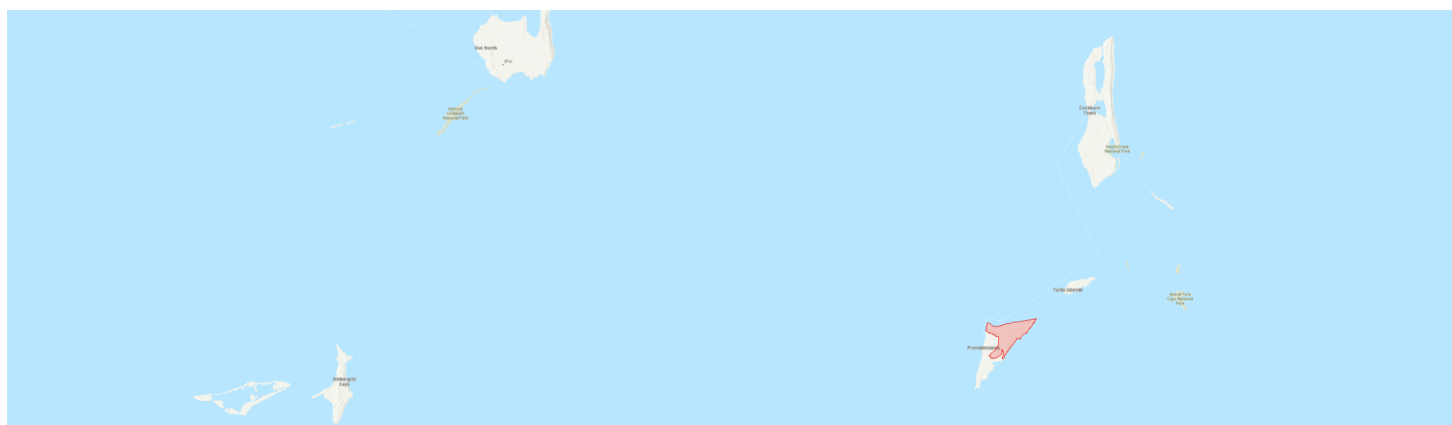


# Salt Cay

TCL\_19



Country: **Turks and Caicos Islands**

Administrative region: **Salt Cay (Island)**

Central co-ordinates: **21.33326 N, -71.19895 E**

Area: **3.87km²**

## Qualifying IPA criteria

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

## IPA assessment rationale

North Salt Cay qualifies as a TIPA under all three criteria. It meets A(i) by supporting an inferred more than 1% of the global population of the threatened endemic *Lepidium filicaule* and by being one of the five best sites for the Endangered *Ayenia tenuicaulis*. It meets criterion B(iii) as it supports 12 species (more than or equal to 15%) from the list of socially, culturally or economically important species. Criterion C(iii) is also met, as it is one of the five best sites for both the coastal scrub and salina habitats.

## Site description

This TIPA encompasses the northern half of Salt Cay, excluding Town Salina. It does not include the residential areas in the south

district of Balfour Town, though does about the edge of the residential areas of the North District north of Town Salina.

## Botanical significance

*Lepidium filicaule*, a minute and threatened endemic herb with a very short life cycle, is found in two sites within this TIPA; on a ridge near north-west point and by a pond north of the airport. Two additional threatened species occur here, *Argythamni argentea* and *Ayenia tenuicaulis*. The national flower of Turks and Caicos, *Limonium bahamense*, is found in the area between Taylor Hill and Town Salina. This is the densest population of the species within the TCI, making this site of high significance for this plant. Also found within this TIPA is a population of the rare freshwater fern *Marsilea nashii*.

## Habitat and geology

Town Salina is one of the five best sites for the salina habitat in TCI. It is a hypersaline waterbody with anaerobic microorganisms in the soil-bed. Flooding of Town Salina supports the existence of the large area of palustrine marsh adjacent to it, which is vital to supporting the large population of *Limonium bahamense* found here. This palustrine marsh is an open area with soil which is encrusted with salt, supporting strictly halophytic plant species including *Limonium*.

In the north-west point area of the TIPA, a ridge with a steep southern slope and gentle northern slope towards the coast is found. This area consists of dwarf shrubland, limestone thicket and coastal scrub. The site is one of the five best sites for coastal scrub habitat, which forms in coastal areas from encroaching vegetation which covers the bordering sand dunes. Here, this habitat is important for supporting species such as *Euphorbia lecheoides*, *Reynosia septentrionalis* and *Lantana involucrata*.

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## Conservation issues

Given its coastal setting, this area is highly threatened by further residential and tourist developments. Grazing by cattle and donkeys may also threaten some plant species, particularly herbaceous species such as *Lepidium filicaule*. Excessive flooding of the salina can salinate surrounding areas, potentially affecting the composition of species due to lower soil fertility.

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## Site assessor(s)

### Assessed by:

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

Sara Bárrios, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

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Juan Viruel, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Tim Wilkinson, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

### Date of first assessment:

14th Feb 2025

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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
<i>Argythamnia argentea</i>	A(i)	—	—	—	—	✓	
<i>Ayenia tenuicaulis</i>	A(i)	—	—	✓	—	—	
<i>Lepidium filicaule</i>	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
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General site habitats

GENERAL SITE HABITAT	PERCENT COVERAGE	IMPORTANCE
Marine Coastal/Supratidal - Coastal Brackish/Saline Lagoons/Marine Lakes	—	
Shrubland - Subtropical/Tropical Dry Shrubland	—	
Forest - Subtropical/Tropical Dry Forest	—	
Marine Coastal/Supratidal - Coastal Sand Dunes	—	

Land use types

LAND USE TYPE	PERCENT COVERAGE	IMPORTANCE
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Threats

THREAT	SEVERITY	TIMING
Residential & commercial development - Tourism & recreation areas	High	Ongoing - increasing
Agriculture & aquaculture - Livestock farming & ranching - Small-holder grazing, ranching or farming	Medium	Ongoing - increasing
Invasive & other problematic species, genes & diseases - Invasive non-native/alien species/diseases - Named species	Medium	Ongoing - increasing
Climate change & severe weather - Storms & flooding	High	Ongoing - increasing