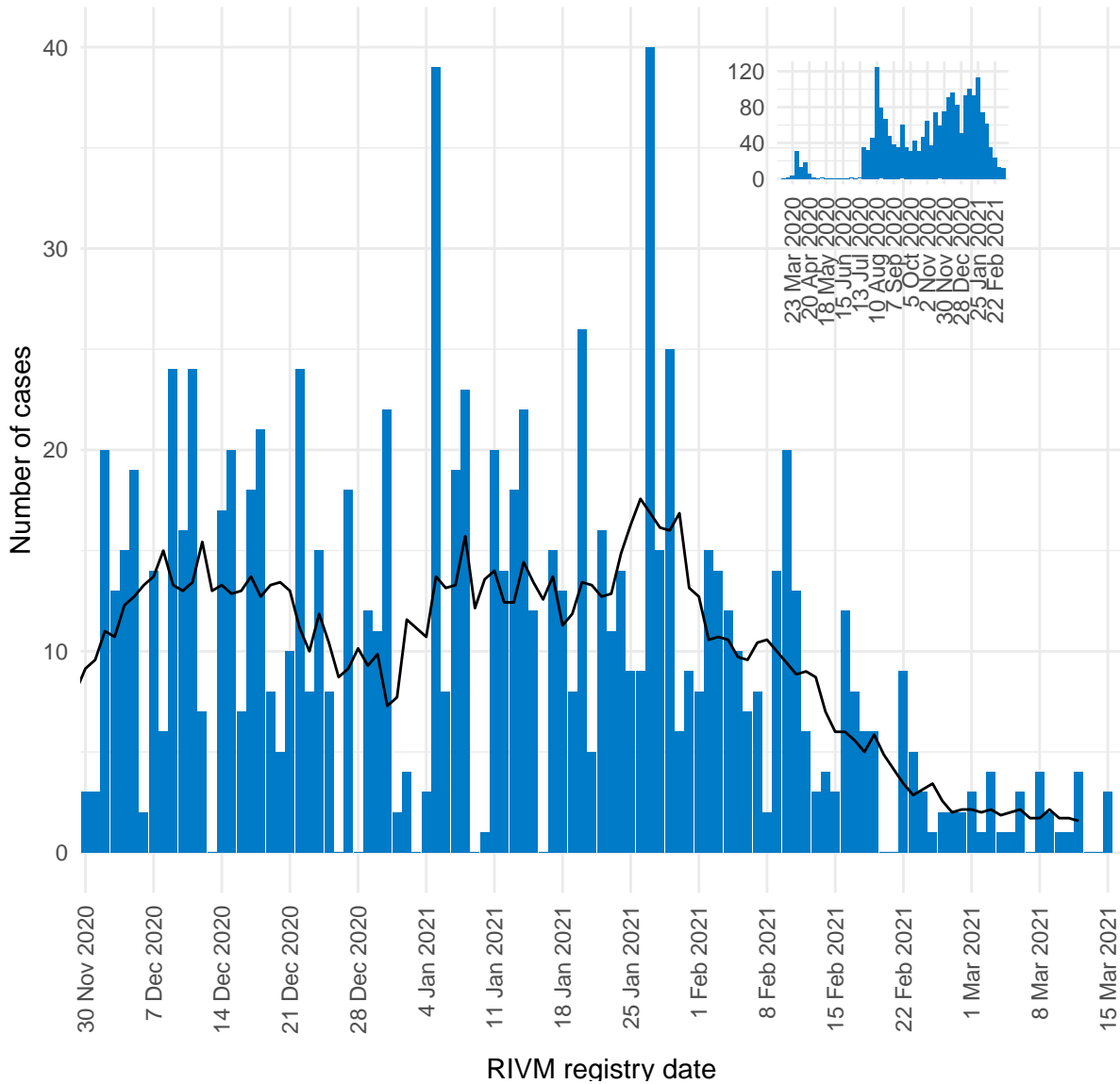


Figure 6: Number of daily reported SARS-CoV-2 cases on Dutch St Maarten, presented by RIVM registry date^{1,2}.

¹ This figure displays the daily number of new SARS-CoV-2 by date of reporting to the RIVM. The black line represents the 7-day moving average of new infections. The vertical axes of figures 1-6 differ due to dissimilarities in the quantity of cases between the islands.

