



DUTCH CARIBBEAN NATURE ALLIANCE

Important Bird Areas in the Dutch Caribbean

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Dutch Caribbean Important Bird Areas

The Dutch Caribbean comprises of the six islands as listed in the table below with their corresponding important bird areas. As part of the BirdLife International network and bird conservation in the Caribbean, the islands and their management bodies work together to monitor and conserve bird species and their populations within the designated areas. There are a total of 23 bird areas with a total area of 45,024 hectares. Birds enlisted in the IUCN Red list of Threatened Species and cases of endemism are factors for classification of an area as important and/or significant, and also determined by birds classified as biome-restricted species, restricted range species and congregatory bird species.

Table 1 Sizes of Important Bird areas by Island

IBA Code	IBA Name	Area (ha)
Aruba		
AW001	Bubali Wetlands	53
AW002	Tierra del Sol Salina	2
AW003	Oranjestad Reef Islands	309
AW004	San Nicolas Bay Reef Islands	248
Bonaire		
AN009	Washington Slagbaai National Park	6,900
AN010	Dos Pos	235
AN011	Washikemba-Fontein-Onima	5,960
AN012	Klein Bonaire	1,810
AN013	Lac Bay	2,075
AN014	Pekelmeer	6,850
Curaçao		
AN015	North-east Curaçao	13,555
AN016	Malpais-St. Michiel	1,100
AN017	Muizenberg	65
AN018	Jan Theil Lagoon	430
AN019	Klein Curaçao	1,130
Saba		
AN006	Saba Coasline	2,000
St. Eustatius		
AN007	Boven	1,016
AN008	The Quill	470
St. Maarten		
AN001	Little Bay Pond	8
AN002	Fresh Pond	14
AN003	Great Salt Pond	188
AN004	Fort Amsterdam	278
AN005	Pelican Rock	328

IBA Locations

Table 2 Map of Dutch Caribbean IBA Locations



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IBA Bird Species

Table 3 List of bird species occurring in the IBAs of the Dutch Caribbean islands

✓ = presence ■ = Island IBA Species						
Important Bird Area Species	ARU	BON	CUR	SAB	EUX	SXM
Antillean Crested Hummingbird				✓	✓	✓
Audubon's Shearwater				✓	✓	
Bare-eyed Pigeon	✓	✓	✓			
Black Noddy	✓					
Bridled Quail-dove				✓	✓	
Bridled Tern	✓			✓		
Brown Noddy	✓					
Brown Pelican	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Brown Trawler				✓	✓	
Caribbean Coot	✓	✓	✓			✓
Caribbean Elaenia	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Caribbean Flamingo	✓	✓	✓			
Common Tern	✓	✓	✓			
Green-throated Carib				✓	✓	✓
Laughing Gull	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Least Tern	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Lesser Antillean Bullfinch				✓	✓	✓
Pearly-eyed Thrasher		✓		✓	✓	✓
Purple-throated Carib				✓	✓	
Red-billed Tropicbird				✓	✓	
Roseate Tern	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Royal Tern	✓	✓				✓
Sandwich Tern/Cayenne	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Scaly-breasted Thrasher				✓	✓	
Sooty Tern	✓					
Yellow-shouldered Amazon		✓				
Total	12	10	5	9	9	9

ARUBA

Bubali Wetlands [AW001]

The Bubali Wetlands is an **Important Bird Area** for Aruba under the Birdlife International protocol of important bird areas in the Caribbean. The area has been designated as IBA AW001.

This Bird Sanctuary is located on the northwest coast on the western end of the island. The wetland is significant for the Near Threatened Caribbean Coot (*Fulica caribaea*). It is known that over 30 pairs breed in the area and up to 110 coots have been recorded. The wetland is also a habitat range for other waterbirds including a roost of 400+ Neotropic Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) and numerous migratory shorebirds. The White-tailed Nightjar (*Caprimulgus cayennensis*) and Bare-eyed Pigeon* (*Patagioenas corensis*) are present in the shrublands highlighting the importance of the IBA.

The Bubali Wetlands is state owned and is a well-recognised nature reserve also known as “Bubali Pond Bird Sanctuary”. Protection exists through general awareness of the area’s wildlife importance.

