**Anguilla and TCI island information**

**November 2019**

**Anguilla**

Anguilla is the northernmost of the Leeward Islands, and comprises the main island (91km2) and several smaller islets. It is only 8 km from St Maarten. Anguilla is mainly flat, with the highest point 213 feet above sea level.

Climate is sunny year-round, with average temperatures of 27°C. The wet season extends from June to November. Most of the islands rainfall of 900 – 1,000mm can fall within a few weeks. The hurricane season normally runs from June to November.

Anguilla and its cays are mostly rocky, with mainly limestone, corals and sandstone.

Important Bird Area designation: A1 and A2 for East End pond (species of global conservation concern, and assemblage of restricted range species: Caribbean coot, Green-throated Carib).

From the RSPB Stocktake (2014):

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Total species recorded | 1003 |
| Native species | 761 |
| Known endemic species | 6 |
| Endemic Globally Threatened species | 2 |
| Known non-native species | 216 |

Endemic species are as follows:

Plants:

* Anguilla bush Rondelitia anguillensisis

Reptiles:

* Sombrero Island black lizard Ameiva corvina (Sombrero Island)
* Little Scrub Island black ameiva Ameiva corax (Little Scrub Island)

The dwarf gecko Sphaerodactylus sp. may be endemic also, and has been tentatively named Sombrero dwarf gecko

Invertebrates:

* Sweat bee *Lasioglossum sombrerense* (Sombrero Island)
* Solifugid *Antillotrecha iviei* (Sombrero Island)
* Comb-clawed beetle *Hymenorus anguillae*



**Main islands**

Dog Island

Description: A remote uninhabited low rocky island, with three smaller cays off the west and north coasts. The centre of the island is covered with low scrub and cacti.

Size: 510ha (5.1 km2)

Distance from nearest land: 13km NW of Anguilla

Biodiversity: one of the most important seabird islands in the Caribbean in terms of number of breeding species and home to Anguilla’s largest seabird breeding colonies, with 10 breeding seabird species, including over 135,000 pairs of sooty terns Onychoprion fuscatus. This site is globally important for populations of brown boobies Sula dactylatra and red-billed tropicbirds Phaethon aethereus and regionally important for magnificent frigatebirds Fregata magnificens, masked boobies Sula dactylatra, laughing gulls Leucophaeus atricilla, and sooty terns Onychoprion fuscatus.

Also present are five species of native terrestrial reptile: ground lizard *Ameiva plei*, Tree lizard *Anolis gingivinus*, Little dwarf gecko *Sphaerodactylus parvus*, Island dwarf gecko *S. sputator*, and slippery back *Mabouya* sp.

Pathways of entry: boat

Other information:

* Privately owned
* In 2012, Dog Island was subject of a rodent eradication operation to protect these colonies from predation.
* Important Bird Area designation: A4i, A4ii and A4iii (important for congregations of waterbirds on a regular basis to varying categories of global importance).
* Top ranked among the OTs by the RSPB for invasive alien vertebrate eradication (goats).

Scrub Island

Description: Low-lying with sandy beaches and complex of ponds and lagoons, lined with mangroves and small trees. Uninhabited.

Size: 8 km2

Distance from nearest land: The largest outer island is separated from the mainland by a 500m channel.

Biodiversity: an important habitat sites for a number of species, particularly seabirds. Also present are five species of native terrestrial reptile: ground lizard *Ameiva plei*, Tree lizard *Anolis gingivinus*, Little dwarf gecko *Sphaerodactylus parvus*, Island dwarf gecko *S. sputator*, and the Anguillan racer *Alsophis rijgersmaeri*.

Green and leatherback turtles have been known to nest on the beaches.

Pathways of entry: boat

Other information:

* Privately owned
* Large numbers of goats on the island.
* Important Bird Area designation: A4i (important for congregations of waterbirds on a regular basis).
* The endemic lizard Ameiva corax is found only on Little Scrub Island (24 ha)

Sombrero Island

Description: Cliffs and rocky areas. Phosphates were mined here in the past. Vegetation is sparse due to hurricane impacts. Uninhabited.

Size: 38 ha (0.38 km2)

Distance from nearest land: 65 km north-west of Anguilla

Biodiversity: Home to a large seabird colony. Noted for the endemic Sombrero ground lizard Ameiva corvina, a widespread species on the island and found only here. The tree lizard Anolis gingivinusis is also found on the island. Invertebrate surveys have found at least 40 endemic invertebrate species, including a new species of bee. The surrounding waters are feeding areas for sea-turtles: Green, Hawksbill, Leatherback and Loggerhead

Pathways of entry: boat

Other information:

* Important Bird Area designation: A4i (important for congregations of waterbirds on a regular basis).

