

TC007 Grand Turk Salinas and Shores

COORDINATES 21°27'N 71°08'W

ADMIN REGION Grand Turk

AREA 268 ha

ALTITUDE 0–2 m

HABITAT Coastal wetland, salina, beach, sea



Lesser Yellowlegs



Unprotected

THREATENED BIRDS



RESTRICTED-RANGE BIRDS



BIOME-RESTRICTED BIRDS



CONGREGATORY BIRDS



■ Site description

Grand Turk Salinas and Shores IBA embraces all the major wetland areas on Grand Turk Island. About 40% of Grand Turk is wetland—abandoned salinas (or salt pans) from the salt production industry, saltwater inlets (or creeks) and nearby shores. Some of these wetlands are viewable from the centre of TCI’s capital (Cockburn Town, or “Grand Turk”). The salinas and wetlands include Town Salina, North Wells, South Wells, North Creek, South Creek, Great Salina, Hawkes Pond Salina and Hawkes Nest Salina. The creeks support tidal mudflats.

■ Birds

This IBA is significant for waterbirds—with important breeding and wintering populations of a range of species. Large numbers of herons, egrets, ducks, shorebirds and terns use these wetlands, but the breeding population of Least Tern *Sterna antillarum* is globally important, as are the large numbers of wintering Short-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus griseus*, Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca* and Lesser Yellowlegs *T. flavipes*. The breeding population of Laughing Gull *Larus atricilla* is also globally significant. The Near Threatened Piping Plover *Charadrius melodus* has been recorded.

■ Other biodiversity

The Critically Endangered hawksbill *Eretmochelys imbricata*, and Endangered green *Chelonia mydas* and leatherback *Caretta caretta* turtles all nest on some of the beaches in this IBA.

■ Conservation

Grand Turk Salinas and Shores IBA is a mixture of crown and private land ownership. Salt pans are regarded as waste-land rather than the unique resource that they are, and are being infilled. The TCI Government Development Manual outlines the requirement for an environmental impact assessment for any development in a salina, but the Department of Planning does not enforce this need. With the constant threat of development impinging on the integrity of these wetlands there is a strong case for designating them as a statutory nature reserve (for both their historic interest and biodiversity value). Town Salina would be an ideal focal area for development as an awareness-raising/educational “watchable wildlife pond”.