* *Aruba’s only Northern South America biome-restricted species.*

Tierra del Sol Saliña [AW002]

The Tierra del Sol Saliña is an **Important Bird Area** for Aruba under the Birdlife International protocol of important bird areas in the Caribbean. The area has been designated as IBA AW002.

This natural saliña is situated within a gulf course close to the north coast at the north-western tip of the island. The area has an open water section which flows naturally to the sea. A desert scrub habitat surrounds the area. The saliña periodically dries out naturally. Surface water flow can also be re-directed to dry out the saliña.

The Near Threatened Caribbean Coot (*Fulica caribaea*) occurs on the site making Tierra del Sol Saliña significant. A record of up to 170 birds has been spotted in the area. White-cheeked Pintails (*Anas bahamensis*) can also be observed; the saliña supports a wide range of waterbirds. Herons and egrets roost in the area, sharing the IBA with terns that also roost in the area. Migrating shorebirds also use the IBA. The surrounding shrubland is important for the Northern South America biome-restricted species—the Bare-eyed Pigeon (*Patagioenas corensis*)—and a number of other bird species.

Oranjestad Reef Islands [AW003]

Oranjestad Reef Islands is an **Important Bird Area** for Aruba under the BirdLife

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International protocol of important bird areas in the Caribbean. The area is designated as IBA AW003.

The IBA is in the southwestern coast of Aruba, comprising of a few sand and coral islets adjacent to the central Oranjestad harbour and the east end of Oranjestad.

The area is significant for breeding terns, the most numerous seabird being the Sandwich Tern subspecies, the “Cayenne” (*Thalasseus sandvicensis eurygnatha*). The islets are one of the two Sandwich Tern nest sites that occur on Aruba.

San Nicolas Bay Reef Islands [AW004]

The San Nicolas Bay Reef Islands are an **Important Bird Area** for Aruba under the Birdlife International protocol of important bird areas in the Caribbean. The area has been designated as IBA AW004.

The area is made up of five small, low-lying, boulder-coral reef islets situated off the south coast of south-easternmost Aruba, within San Nicolas Bay. The group of islands is separated from mainland by a shallow lagoon next to a large oil refinery and the town of San Nicolas.

The area gained IBA status, as it is significant for nesting gulls and terns. Birds present in globally important numbers include: Laughing Gull (*Larus atricilla*) — 800 birds; Sandwich ‘Cayenne’ Tern (*Thalasseus sandvicensis eurygnatha*) — 1,300–3,500 pairs; Roseate Tern (*Sterna dougallii*) and Common Tern (*S. hirundo*) use the area as a breeding site. Other species that also breed in regionally important numbers include: Royal Tern (*S. maxima*); Least Tern (*S. antillarum*); Bridled Tern (*S. anaethetus*); Sooty Tern (*S. fuscata*) — 14,340 birds; Brown Noddy (*Anous stolidus*) and Black Noddy (*A. minutus*). The nesting season is primarily between early April and mid-August.

The endemic Aruban Whiptail Lizard (*Cnemidophorus arubensis*) occurs in the IBA. Queen Conch (*Lobatus gigas*) is relatively abundant within the IBA. Globally threatened sea turtles are occasionally observed in the waters surrounding the area.

BONAIRE

Washington Slagbaai National Park [AN009]

The Washington Slagbaai National Park (WSNP) is one of the six Bonaire **Important Bird Areas** under the BirdLife International protocol of important bird areas in the Caribbean. The park has been designated as IBA AN009.

The National Park has a hilly terrain, which includes Mount Brandaris, the island’s highest point. The park supports some of the island’s most extensive

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areas of vegetation, xerophytic shrublands with columnar cacti. The park also has a number of water holes, salinas and lagoons along the coast. The WSNP is formally protected within the national system.

As an IBA, the area is important as nesting, roosting and foraging grounds for the wild population of Yellow-shouldered Amazons (*Amazona Barbadosensis*). The three Dutch Caribbean secondary Endemic Bird Areas (EBA) restricted-range species, the two Northern South America biome-restricted birds, and a number of endemic species are supported by the shrublands in this IBA. Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) nest in globally significant numbers; Sandwich Terns (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*) and Least Terns (*S. antillarum*) nest in regionally important numbers. The concentration of approximately 500 Caribbean Flamingoes (*Phoenicopterus ruber*) is regionally important as well.

STINAPA Bonaire manages the state-owned IBA. The WSNP contains two **Ramsar** sites: Gotomeer and Saliña Slagbaai.