Prickly Pear Cays

Description: Uninhabited sandy islands with sparse vegetation, divided by a narrow boat channel between Prickly Pear East and Prickly Pear West. Other rocky outcrops exist in the group.

Size: West Cay – 1.2 km long, East Cay is 1.6 km long and 0.4 km wide.

Distance from nearest land: 9.7 km from Anguilla

Biodiversity: An important habitat sites for a number of species, particularly seabirds.

Pathways of entry: boat (mainly to Prickly Pear East. Prickly Pear West has no easy boat landing facility).

Other information:

* Part of the MPA
* Top ranked among the OTs by the RSPB for invasive alien vertebrate eradication (Black rat).

**Turks and Caicos Islands**

TCI consists of an archipelago of about 500 km² of land is divided between 120 low islands and cays situated on shallow banks to the south of the Bahamas. Only six of the islands are permanently inhabited, with 31,458 (2012) permanent residents: Grand Turk; Salt Cay; South Caicos; Middle Caicos; North Caicos and Providenciales. Providenciales (“Provo”) is the third largest is size (98 km2), largest in population and where the government offices are as well as most of the tourism. Together with southern Florida, the Bahamas and northern Cuba, TCI is part of a limestone platform formed from calcareous marine sediments. Provo is connected to North Caicos by a regular ferry, and North Caicos is connected to Middle Caicos by road. East Caicos is only accessible by boat. South Caicos is accessible by plane or ferry from Provo.

TCI consists of two shallow banks, the easterly Turks Bank (254 km2) and Caicos Bank (5,334 km2), with deep ocean between them. Maximum height above sea level is 50m. Over half the land area above sea level is wetlands.

Climate is warm and dry, with occasional heavy rain and average temperatures around 20 – 27°C. The hurricane season normally runs from June to November. TCI lie in the path of the north-east trade winds. The island are affected by the west-setting North Equatorial Current on both their northern and southern extremities, flowing from Cuba and the Caribbean region to the south.

From the RSPB Stocktake (2014):

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Total species recorded | 1,883 |
| Native species | 1,747 |
| Known endemic species | 42 |
| Endemic Globally Threatened species | 4 |
| Known non-native species | 136 |

For a full list of the cays and more detailed map see https://www.visittci.com/other-islands

The endemic species and subspecies are as follows:

Plants:

* Turks and Caicos heather *Limonium bahamense*
* Caroline’s pink flower *Stenandrium carolinae*
* Caicos Encyclia orchid *Encyclia caicensis*
* Britton’s buttonbush *Spermacoce brittonii*
* Ambergris Buttonwood *Spermacoce capillaris*
* Silvery silverbush *Argythamnia argentea*
* Peppergrass *Lepidium filicaule*
* North Caicos milkweed vine *Metastelma stipitatum*
* Caroline's Pink *Stenandrium carolinae*
* Turks Island Prickly-pear *Opuntia x lucayana*
* TCI Milkweed Vine *Cynanchum* (or *Metastelma*) *stipitatum*

In addition, the plant subspecies *Evolvulus bahamense arbuscula* is potentially endemic to the TCI

Invertebrate species or subspecies

* Drury’s hairstreak butterfly *Strymon acis leucosticha*
* Land snails:
	+ *Cerion lewisi*
	+ *Cerion brevispira*
	+ *Cerion abbotti*
	+ *Cerion caicosense*
* Tiger beetle *Tetracha naviaux*
* Comb-clawed beetle *Hymenorus pygmaeus*
* Horseflies:
	+ *Stenotabanus sputnikulus*
	+ *Stenotabanus farri*
* Leaf-footed bug *Leptoglossus caicosensis*
* Wall crab spider *Selenops baweka*

Reptile species:

* Caicos barking gecko *Aristelliger hechti*
* Caicos pygmy boa *Tropidophis greenwayi*
* Rock iguana *Cyclura carinata carinata*
* Turks Dwarf Gecko *Sphaerodactylus underwoodi*
* Caicos Dwarf Gecko *Sphaerodactylus caicosensis*
* Caicos Skink *Spondylurus caicosae*
* Turks Skink *Spondylurus turksae*
* Caicos Curlytail *Leiocephalus psammodromus* ([iNaturalist](https://www.inaturalist.org/taxa/39326-Leiocephalus-psammodromus/browse_photos)).