² The reported data has been presented by the date of reporting to the RIVM. These numbers can lag behind when the most recent data has not yet been reported to the RIVM.

3 SARS-CoV-2 incidence rate progression over time

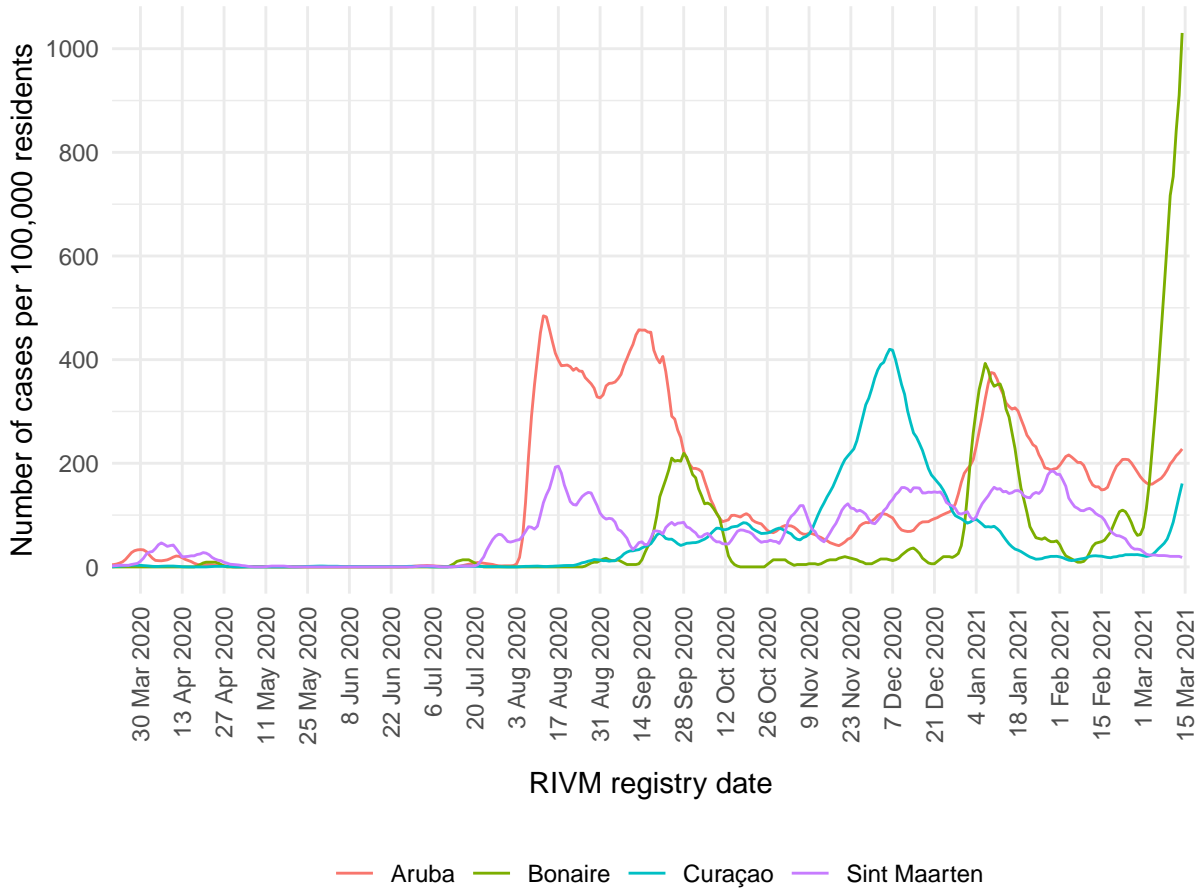


Figure 7: Number of reported cases per 100,000 residents by RIVM registry date, on Curaçao, Aruba, Dutch St Maarten, and Bonaire^{1,2}.

¹ This figure displays the 3-week average incidence rate per island per 100,000 residents, including the population of undocumented migrants on each island. Each line on the vertical axis indicates a weekly average of the incidence rate (defined as the number of new cases per 100,000 persons per week, over the total population) over a period of three weeks. For example: the reported value on January 4th 2021, is the weekly average of the incidence rate between December 28th, 2020 and January 11th, 2021.

² Due to the small number of reported cases on Saba and St Eustatius, these islands have not been included in this figure.