Dos Pos [AN010]

Dos Pos is one of the six Bonaire **Important Bird Areas** under the BirdLife International protocol of important bird areas in the Caribbean. The area has been designated as IBA AN010.

Situated on the leeward side in northern Bonaire, Dos Pos lies on the southeast of Washington Slagbaai National Park and is characterised by numerous hills and sheltered valleys. There is a 100-metre wide canyon on the eastern portion of the IBA, Roi Sangu, with 25-metre high cliffs.

The site is an important breeding and roosting site for its population of Vulnerable Yellow-headed Amazons (*Amazona barbadensis*). Approximately 40% of the island's parrot roosts in three separate areas within the IBA. Roi Sangu is an important nesting site for the species. The three species of EBA restricted-range birds occur at Dos Pos, including the two Northern South America biome-restricted bird species. The area has a seasonal pond, which supports some waterbirds including the Near Threatened Caribbean Coot (*Fulica Caribbaea*).

Several endemic lizards and land-snail species occur at Dos Pos. The area has gained extensive natural history attention, as it is one of the few freshwater sites of Bonaire.

ECHO, the leading nongovernment organisation in parrot conservation on Bonaire, is currently managing Dos Pos. The IBA is adjacent to WSNP, and has been experiencing habitat degeneration by populations of feral pigs, goats and donkeys: hence the importance to conserve the area. Habitat loss and degradation, poaching and predations by cats and rats threaten the population of Yellow-shouldered Amazons.

Washikemba-Fontein-Onima [AN001]

Washikemba–Fontein–Onima is one of the six Bonaire **Important Bird Areas** under the BirdLife International protocol of important bird areas in the Caribbean. The area has been designated as IBA AN011.

Situated along the windward coast of Bonaire, between the WSNP in the north and Lac Bay on the southeast. The IBA extends inland to the escarpments from Washikemba in the south to Playa Grandi in the North. The area includes Fontein’s natural springs and cliffs, Washikemba’s cliffs and intermittent ponds, and Onima’s dam.

The Vulnerable Yellow-shouldered Amazon (*Amazona barbadensis*) breeds in the Onima-Fontein cliffs. The importance of the area is highlighted by the over 100 birds forming a winter roost at Fontein. The Near Threatened Caribbean Coot (*Fulica caribaea*) only occurs and breeds at reservoirs found in the area. The breeding population of the Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum*) makes the coast of Boca Onima to Washikemba regionally important. The three Dutch Caribbean secondary EBA restricted-range birds and the two Northern South America biome-restricted species occur at this IBA.

Five endemic land-snails, two endemic lizards and six endemic arthropods comprise the fauna of this IBA.

Klein Bonaire [AN012]

Klein Bonaire is one of the six Bonaire **Important Bird Areas** under the BirdLife International protocol of important bird areas in the Caribbean. The offshore island, situated approximately one kilometre from the central west coast opposite Kralendijk, has been designated as IBA AN012.

Klein Bonaire is a low coral-limestone island fringed with a sandy beach referred to as an Index Beach important for nesting Hawksbill (critically endangered) and Loggerhead (endangered) sea turtles. The small satellite island is dominated by low shrubby vegetation; the shoreline includes three salinas and five freshwater springs (wells) and coral rubble strands.

As an IBA, the island is significant for Caribbean Elaenia (*Elaenia martinica*), which is a Dutch Caribbean EBA restricted-ranges species. The Bare-eyed Pigeon (*Patagioenas corensis*) also occurs on Klein Bonaire. The Ruby Topaz hummingbird (*Chrysolampis mosquitus*) occurs at relatively high densities. Terns, such as the regionally important population of Least Terns (*Sterna antillarum*), and a number of shorebirds (plovers), nest in the salinas and along the shoreline.

This IBA is part of the Bonaire National Marine Park, managed by STINAPA Bonaire and is also an important **Ramsar** site.

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Lac Bay [AN013]

Lac Bay is one of the six Bonaire **Important Bird Areas** under the BirdLife International protocol of important bird areas in the Caribbean. The area has been designated as IBA AN013.

Lac is situated on the southeastern side of Bonaire comprising of a shallow bay, seagrass beds and a thriving population of locally threatened Queen Conch (*Lobatus gigas*), which is protected from the open ocean by a fringing reef at its mouth. The area supports Bonaire's only significant mangrove woodland.