Among the endemic reptile subspecies are:

* Turks and Caicos Rock Iguana *Cyclura carinata carinata*
* Turks Rainbow Boa *Epicrates chrysogaster chrysogaster*

Endemic bird subspecies:

* Thick-billed vireo *Vireo crassirostris stalagmium*
* Greater Antillean bullfinch *Loxigilla violacea ofella*

Marine invertebrates:

* Marine cone snail *Jaspidiconus lusca*
* Cave-dwelling marine invertebrates:
	+ Remipede crustacean *Micropacter yagerae* (known only from Providenciales and the sole member of the endemic family Micropacteridae.)
	+ Remipede crustacean *Kaloketos pilosus*
	+ Shrimps:
		- *Stygiomysis clarkei*
		- *Speonebalia cannoni*
	+ Polychaete worm *Pelagomacellicephala iliffei*
	+ Ostracod crustacean *Deeveya spiralis*
	+ Isopod crustacean *Bahalana caicosana*
	+ Copepod crustaceans:
		- *Erebonectoides macrochaetus*
		- *Fosshagenia ferrarii*
		- *Caiconectes antiquus*
* A sponge *Willardia caicosensis* (known only from deep waters off the Turks and Caicos Islands.)

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**Main islands**

North Caicos

Description: Second largest island (after Middle Caicos). There is one protected area of gallery forest at Wades Green and Teren Hill. Inhabited: 1,300 human population in 2012.

Size: 66 km2 overall. Wades Green and Teren Hill protected area = 300 ha (3 km2).

Distance from next nearest land: linked to Provo by ferry (30 mins) and Middle Caicos by a 1 mile bridge.

Biodiversity: The most important site in TCI for high forest. Site for a number of restricted range land birds. Site for several reptiles including the following endemic species: the gecko *Aristelliger hechti*, Curly tail *Leiocephalus psammodromus*, Caicos Islands reef gecko *Sphaerodactylus caicosensis*, and one endemic snake the Caicos Islands tope boa *Tropidophis greenwayi*.

Pathways of entry: 30 minute ferry from Provo, 1 mile road bridge to Middle Caicos.

Other information:

* Important Bird Area designation: A1 and A3 (species of global conservation concern, and assemblage of restricted range species).

Middle Caicos

Description: Largest island. There is one protected area of Fish ponds and Crossing Place Trail. Limestone cliffs, offshore cays, caves and ponds.

Size: 77 km2 overall. Fish ponds and Crossing Place Trail protected area = 1,200 ha (12 km2).

Distance from nearest land: 1 mile land bridge to North Caicos, 23 km to East Caicos.

Biodiversity: Site for a number of restricted range land birds, specialist plants and butterflies, including the endemic Drury’s hairstreak *Strymon acis*. The Middle Caicos forest is also important for a number of restricted range birds and five species of bat. The forest is one of the most important habitats for the endemic reptiles: the gecko *Aristelliger hechti*, Curly tail *Leiocephalus psammodromus*, Caicos Islands reef gecko *Sphaerodactylus caicosensis*, and one endemic snake the Caicos Islands tope boa *Tropidophis greenwayi*.

Pathways of entry: land bridge to North Caicos. Boat to East Caicos.

Other information:

* Important Bird Area designation: A1 and A3 (species of global conservation concern, and assemblage of restricted range species).

East Caicos

Description: Uninhabited. Habitats include ponds, caves, woodlands, flats and marshes, and coastal wetlands.

Size: 51.5 km2

Distance from nearest land: 23 km to Middle Caicos, 19 km to main part of South Caicos 9there is a long sand spit extending north from South Caicos which comes closer.

Biodiversity: East Caicos is important for a number of restricted range land and seabirds. The caves are probably important for bats and invertebrates. An important area for the endemic reptiles: the gecko *Aristelliger hechti*, Curly tail *Leiocephalus psammodromus*, Caicos Islands reef gecko *Sphaerodactylus caicosensis*, and one endemic snake the Caicos Islands tope boa *Tropidophis greenwayi*.

Pathways of entry: boat

Other information:

* Important Bird Area designation: A1, A2, A3 and A4i (species of global conservation concern, and assemblage of restricted range species, and important for congregations of waterbirds on a regular basis).

