Ramsar Information Sheet

Published on 31 January 2025
Update version, previously published on : 21 September 1994

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (Overseas territories)

Booby Pond and Rookery

Designation date	21 September 1994
Site number	702
Coordinates	19°39'59"N 80°04'30"W
Area	82,00 ha

https://rsis.ramsar.org/ris/702
Created by RSIS V.1.6 on - 31 January 2025

Color codes

Fields back-shaded in light blue relate to data and information required only for RIS updates.

Note that some fields concerning aspects of Part 3, the Ecological Character Description of the RIS (tinted in purple), are not expected to be completed as part of a standard RIS, but are included for completeness so as to provide the requested consistency between the RIS and the format of a 'full' Ecological Character Description, as adopted in Resolution X.15 (2008). If a Contracting Party does have information available that is relevant to these fields (for example from a national format Ecological Character Description) it may, if it wishes to, include information in these additional fields.

1 - Summary

Summary

Booby Pond and Rookery is located on the southern coast of Little Cayman. It was designated as a Ramsar Site in 1994 and mostly comprises a seasonally flooded, eutrophic, brackish-hypersaline lagoon system, separated from the sea by a narrow coastal beach ridge. The lagoon is irregularly fringed by mangrove communities dominated by Black mangrove Avicennia germinans and White mangrove Laguncularia racemosa. The northern boundary supports a retreating mosaic of Red mangrove Rhizophora mangle, which transitions to xerophytic shrubland and forest mosaic on rock pavement.

It is important as a regionally representative example of a land-locked, mangrove-fringed lagoon system. It supports several globally threatened animal species, including the endemic Sister Islands rock iguana Cyclura nubila caymanensis and Parker's dwarf boa Tropidophis parkeri (both Critically Endangered); and the West Indian whistling-duck Dendrocygna arborea, White-crowned pigeon Patagioenas leucocephala, and Vitelline warbler Setophaga vitellina (all listed as Near Threatened). In addition, the shrubland is floristically diverse and includes several threatened endemic or near-endemic plant species, including the Corato Agave caymanensis, Thatch palm Coccothrinax proctorii and Wild banana orchid Myrmecophila thomsoniana var. minor (all Endangered) and Cayman broadleaf Cordia sebestena var. caymanensis (Vulnerable). Several endemic insect and other reptile species are present.

The site is also an important breeding bird area. There is an internationally important breeding colony of Red-footed booby Sula sula (estimated at 20,000 birds); breeding populations of the three globally threatened bird species and other endemic birds (Caribbean elaenia Elaenia martinica caymanensis and Greater Antillean grackle Quiscalus niger bangsi); and a large mixed heronry. It is noted as an important location for wintering Nearctic shorebirds and as a stop-over for a variety of migrating bird species.

It is a visually impressive site, acting as the primary terrestrial nature tourism attraction on Little Cayman, with a high-quality visitor centre run by National Trust volunteers. It is also an important buffer and flood control feature. The site is threatened by several factors, including pressure from residential and commercial development, disturbance of breeding birds, and predation of native animals by feral cats and rats.

2 - Data & location

2.1 - Formal data

2.1.1 - Name and address of the compiler of this RIS

Responsible compiler

Institution/agency	Cayman Islands Department of Environment
Postal address	P.O. Box 10202, Grand Cayman KY1 -1002, Cayman Islands

National Ramsar Administrative Authority

Institution/agency	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Postal address	2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DF

2.1.2 - Period of collection of data and information used to compile the RIS

From year	1994
To year	2024

2.1.3 - Name of the Ramsar Site

Official name (in English, French or Spanish)	Booby Pond and Rookery

2.1.4 - Changes to the boundaries and area of the Site since its designation or earlier update

(Update) A. Changes to Site boundary	Yes ○ No ◉
(Update) B. Changes to Site area	No change to area
(Update) For secretariat only: This update is an extension	☐

2.1.5 - Changes to the ecological character of the Site

(Update) 6b i. Has the ecological character of the Ramsar Site (including applicable Criteria) changed since the previous RIS?	Not evaluated

2.2 - Site location

2.2.1 - Defining the Site boundaries

b) Digital map/image
<2 file(s) uploaded>

Former maps	0

Boundaries description

The site is located on the southern coast of the island of Little Cayman, towards the western end, north of Blossom Village and behind the beach ridge at South Hole Sound; the geographical coordinates are 19°39'57"N 80°04'30"W.