As an IBA, Lac is significant as an occasional roost site for Vulnerable Yellow-shouldered Amazons (*Amazona barbadensis*). The Caribbean Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus ruber*) also occurs in Lac, occasionally exceeding 200 birds. The bay also supports good numbers of wintering and breeding shorebirds, breeding herons and Least Terns (*Sterna antillarum*). A historical roost of over 100 Magnificent Frigatebirds (*Fregata magnificens*) has been observed in the IBA.

This IBA is recognised as a **Ramsar** site and is also part of the Bonaire National Marine Park, managed by STINAPA Bonaire. The area is also popular for recreational activities such as guided kayak tours among the mangroves.

Pekelmeer [AN014]

Pekelmeer [Saltworks] is one of the six Bonaire **Important Bird Areas** under the BirdLife International protocol of important bird areas in the Caribbean. The area has been designated as IBA AN014.

Pekelmeer is the flat, low-elevation southern end of the island—a series of natural shallow lagoons, which have been modified over hundreds of years for salt production. Most of the area is under active management for maximum salt production.

The global importance of this IBA is due to the presence of the Caribbean Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus rubus*) with several thousands of individuals during the breeding season. The area is also an important nesting area for globally important numbers of Common Terns (*Sterna hirundo*) and the regionally important numbers of Sandiwch Terns (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*), Royal Terns (*S. maxima*), and Least Terns (*S. antillarum*). Pekelmeer is also used by hundreds of migratory and wintering shorebirds. The Bare-eyed Pigeon (*Patagioenas corensis*) also occurs in the IBA.

This IBA is also recognised as a **Ramsar** site and as the Flamingo Breeding Reserve.

CURAÇAO

North-east Curaçao parks and coast [AN015]

North-east Curaçao parks and coast is one of the five Curaçao **Important Bird Areas** under the BirdLife International protocol of important bird areas in the Caribbean. The area has been designated as IBA AN015.

This IBA extends along the coast from the northern tip end of the island on the east coast through to Playa Grandi and ending near Hato airport. Shete Boka National Park lies within the IBA, including the Christoffel Park. Limestone terraces and inland hills support evergreen woodland, coastal lagoons with seagrass beds and mangroves, and dry deciduous shrubland on volcanic soils.

The breeding colony of Least Terns (*Sterna antillarum*) makes this IBA regionally significant. Brown Boobies (*Sula leucogaster*) also roosts in this area. Adjacent areas just offshore are important feeding areas for Boobies and Terns. The Caribbean Elaenia (*Elaenia martinica*) and the Bare-eyed Pigeon (*Patagioenas corensis*) are both numerous in this IBA. The shrubland supports the endemic subspecies of Brown-throated Parakeet (*Aratinga pertinax pertinax*) and is also important for large numbers of Neotropical Migrants.

Three globally threatened of sea turtle species nest on Shete Boka beaches. Christoffel Park supports approximately 50 species of rare plants and seven rare mammal species. Christoffel and Shete Boka Park are managed both by CARMABI.

Malpais–St. Michiel [AN016]

Malpais–St. Michiel is one of the five Curaçao **Important Bird Areas** under the BirdLife International protocol of important bird areas in the Caribbean. The area has been designated as IBA AN016.

Located on the southern side of central Curaçao, Malpais–St. Michiel is an area of basalt rock over-capped by coralline limestone hills. The IBA consists of two dam-created freshwater lakes that retain water during most of the dry season. It also includes a hyper-saline lagoon at St. Michiel. Volcanic soils support dry deciduous vegetation and a well developed *Coccoloba swartzii-Erithal fruticosa* woodland habitat on limestone.

The Nearly Threatened Caribbean Coot (*Fulica caribaea*) breeds on Malpais making this IBA significant. The Caribbean Elaenia (*Elaenia martinica*) occurs in the shrubland as well as the Bare-eyed Pigeon (*Patagioenas corensis*) which roosts below Malpais dam along with Brown-throated Parakeets (*Aratinga pertinax*). A globally important population of Common Terns (*Sterna hirundo*) is supported by the St. Michiel lagoon, which is also part of the network of sites that supports Caribbean Flamingos (*Phoenicopterus rubus*). An endemic freshwater

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fish can be found in the lakes within the IBA; endemic land snails and a number of endemic plant species also occurs in the area.

