Available from https://tipas.kew.org/site/garden-ponds/
[Accessed 16 June 2026]

Garden Ponds

TCI_11

Country: **Turks and Caicos Islands**
Administrative region: **Middle Caicos (Island)**
Central co-ordinates: **21.78935 N, -71.69706 E**
Area: **9.04km²**

Qualifying IPA criteria

A(i), B(ii), B(iii), C(iii)

IPA assessment rationale

This site qualifies as a TIPA under criterion A(I), due to being the only known site in TCI (thus inferred to have greater than or equal to 5% of the national population) of the Lucayan endemic herb Lobelia lucayana. It is also one of the five best sites for the threatened tree Zanthoxylum flavum. It additionally qualifies under criterion B(ii) and B(iii) due to containing 11 (greater than or equal to 20%) of species of high conservation importance and 24 species (greater than or equal to 15%) from the list of socially, culturally or economically important species. Under criterion C for threatened habitats, this species qualifies under criterion C(iii) by being one of the five best sites for the palustrine swamp habitat, limestone thicket and tropical dry forest habitats.

Site description

This TIPA is situated in the Lorimers area at the eastern end of Middle Caicos. It includes the historical Haulover Plantation site to the north and the field road to Big Pond to the south. The south-eastern boundary follows Increase Road and the southern boundary is with that of the RAMSAR site. The western boundary extends up to pond edges and along Lorimers creek to the east.

Botanical significance

This TIPA is significant as it is the only known contemporary site for the threatened endemic Lobelia lucayana, which has only been recorded in TCI in recent decades from the field road to Big Pond. This species is a small ephemeral white-flowered herb which favours the shady, moist conditions of areas such as Garden Pond. The site also contains populations of the threatened species Encyclia caicensis, Pseudophoenix sargentii, Zanthoxylum flavum and Stenandrium carolinae, as well as several species of social, cultural or economic importance such as the rare tree Bursera simaruba and Island Heather Limonium bahamense. Much of this TIPA floods in the rainy season, allowing rare aquatic plants such as Echinodorus berteroi and Marsilea nashii to grow.

Habitat and geology

This site largely consists of a dominating continuous limestone thicket and tropical dry forest, for which it is one of the best sites in TCI. Both of these habitats are nationally threatened. The site contains the titular ‘Garden ponds’; three ephemeral ponds that are recharged by precipitation. Around these ponds are key areas of nationally threatened palustrine swamps.

Conservation issues

Development is a potential threat to this area. Poaching of Pseudophoenix palms is also a potential issue for that species.

Site assessor(s)

Bryan Naqqi Manco, Department for Environment and Coastal Resources, Turks and Caicos Government

Junel Blaise, Department for Environment and Coastal Resources, Turks and Caicos Government

Dodly Propser, Department for Environment and Coastal Resources, Turks and Caicos Government

Amy Barker, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Sara Bárrios, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Elloise Budd, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Stuart Cable, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Colin Clubbe, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Marcella Corcoran, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Thomas Heller, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Juan Viruel, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Tim Wilkinson, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Date of first assessment:
14th Feb 2025

IPA criterion A species

SPECIES	QUALIFYING SUB-CRITERION	≥ 1% OF GLOBAL POPULATION	≥ 5% OF NATIONAL POPULATION	1 OF 5 BEST SITES NATIONALLY	ENTIRE GLOBAL POPULATION	SOCIO-ECONOMICALLY IMPORTANT	ABUNDANCE AT SITE
Encyclia caicensis	A(i)	–	–	–	–	✓	
Lobelia lucayana	A(i)	–	✓	–	–	–	
Stenandrium carolinae	A(i)	–	–	–	–	–	
Zanthoxylum flavum Vahl	A(i)	–	–	✓	–	✓	

IPA criterion C qualifying habitats

HABITAT	QUALIFYING SUB-CRITERION	≥ 5% OF NATIONAL RESOURCE	≥ 10% OF NATIONAL RESOURCE	1 OF 5 BEST SITES NATIONALLY	AREAL COVERAGE AT SITE
Limestone thicket	C(iii)	–	✓	✓	
Tropical dry forest	C(iii)	–	–	–	

General site habitats

GENERAL SITE HABITAT	PERCENT COVERAGE	IMPORTANCE
Forest - Subtropical/Tropical Dry Forest	–	
Shrubland - Subtropical/Tropical Dry Shrubland	–	
Wetlands (inland) - Permanent Freshwater Marshes/Pools [under 8 ha]	–	
Wetlands (inland) - Permanent Saline, Brackish or Alkaline Marshes/Pools	–	

Land use types

LAND USE TYPE	PERCENT COVERAGE	IMPORTANCE

Threats

THREAT	SEVERITY	TIMING
Biological resource use - Gathering terrestrial plants - Intentional use (species being assessed is the target)	Medium	Future - inferred threat
Residential & commercial development - Tourism & recreation areas	Medium	Ongoing - increasing
Climate change & severe weather - Storms & flooding	High	Ongoing - increasing