

Prickly Pear Island

BVITIPA016



Country: **British Virgin Islands**

Administrative region: **Prickly Pear (Province)**

Central co-ordinates: **18.50540 N, -64.36693 E**

Area: **0.72km²**

Qualifying IPA criteria

B(ii), C(iii)

IPA assessment rationale

The entire island of Prickly Pear has been identified as a TIPA for its botanical richness and nationally important Dry salt flats habitat.

Site description

Prickly Pear is in the North Sound off Virgin Gorda. The island was declared a Bird Sanctuary in 1980 and a National Park in 1988 for its important mangrove and salt pond systems, turtle nesting and avifauna. The island is undeveloped, apart from a concession area at Vixen Point.

Botanical significance

The island is rich in plant diversity with five species of national high conservation importance, qualifying under sub-criterion B(ii) for TIPAs. On the northern shore, there are populations of the Virgin Islands endemic *Croton fishlockii* (NT), which only grows in the BVI and on St John in the USVI. The Puerto Rico Bank endemic *Agave missionum* (VU) can be found in a few locations on the south of the island. Populations of Puerto Rican Bank endemics *Malpighia woodburyana* (VU), *Psychilis macconnelliae* (NT) and *Tolumnia prionochoila* (NT) are found growing across the TIPA.

Habitat and geology

The southern side of the island from Vixen Point to Bandy Point is where three out of the four occurring salt ponds are located. Surrounding the ponds are important areas of the nationally threatened Dry salt flats habitat, identified as the third-best site for this habitat in the BVI under TIPAs sub-criterion C(iii). Two other nationally threatened habitats which occur within the TIPA did not qualify under sub-criterion C(iii), Mangroves mainly near Bandy Point and Coastal shrubland along the coast and lower hills across the island. The first habitat is very small and restricted, while the second did not represent one of the best sites, as grazing by feral goats is severe and has been very detrimental to the vegetation reducing habitat quality. The rest of the island is mostly covered by Seasonally deciduous forests and woodlands.

Conservation issues

Grazing by feral goats is damaging the vegetation extensively, but a feral goat eradication programme is underway. Permanent monitoring plots to evaluate vegetation recovery post-eradication have been set-up by NPTVI and the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. Along with monitoring the vegetation recovery, activities to survey, map and monitor invasive plant species are also being carried out on the island.

Site assessor(s)

BVI TIPAs National Team, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew - National Parks Trust of the Virgin Islands - BVI Ministry of Natural Resources, Labour and Immigration

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>Agave missionum</i> Trel.	A(i)	—	—	—	—	—	
<i>Malpighia woodburyana</i> Vivaldi	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
Dry Salt Flats	C(iii)	—	—	✓	

General site habitats

GENERAL SITE HABITAT	PERCENT COVERAGE	IMPORTANCE
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Land use types

LAND USE TYPE	PERCENT COVERAGE	IMPORTANCE
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Threats

THREAT	SEVERITY	TIMING
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Bibliography

The BVI TIPAs National Team 2019. **Identifying and Conserving Tropical Important Plant Areas in the British Virgin Islands (2016-2019): Final Technical Report.**