Muizenberg [AN017]

Muizenberg is one of the five Curaçao **Important Bird Areas** under the BirdLife International protocol of important bird areas in the Caribbean. The area has been designated as IBA AN017.

This IBA comprises of an intermittent shallow lake/wetland situated in the northern suburbs of Willemstad. As part of changing environment of Central Curaçao, the wetland was created by damming a stream which drains the surrounding low hills. Busy roads bound the site on all sides and comprises of agricultural land with small farms on the north-east side area. For more than six months each year, the wetland holds some water, periodically flooding grasslands and shrubland which surrounds the area.

The Near Threatened Caribbean Coot (*Fulica caribaea*) is a resident breeder making the site a significant IBA as a congregation up to 800 birds may occur during the wet season. Caribbean Flamingos (*Phoenicopterus ruber*) occasionally feed in the wetland and many other resident and migrant waterbirds are supported by this IBA.

Jan Theil Lagoon [AN018]

Jan Theil Lagoon is one of the five Curaçao **Important Bird Areas** under the BirdLife International protocol of important bird areas in the Caribbean. The area has been designated as IBA AN018.

Located on the south coast and southern Curaçao, east of Willemstad, Jan Theil Lagoon comprises 80 hectares of hyper-saline lagoons. The water bodies are surrounded by approximately 228 hectares of dry deciduous woodlands and evergreen shrubland. The area also consists of one spring and several abandoned dams supporting freshwater during the rainy season which significantly increases habitat diversity.

The population of Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) in the IBA is globally significant. There is a fluctuating regionally important population of Least Terns (*Sterna antillarum*) and up to 1,200 pairs of Sandwich Terns (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*) used to breed in the area. Disturbance has affected the breeding tern numbers, reduced to insignificant levels. The lagoon is an important foraging ground for Caribbean Flamingos (*Phoenicopterus ruber*) occurring on the island. Jan Theil Lagoon is also important for migratory shorebirds and other migrants. Ten of the eleven resident populations of Leeward Dutch Antilles endemic subspecies of birds breeding on Curaçao also make the IBA important.

Klein Curaçao [AN019]

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Klein Curaçao is one of the five Curaçao **Important Bird Areas** under the BirdLife International protocol of important bird areas in the Caribbean. The area has been designated as IBA AN019.

This IBA is a small, flat, offshore reef island about ten kilometres south-east of the south-easternmost point of Curaçao. The island was extensively mined for phosphates in the late 19th and 20th centuries affecting the originally well-vegetated landscape. Overgrazing by livestock since 1800s also altered the natural vegetation. Before 2000, the island vegetation consisted of a few small herbs and grasses but a highly successful restoration project has regenerated the native flora and landscape changes are rapidly taking place.

The breeding population of Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum*) makes this IBA significant. In 2002, 286 terns nested on Klein Curaçao making it globally important. Far greater numbers of terns have historically bred on the island. The Bare-eyed Pigeon (*Patagioenas corensis*), the only Northern South America biome-restricted species that occurs in Curaçao has been recorded on this IBA. The House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) has colonised the area in the 1990s.

This IBA is the most significant sea turtle nesting beach within Curaçao territory. Endangered Loggerheads (*Caretta caretta*) and Green (*Chelonia mydas*) and the Critically Endangered Hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) turtles nest on the island.

SABA

Saba coastline [AN006]

Saba coastline is the island's only **Important Bird Area** under the BirdLife International protocol of important bird areas in the Caribbean. The area has been designated as IBA AN006.

All land areas from the coast to 400 metres inland around the perimeter of the island and all the sea areas up to one kilometer from the coast constitute the Saba coastline IBA. The rainforest ravine at the "Thissell Park" and the elfin forest reserve at the top of Mount Scenery are also included in this IBA. The features of the coastline comprises of rocky cliffs, 100-metre high and over. Fort Bay is the only main human settlement along the coast where a dock, several buildings, a rock quarry and a land fill exist in the area.

