

Tobago Cay Marine Park

A SPAW listed protected area



Country: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

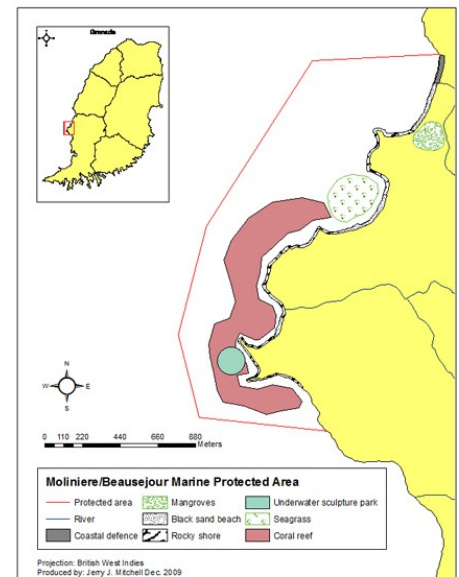
Management structure / authority: The TCMP is governed by a Marine Parks Board

Date of establishment: 23 December 1997

Date of listing under SPAW: 09 December 2014

Size: 66 sq. Km

Marine Surface: 60 sq. Km



Context:

The Tobago Cays are of great ecological, social, cultural and economic importance to St Vincent and the Grenadines and Grenada. The Tobago Cays Marine Park (TCMP) comprises of five small uninhabited cays, and one larger inhabited island, located in the Southern Grenadines. The area is stunningly beautiful, with pure white sand, crystal clear waters, plentiful coral reefs, and rich biodiversity.

The area has long been a popular spot for tourists including yachts, divers, cruise ships and day trippers. Over 80% of yachts visiting the Grenadines visit the TCMP. The area was previously used as a fishing spot by locals, and protection of the area is likely to have benefited fishers by providing a safe breeding ground for fish. Tourism is central to the economies of the Southern Grenadines (including Union Island, Mayreau and Canouan) and the TCMP is a key tourism draw card.

Main fauna populations and/or those of particular importance present (resident or migratory) in the area:

The TCMP contains a number of important threatened species, both terrestrial and marine. There are populations of brown pelican, bridled terns and iguanas in the park, and there are many migratory birds which pass through the area. The beaches and sea grass beds are feeding and nesting grounds for green turtles, hawksbill turtles and leatherback turtles. The reefs are home to many species of listed coral from the *Milleporidae*, *Alcyonacea* and *Scleractinia* families, there are also populations of queen conch and Caribbean spiny lobster in the park.



Main ecosystems in the area:

As main ecosystems in Tobago Cay Marine Park, there are different coral reefs, a seagrass bed and a mangrove.

Potential Threats:

As natural threats to resources there are storm damage and white band disease.

As human threats to resources there are: over fishing attributed to both local fishermen and visiting yachts; physical impacts associated with visiting yachts; damage due to snorkeling and diving, both in touching fragile corals, either deliberately or accidentally, and in stirring up sediments; and bilge and wastewater discharged from yachts.

MANAGEMENT PLAN

Resource management

- Biological resources
- Mooring buoys
- Maintenance
- Garbage management
- On-shore facilities
- Licensing of commercial operators
- Zonation

Monitoring, evaluation and research

- Monitoring and evaluation approach
- Research

Public Education and Awareness

- Enhance public awareness of environmental issues and build a national constituency
- contribute to public education in the interpretation of the natural environment
- Support of sustainable livelihoods in and around the park

Safety and Security arrangements

- Adequate training of rangers
- 24 hour 7 days a week presence of park rangers or ranger facility in the park
- strict adherence to rules governing speed limits for dinghies, swimming, snorkeling and diving

Surveillance and enforcement

- Rules and regulations
- Offences and penalties
- Authorized officers and their powers
- Ticketing system

Administration and Financial arrangements

- Users Fees
- Staffing
- Training
- Infrastructure and equipment
- Monitoring assistants and internships
- Business Plan
- Income and expenses
- Financial management

Contact:

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The Tobago Cay Marine Park is part of the **SPAW protected areas managers network**.

For more information about it: <https://www.car-spaw-rac.org/?Protected-Areas>