2.2.2 - General location

a) In which large administrative region does the site lie?	Little Cayman, Cayman Islands
b) What is the nearest town or population centre?	South Town (Blossom Village), Little Cayman

2.2.3 - For wetlands on national boundaries only

a) Does the wetland extend onto the territory of one or more other countries?	Yes ○ No ◉
b) Is the site adjacent to another designated Ramsar Site on the territory of another Contracting Party?	Yes ○ No ◉

2.2.4 - Area of the Site

Official area, in hectares (ha): 82

Area, in hectares (ha) as calculated from GIS boundaries: 81.627

2.2.5 - Biogeography

Biogeographic regions

Regionalisation scheme(s)	Biogeographic region
WWF Terrestrial Ecoregions	Neotropical
Marine Ecoregions of the World (MEOW)	Tropical Atlantic, Tropical Northwestern Atlantic

3 - Why is the Site important?

3.1 - Ramsar Criteria and their justification

☑ Criterion 1: Representative, rare or unique natural or near-natural wetland types

Hydrological services provided	See section 4.5.
Other ecosystem services provided	See section 4.5.
Other reasons	Bobby Pond is representative of a coastal, land-locked, mangrove-fringed lagoon system of a kind that is widespread among low-lying islands in the region.

☑ Criterion 2 : Rare species and threatened ecological communities

Optional text box to provide further information	The site supports several IUCN-categorized globally threatened species. These include the endemic Sister Islands rock iguana Cyclura nubila caymanensis and Parker's dwarf boa Tropidophis parkeri (both Critically Endangered species); the West Indian whistling-duck Dendrocygna arborea, White-crowned pigeon Patagioenas leucocephala, and Vitelline warbler Setophaga vitellina (all listed as Near Threatened); and several plants found in the dry shrubland on the northern edge of the site, which include Corato Agave caymanensis, Thatch palm Coccothrinax proctorii and Wild banana orchid Myrmecophila thomsoniana var. minor (all endemic species listed as Endangered), Cayman broadleaf Cordia sebestena var. caymanensis (endemic species listed as Vulnerable), Wild jasmine Tabernaemontana laurifolia (locally endangered, near-endemic species listed as Near Threatened), and Evolvulus squamosa (locally endangered, endemic species to Little Cayman, Bahamas and Anegada).

☑ Criterion 3 : Biological diversity

Justification	Bobby Pond and Rookery supports a diversity of vegetation types, including mangrove-fringed lagoon vegetation transitioning through to diverse dry evergreen shrubland and forest on rock pavement (see section 4.1), amongst which several endemic plant species to Cayman occur (see Criterion 2). There is also a wide diversity of animal species, including various endemic insects and reptiles (other endemic reptiles to those mentioned under Criterion 2 are Little Cayman green anole Anolis maynardi and Little Cayman racer Cubophis ruttyi). It also includes significant populations of multiple breeding water birds (see Criterion 4) and is noted as an important wintering site for Nearctic shorebirds and stop-over for a variety of migrating land-birds and raptors (see Criterion 4).

☑ Criterion 4 : Support during critical life cycle stage or in adverse conditions

Optional text box to provide further information

The site is an important area for breeding birds with over 30 breeding taxa recorded. This includes a large colony of Red-footed boobies Sula sula and a sizable colony of Magnificent frigatebirds Fregata magnificens, the only such aggregations in the Cayman Islands. All three bird species of global concern breed on site, i.e. Vitelline warbler Setophaga vitellina, White-crowned pigeon Patagioenas leucocephala and West Indian whistling-duck Dendrocygna arborea. Breeding endemic birds include the Caribbean elaenia Elaenia martinica caymanensis and Greater Antillean grackle Quiscalus niger bangsi (which is restricted to Little Cayman). The large mixed heronry includes breeding populations of Snowy egret Egretta thula, Tricolor heron Egretta tricolor, Cattle egret Bubulcus ibis, Little blue heron Egretta caerulea and Yellow-crowned night heron Nyctanassa violacea.