All of the seven Lesser Antilles Endemic Bird Areas restricted-range birds occur in the vegetated ghauts, the rainforest ravine and elfin forest, making the IBA significant. Seabirds best characterise the Saba coastline IBA. The populations of Red-billed Tropicbirds (*Phaethon aethereus*) and Audubon's Shearwater (*Puffinus lherminieri*) increase the significance of the coastline as an IBA. The coastal cliffs and xeric, rocky hills are nesting grounds for about 750-1000 pairs of Red-billed Tropicbirds. It is thought that the nesting population of Audubon's

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Shearwater s is around 1,000 individuals, but it has been challenging to provide an accurate estimation. “Thissell Park” is the only ‘confirmed’ breeding site.

The Endangered Red-bellied Racer (*Alsophis rufiventris*), endemic snake species to Saba and St. Eustatius, occurs in the IBA, as well as the island endemic lizard, the Saban Anole (*Anolis sabanus*).

ST. EUSTATIUS

Boven [AN007]

Boven is one of the two St. Eustatius **Important Bird Areas** under the BirdLife International protocol of important bird areas in the Caribbean. The area has been designated as IBA AN007.

This IBA is an area of xeric, uninhabited rocky hills in the north-west peninsula of the island. It represents about 25% of St. Eustatius’ land area. Boven, including Venus Gilboa Hill, Signal Hill and Bergje, comprise the “Northern Hills”, receiving much less rainfall than the higher Quill IBA. There is a predominance of *Acacia* thorn scrublands and grassland. Rocky outcroppings are scattered through the hills. Cliffs and rocky shore constitute the coastline of Boven and the IBA extends one kilometer out to sea. Zeelandia beach is at the south-east end of the area. The oil transfer terminal is located on the western border.

The Boven IBA supports a globally significant population of Red-billed Tropicbirds (*Phaethon aethereus*). The area is important for four of the eight Lesser Antilles Endemic Bird Areas restricted-range birds. The Red-billed Tropicbirds nest at Zeelandia beach and in the hills above the airport. The Environmental Protection in the Caribbean conducted surveys in 2003 estimated about 100-200 breeding individuals.

The Vulnerable Lesser Antillean Iguana (*Iguana delicatissima*) is a restricted-range reptile occurring in the IBA along with other lizard and gecko species. The endemic Statia Morning Glory (*Ipomoea sphenophylla*) can also be found growing in the IBA.

The Quill [AN008]

The Quill is one of the two St. Eustatius **Important Bird Areas** under the BirdLife International protocol of important bird areas in the Caribbean. The area has been designated as IBA AN008.

A dormant volcano known as the Quill is located at the south-eastern end of St. Eustatius. The Quill dominates the landscape rising to over 600 metres, the highest point on the island. The IBA is bordered by the national park boundaries which include the volcanic cone above 250 metres, the crater, the rim of the volcano and White Wall. The Quill IBA extends one kilometer out to sea and there are no human settlements within the area.

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The Quill supports populations of all eight Lesser Antilles Endemic Bird Areas restricted-range bird occurring on the island. In 2003, a Scaly-breasted Thrasher (*Margarops fuscus*) was observed for the first time since 1927. The status of this species as a breeding bird is unknown (potential ninth restricted-range species). White Wall is a seabird breeding site, but this coastal area does not harbour internationally significant numbers.

The Vulnerable Lesser Antillean Iguana (*Iguana delicatissima*) and the Red-bellied Racer (*Alsophis rufiventris*) are restricted-range reptiles occurring in the IBA. The island endemic Statia Morning Glory (*Ipomoea sphenophylla*) is also present in the IBA.

ST. MAARTEN

Little Bay Pond [AN001]

Little Bay Pond is one of the five **Important Bird Areas** for St. Maarten under the Birdlife International protocol of important bird areas in the Caribbean. The area has been designated as IBA AN001.

This IBA is situated in the middle of the south coast of St. Maarten, near the capital city Philipsburg. Little Bay Pond is approximately 2.5 kilometres in diameter and has low salinity (4-8 parts per thousand). The IBA is bordered by aquatic grasses and red, black and white mangrove trees. The surrounding areas support shrubland. A hiking path encircles the pond connecting to the sea at the rocky shore of Little Bay with a small outlet running from the pond into the ocean.

The Near Threatened Caribbean Coot (*Caribaea fulica*) population makes Little Bay Pond highly significant. About 22 have been observed in the area, including breeding pairs. The pond also thrives with all five Lesser Antilles Endemic Bird Areas (EBA) restricted-range birds.

