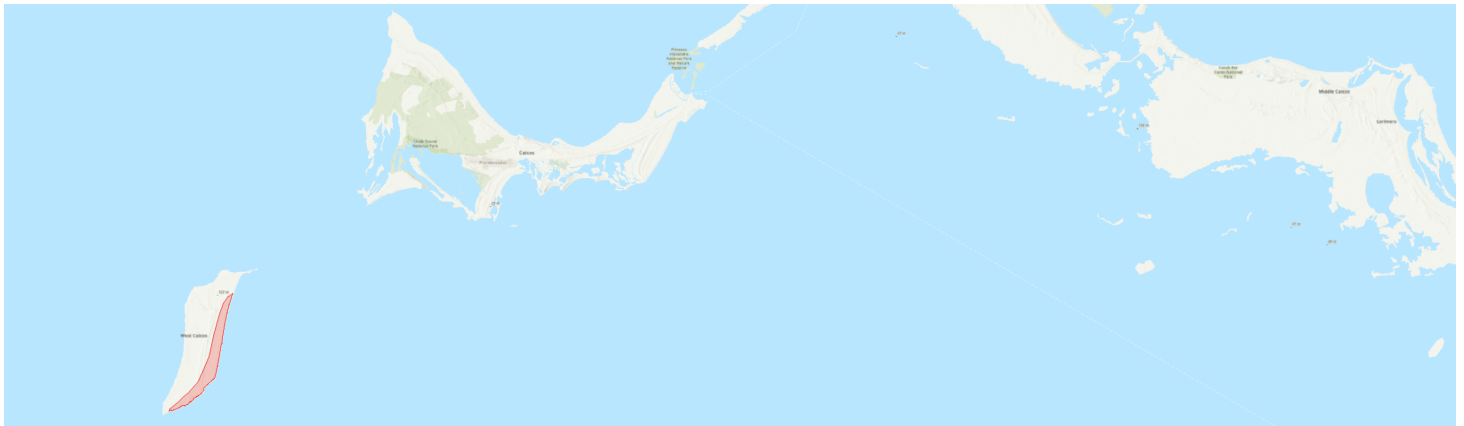


West Caicos Coastal Coppice

TCL_01



Country: **Turks and Caicos Islands**

Administrative region: **West Caicos (Island)**

Central co-ordinates: **21.65527 N, -72.45202 E**

Area: **5.16km²**

Great Salina which sits at the base of an oolitic dune ridge which runs from north to south.

Qualifying IPA criteria

B(ii), B(iii), C(iii)

IPA assessment rationale

This site qualifies under two subcriteria of criterion B for botanical richness. It meets B(ii) by supporting 7 species of high conservation importance, exceeding the threshold of equal to or more than 20% of species from the agreed list. It also far exceeds the 15% of species from the agreed list of socially, economically or culturally important species, with 28 unique species occurring here. This site also qualifies under criterion C(iii), being one of the five best sites for the nationally threatened coastal coppice habitat.

Botanical significance

This site is notable for an abundance of the Lucayan endemic and Near Threatened Silver Thatch palm *Coccothrinax inaguensis* which dominates the dune ridge on the coastal side of this TIPA. The *Coccothrinax* trees here are very big and old, which reflects a long history of no human disturbance as they have very slow growth and a dependence on mycorrhizal fungi. This makes them highly sensitive and vulnerable to disturbance. The trees in this TIPA are therefore likely to be hundreds of years old. Additionally, a threatened species, *Chamaecrista caribaea* can also be found here. A high number of socio-economically useful plants can also be found here, such as Big Sage Lantana *involucrata* and Darling Plum *Reynosa septentrionalis*. Many plants which form an important part of the endemic Caicos Rock Iguana *Cyclura carinata* diet are also found here. This site is generally under-explored, with the last major botanical survey being in 1904. Further survey work will improve understanding of the botanical significance of this site.

Site description

This TIPA is located on the eastern shore of West Caicos, situated to the south-west of Providenciales. It includes the large, elongated

Habitat and geology

The majority of this site consists of oolitic sand dunes up to 16 m

high, with a gypsum-bearing salina on the inland side (Handford and Baria 2007, Bachtel and Kendall 2016). The coastal coppice woodlands, dominated by *Coccothrinax inaguensis* are the key habitat on the ridge, and comprise one of the five best sites for this nationally threatened habitat in TCI.

Conservation issues

Development is a significant threat on West Caicos, which is presently uninhabited but this may change in the future. So far, most development on the island has been situated on the west-central side of the island, with large areas historically having been cut for sisal production. The east coast, including this TIPA, has remained in pristine condition. The coastal coppice which characterizes this site is sensitive and particularly threatened by development activities due to its close proximity to the coast. Grazing pressure from feral goats may also have adverse effects on plant species within this TIPA.

Site assessor(s)

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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
<i>Chamaecrista caribaea</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
Coastal coppice	C(iii)	—	—	✓	

General site habitats

GENERAL SITE HABITAT	PERCENT COVERAGE	IMPORTANCE
Shrubland - Subtropical/Tropical Dry Shrubland	—	

Land use types

LAND USE TYPE	PERCENT COVERAGE	IMPORTANCE

Threats

THREAT	SEVERITY	TIMING
Invasive & other problematic species, genes & diseases - Problematic native species/diseases - Named species	Medium	Ongoing - increasing
Residential & commercial development - Housing & urban areas	High	Future - planned activity
Climate change & severe weather - Storms & flooding	High	Ongoing - increasing
Residential & commercial development - Tourism & recreation areas	High	Ongoing - increasing

Bibliography

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Bachtel, S., Kendall, C. 2016. **Reef to ooid sequences and Leeward**