It is also noted as a major wintering waterbird site for species such as Blue-winged teal Spatula discors, Northern shoveler Anas clypeata, American wigeon Anas americana, Lesser scaup Aythya affinis, American coot Fulica americana, Great blue heron Ardea herodias, Great egret Ardea alba, Greater yellowlegs Tringa melanoleuca, Lesser yellowlegs T. flavipes, Semipalmated sandpiper Calidris pusilla and Least sandpiper Calidris minutilla.

The site also acts as an important stop-over site for migratory raptors, including Osprey Pandion haliaetus, Merlin Falco columbarius and Peregrine falcon Falco peregrinus, and migratory land-birds such as Yellow-bellied sapsucker Sphyrapicus varius, Gray catbird Dumetella carolinensis, White-eyed vireo Vireo griseus, Yellow-throated vireo Vireo flavifrons, and 21 species of warbler, most commonly Northern parula Setophaga americana, Cape May warbler Setophaga tigrina, Yellow-throated warbler S. dominica, Palm warbler S. palmarum, Prairie warbler S. discolor, Yellow-rumped warbler S. coronata, Black-and-white warbler Mniotilta varia, American redstart Setophaga ruticilla, Ovenbird Seiurus aurocapilla and Northern waterthrush S. noveboracensis.

☑ Criterion 6 : >1% waterbird population

Optional text box to provide further information

The site contains a breeding colony of Red-footed booby Sula sula, which comprised an estimated 20,000 birds in 1997, the largest colony in the Caribbean amounting to c.14% of the global population.

3.2 - Plant species whose presence relates to the international importance of the site

Phylum	Scientific name	Criterion 2	Criterion 3	Criterion 4	IUCN Red List	CITES Appendix I	Other status	Justification
Plantae								
TRACHEOPHYTA / LILIOPSIDA	*Agave caymanensis*	☑	☑	☐	EN	☐		Listed as Vulnerable on IUCN Red List; Endemic to Cayman Islands
TRACHEOPHYTA / LILIOPSIDA	*Coccothrinax proctorii*	☑	☑	☐	EN	☐		Listed as Endangered on IUCN Red List; Endemic to Cayman Islands
TRACHEOPHYTA / MAGNOLIOPSIDA	*Cordia sebestena*	☑	☑	☐	EN	☐		Listed as Vulnerable on IUCN Red List; Endemic to Cayman Islands
TRACHEOPHYTA / LILIOPSIDA	*Myrmecophila thomsoniana*	☑	☑	☐	EN	☐		Listed as Endangered on IUCN Red List; Endemic to Cayman Islands
TRACHEOPHYTA / MAGNOLIOPSIDA	*Tabernaemontana laurifolia*	☑	☑	☐	NT	☐		Listed as Near Threatened on IUCN Red List; endemic to Cayman Islands and locally endangered

The row in the table above for Cordia sebestena refers to Cordia sebestena var. caymanensis which was assessed as Vulnerable for The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species in 2014; and the row for Myrmecophila thompsoniana refers to Myrmecophila thompsoniana var. minor.

