

Tortola North Shore

BVITIPA018



Country: **British Virgin Islands**

Administrative region: **Tortola (Province)**

Central co-ordinates: **18.44804 N, -64.62683 E**

Area: **2.31km²**

Qualifying IPA criteria

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

IPA assessment rationale

The area qualified for having globally threatened plants, nationally threatened habitats and for its botanical richness. The BVI TIPAs National Team have discussed and agreed during the TIPAs assessment workshop in April 2018 that surveys were needed to evaluate the conservation importance of the Semi-deciduous gallery forests within this TIPA's boundaries, as data were insufficient for an informed decision. If confirmed in the future, this site could be part of the best site for the Semi-deciduous gallery forests threatened habitat in the BVI along with Sabbath Hill and qualify under TIPAs sub-criterion C(iii) for that habitat.

Site description

This TIPA runs along the coast of northern Tortola, from Anderson Point to Carrot Bay to an elevation of 174 m or less. This site is mostly undeveloped, apart from a few private houses and roads. It includes two National Parks, Mount Healthy and Shark Bay. Mount Healthy National Park, declared in 1983, has the only remaining sugar mill from the 18th century in the BVI. Shark Bay National Park was declared in 1999 to protect the coastal vegetation and coral reef in the nearshore area. Shark Bay National Park is an important area for botanical richness and threatened plants, having several globally threatened species.

Botanical significance

Important national populations (>5%) of two globally threatened species are found within the TIPA. The rare Greater Antilles endemic palm *Sabal causiarum* (VU) grows mostly within Shark Bay National Park on the western end of the TIPA, but there are some individuals growing around Rogues Bay at the eastern side of the TIPA. The Virgin Islands endemic *Pilea sanctae-crucis* (EN), which in the BVI only grows on Tortola is also found here growing inside the National Park. These two species qualified under TIPAs sub-criterion A(i). The BVI TIPAs National Team, during the TIPAs assessment workshop, agreed that *Agave missionum* is widespread on Tortola and all areas on this island (except Sage Mountain and Paraquita Bay and Bar Bay) are important for the conservation of the species. Therefore, *Agave missionum* (VU) qualified under sub-criterion A(i) and B(ii), despite the lack of high accuracy records within this TIPA. The Virgin Islands endemic aroid hybrid *Anthurium x selloum*, which only grows in a few places on Tortola and St. John in the USVI, is found within this TIPA. This species qualified the TIPA under sub-criterion A(iii), despite lack of high accuracy records, as NPTVI reported that the species has been observed growing in the area. Another Virgin Islands endemic species of high conservation importance for the BVI which can be found growing in the TIPA is *Reynosa guama* (NT).

Habitat and geology

The nationally threatened Upland evergreen forest habitat is within this TIPA, outside the national park boundaries, mostly along Spooner Ghut from Mount Healthy to Hell Hole and in a few places above Cooper Bay and Thousand Ghut. This is part of Tortola's best site for the Upland evergreen forest habitat, and as such an important site for habitat conservation nationally qualifying the area under TIPAs sub-criterion C(iii). Besides Semi-deciduous gallery forests habitat, another two nationally threatened habitats are present in the TIPA, i.e. Coastal shrubland and Mangroves. There is a large extent of Coastal shrubland along the northern shore and a few areas of Mangroves in Trunk Bay and Rogues Bay, but these three

habitats did not qualify under TIPAs criterion C.

Conservation issues

Main threats to this TIPA are urban development, feral animal grazing and invasive species including plants and pests.

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>Pilea sanctae-crucis</i> Liebm.	A(i)	—	✓	—	—	—	
<i>Sabal causiarum</i> (O.F.Cook) Becc.	A(i)	—	✓	—	—	—	
<i>Anthurium × selloanum</i> K.Koch	A(iii)	—	✓	—	—	—	

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
Upland Evergreen Forest	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.**