Fresh Pond [AN002]

Fresh Pond is one of the five **Important Bird Areas** for St. Maarten under the Birdlife International protocol of important bird areas in the Caribbean. The area has been designated as IBA AN002.

This IBA is within the capital city of Phillipsburg comprising a large pond with a size of approximately 2.5 kilometres by one kilometer to the west of the Great Salt Pond IBA. The salinity of the pond is low (2-3 parts per thousand) and is bordered by aquatic grasses and red mangrove trees. The pond has artificial islands at each end, vegetated with mangroves and coconut trees providing

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popular nesting sites for waterbirds. The pond is bisected by a busy bridge and heavy traffic and development encircle the area.

The significance of the IBA is due to the population of Near Threatened Coot (*Fulica caribaea*). Nesting occurs in the area and over 50 coots have been recorded for the IBA. All five Lesser Antilles Endemic Bird Areas restricted-range birds occur at the site. Fresh Pond also supports populations of many waterbirds including Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*), Pied-billed Grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*), Great Egret (*Casmerodius albus*), White-cheeked Pintail (*Anas bahamensis*) and Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*).

Great Salt Pond [AN003]

Great Salt Pond is one of the five **Important Bird Areas** for St. Maarten under the Birdlife International protocol of important bird areas in the Caribbean. The area has been designated as IBA AN003.

Located in the south-central St. Maarten on the outskirts of Philipsburg, Great Salt Pond INA is the largest pond on the island. It is bordered on all sides by busy roads with Fresh Pond lying just to the west. This IBA is highly saline (27-38 parts per thousand) with little visible vegetation. Roadside grass and urban development comprise the borders of the pond. The pond was previously used for extraction of salt. The remnant rock walls have become important roost and nesting areas.

Great Salt Pond is significant for the Laughing Gull (*Larus atricilla*) population. Prior to breeding season, about 5,800 gulls congregate at the IBA. About 50 pairs of Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*) breeds at the site and is the only species confirmed to do so within the IBA.

Source: BirdLife International. (2008). Important Bird Areas in the Caribbean: Key sites for Conservation. Cambridge, UK: BirdLife International. (BirdLife Conservation Series No. 15).

Fort Amsterdam [AN004]

Fort Amsterdam is one of the five **Important Bird Areas** for St. Maarten under the Birdlife International protocol of important bird areas in the Caribbean. The area has been designated as IBA AN004.

This IBA is a 2.5-kilometre peninsula in south-east St. Maarten. Ruins of a fort are found on the top of the peninsula, which is registered as a historical site. The slopes below support two metres high thorny *Acacia macracantha* and *A. tortuosa* shrubland. There is a major cruise ship port on the bay at the east side of the peninsula. A tourist resort is situated just 500 metres away to the north.

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Fort Amsterdam IBA is significant for the breeding population of Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) which varies greatly between years. Up to 50 pairs breed on the western side of the point and ten pairs on the eastern side making the site a regionally important colony. Birds nest as close as ten metres from the ruins. All five Lesser Antilles Endemic Bird Areas restricted-range birds occur at this IBA.

The island endemic lizard *Anolis pogus* may occur in the IBA.

Pelican Rock [AN005]

Pelican Rock is one of the five **Important Bird Areas** for St. Maarten under the Birdlife International protocol of important bird areas in the Caribbean. The area has been designated as IBA AN005.

This IBA is a small, rocky islet (approx. 1.2 hectares) about 1.5 kilometres off the south-east coast of St. Maarten. It has a rocky shoreline and it is difficult to access by sea. Rocky cliffs rise from 6-10 metres up to a grass- and low shrub-covered plateau. The IBA includes a one kilometre extension towards the sea around the islet.

Pelican Rock is known for the breeding waterbirds that occurs in this IBA. The population of Laughing Gull (*Larus atricilla*) is globally important. The population of Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) and Royal Tern (*Sterna maxima*) are regionally important. The Bridled Tern (*Sterna anaethetus*) nests in this IBA; the Brown Noddy (*Anous stolidus*) and Adubon's Shearwater (*Puffinus lherminieri*) have also been reported breeding. The Environmental Protection in the Caribbean failed to document these birds as breeding in 2004.

Reference

BirdLife International. (2008). *Important Bird Areas in the Caribbean: Key sites for Conservation*. Cambridge, UK: BirdLife International. (BirdLife Conservation Series No. 15).