

PR009 Karso del Sur

State Forest/Natural Reserve/Biosphere Reserve/Unprotected

COORDINATES 17°58'N 66°50'W

ADMIN REGION Guayanilla, Guánica, Yauco,
Guayanilla

AREA 8,162 ha

ALTITUDE 1–240 m

HABITAT Forest, shrubland, coastline, rocky areas,
wetlands, introduced/exotic vegetation



Puerto Rican
Nightjar

THREATENED BIRDS

2

RESTRICTED-RANGE BIRDS

19

BIOME-RESTRICTED BIRDS

CONGREGATORY BIRDS



■ Site description

Karso del Sur IBA covers the dry forest zone from Guánica to Ponce along the southern coast of Puerto Rico. It includes the Guánica Dry Forest (biosphere reserve) containing a well preserved and exceptionally diverse dry subtropical forest with xerophytic vegetation on karst soils. The IBA includes marine areas (and a number of cays) up to 1 km from the coast.

■ Birds

The forests and shrubland in this IBA are home to 19 (of the 23) Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands EBA restricted-range species (11 of which are island endemics), including the largest known population (c.20% of the total) of the Critically Endangered Puerto Rican Nightjar *Caprimulgus noctitherus*. The IBA also supports a regionally significant breeding population of Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*. Small numbers of Brown Pelican *Pelecanus occidentalis* nest on Don Luis Cay—one of the few nesting locations for the species in Puerto Rico.

■ Other biodiversity

The herpetofauna includes the Critically Endangered Puerto Rican crested toad *Bufo lemur*, and the endemic blue-tailed

ground lizard *Ameiva wetmorei*. The IBA has more than 700 plant species including the Critically Endangered Woodbury's stopper *Eugenia woodburyana*, Vahl's boxwood *Buxus vahlii* and Puerto Rico manjack *Cordia rupicola*, and the Endangered lignumvitae *Guaiacum officinale* and *Stahlia monosperma*.

■ Conservation

Karso del Sur IBA includes the state-owned and legally protected Guanica State Forest (Puerto Rico's second UNESCO-designated biosphere reserve) and Bahia Ballena Natural Reserve, but also privately owned lands. The land in this IBA is variously used for conservation, research, pasture, tourism and recreation. Since 1973, annual bird migration studies have been carried out in the Guánica State Forest. The NGO Coalición Pro Bosque Seco Ventanas Verraco, is promoting the integration of Punta Verraco, Ventanas and Cerro Toro (currently in private hands) into the Guánica protected area. A wind energy project threatens the effective conservation of this IBA. Habitat loss and degradation is occurring as a result of housing and industrial development, invasive species, water pollution and human disturbance.