West Caicos

Description: Generally flat terrain. Low iron shore cliffs, and sandy beaches. Surrounded by the West Caicos Marine National Park. 500 acre saline lake in the centre. Uninhabited (but used to be inhabited, people growing sisal and working salt ponds).

Size: 28.5 km2

Distance from nearest land: 22 km to Provo.

Biodiversity: Home to numbers of birds, including flamingoes.

Pathways of entry: boat (dive boats, private vessels on day trips)

Other information:

* Plans to restore an abandoned resort for tourism.

South Caicos

Description: Limestone dune cliffs and low vegetation, many sandy beaches. Inhabited: population 1,139 (2012). Main industry is tourism.

Size: 13.7 km2

Distance from nearest land: 39.6 km to Grand Turk

Biodiversity: no endemics present?

Pathways of entry: boat, domestic airport

Other information: none

Grand Turk

Description: Historical and political capital of TCI, now replaced by Provo as seat of government and commerce. A number of salinas and shores. Inhabited island, with an international airport. Population: 4,831 (2012)

Size: 11.3 km2

Distance from nearest land: 39.6 km to South Caicos.

Biodiversity: Important for a number of seabirds.

Pathways of entry: international airport, seaport, cruise ships, yachts

Other information:

* Important Bird Area designation: A1 and A4i (species of global conservation concern, and assemblage of restricted range species, and important for congregations of waterbirds on a regular basis).

Ambergris Cays

Description: Two sandy cays 1.6 km apart. Little Ambergris Cay consists of several smaller cays surrounding a central lagoon

Size: Big Ambergris Cay = 404 ha, Little Ambergris Cay = 650 ha

Distance from nearest land: 26.6 km to South Caicos

Biodiversity: home to the endemic TCI rock iguana *Cyclura carinata*.

Pathways of entry: airstrip on Big Ambergris Cay, boat (dive boat, private vessels)

Other information:

Little Ambergris Cay:

* Nature reserve
* Top ranked among the OTs by the RSPB for invasive alien vertebrate eradication (Black rat, feral chicken).

Big Ambergris Cay:

* Private island
* Top ranked among the OTs by the RSPB for invasive alien vertebrate eradication (black rat, feral cat, Cuban treefrog).

Salt Cay

Description: Flat, triangular island. Directly exposed to the constant tradewinds and bears a unique weather-beaten landscape. Given over mostly to salt pans, the traditional industry. Inhabited: 100 people.

Size: 6.7 km

Distance from nearest land: 13 km to Grand Turk

Biodiversity: Site of the endemic TCI rock iguana *Cyclura carinata*.

Pathways of entry: boat, ferry from Grand Turk or Provo, airstrip with flights from Grand Turk or Provo

Other information:

* Salt cay is accessible by boat and plane.
* Top ranked among the OTs by the RSPB for invasive alien vertebrate eradication (Black rat, feral cat, dog, cattle, donkeys, mice).
* Nominated as a World Heritage Site

Cotton Cay

Description: A small privately owned uninhabited rocky island in area. Uninhabited.

Size: 112 km2

Distance from nearest land: 2.6km northeast of Salt Cay

Biodiversity: Site of the endemic TCI rock iguana *Cyclura carinata*.

Pathways of entry: boat

Other information:

* Top ranked among the OTs by the RSPB for invasive alien vertebrate eradication (Black rat, goat).

Other cays

Big Sand Cay is a statutory sanctuary, and is particularly important for sooty tern Sterna fuscata.

Long Cay is a statutory sanctuary.

Gibbs Cay is a national park.

Others: Penniston and East cays.

Important Bird Area designation: A4i and A4iii (important for congregations of waterbirds on a regular basis).

French, Bush and Seal Cays are statutory sanctuaries. Bush, Seal and Fish Cays are rocky cays, French Cay is a small (8.9ha) sandy cay. Site of the endemic TCI rock iguana *Cyclura carinata* and Top ranked among the OTs by the RSPB for invasive alien vertebrate eradication (Black rat, mice).

The other cays support important breeding populations for breeding seabirds: Roseate tern, Sandwich terns, Sooty terns, and Brown noddy. Bush Cay and Fish Cay support a bioregionally important breeding population of Bridled terns.

Important Bird Area designation: A4i and A4iii (important for congregations of waterbirds on a regular basis).

**Further information**

<https://www.ukotcf.org.uk/turks-and-caicos-islands>

<https://www.ukotcf.org.uk/anguilla>

<http://lntreasures.com/turkscaicos.html>

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