3.3 - Animal species whose presence relates to the international importance of the site

Phylum	Scientific name	Species qualifies under criterion				Species contributes under criterion				Pop. Size	Period of pop. Est.	% occurrence 1)	IUCN Red List	CITES Appendix I	CMS Appendix I	Other Status	Justification
		2	4	6	9	3	5	7	8								
Others																	
CHORDATA / REPTILIA	*Anolis maynardi*	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		Endemic to Cayman Islands
CHORDATA / REPTILIA	*Cubophis ruttyi*	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		Endemic to Cayman Islands
CHORDATA / REPTILIA	*Cyclura nubila caymanensis*	☑	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				CR	☐	☐		Listed as Critically Endangered on IUCN Red List; Endemic to Cayman Islands
CHORDATA / REPTILIA	*Tropidophis parkeri*	☑	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				CR	☐	☐		Listed as Critically Endangered on IUCN Red List; Endemic to Cayman Islands
Birds																	
CHORDATA / AVES	*Anas americana*	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		Notable wintering bird species
CHORDATA / AVES	*Anas clypeata*	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		Notable wintering bird species
CHORDATA / AVES	*Anas discors*	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		Notable wintering bird species
CHORDATA / AVES	*Ardea alba*	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		Notable wintering bird species
CHORDATA / AVES	*Ardea herodias*	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		Notable wintering bird species
CHORDATA / AVES	*Aythya affinis*	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		Notable wintering bird species
CHORDATA / AVES	*Bubulcus ibis*	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		Notable breeding bird species
CHORDATA / AVES	*Calidris minutilla*	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		Notable wintering bird species
CHORDATA / AVES	*Calidris pusilla*	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				NT	☐	☑		Notable wintering bird species
CHORDATA / AVES	*Dendrocygna arborea*	☑	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				NT	☐	☐		Listed as Near Threatened on IUCN Red List; notable breeding bird species
CHORDATA / AVES	*Dumetella carolinensis*	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		Notable migratory bird species
CHORDATA / AVES	*Egretta caerulea*	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		Notable breeding bird species
CHORDATA / AVES	*Egretta thula*	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		Notable breeding bird species
CHORDATA / AVES	*Egretta tricolor*	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		Notable breeding bird species

Phylum	Scientific name	Species qualifies under criterion				Species contributes under criterion				Pop. Size	Period of pop. Est.	% occurrence 1)	IUCN Red List	CITES Appendix I	CMS Appendix I	Other Status	Justification
		2	4	6	9	3	5	7	8								
CHORDATA / AVES	*Elaenia martinica caymanensis*	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐					☐	☐		Notable breeding bird species; endemic to Cayman Islands
CHORDATA / AVES	*Falco columbarius*	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		Notable migratory bird species
CHORDATA / AVES	*Falco peregrinus*	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☑	☐		Notable migratory bird species
CHORDATA / AVES	*Fulica americana*	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		Notable wintering bird species
CHORDATA / AVES	*Mniotilta varia*	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		Notable migratory bird species
CHORDATA / AVES	*Nyctanassa violacea*	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		Notable breeding bird species
CHORDATA / AVES	*Pandion haliaetus*	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		Notable migratory bird species
CHORDATA / AVES	*Patagioenas leucocephala*	☑	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				NT	☐	☐		Listed as Near Threatened on IUCN Red List; notable breeding bird species
CHORDATA / AVES	*Seiurus aurocapilla*	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		Notable migratory bird species
CHORDATA / AVES	*Setophaga americana*	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		Notable migratory bird species
CHORDATA / AVES	*Setophaga coronata*	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		Notable migratory bird species
CHORDATA / AVES	*Setophaga discolor*	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		Notable migratory bird species
CHORDATA / AVES	*Setophaga dominica*	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		Notable migratory bird species
CHORDATA / AVES	*Setophaga palmarum*	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		Notable migratory bird species
CHORDATA / AVES	*Setophaga ruticilla*	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		Notable migratory bird species
CHORDATA / AVES	*Setophaga tigrina*	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		Notable migratory bird species
CHORDATA / AVES	*Setophaga vitellina*	☑	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				NT	☐	☐		Listed as Near Threatened on IUCN Red List; notable breeding bird species
CHORDATA / AVES	*Sphyrapicus varius*	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		Notable migratory bird species
CHORDATA / AVES	*Sula sula*	☐	☑	☑	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	20000	1997	14	LC	☐	☐		Globally important breeding congregation
CHORDATA / AVES	*Tringa flavipes*	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		Notable wintering bird species
CHORDATA / AVES	*Tringa melanoleuca*	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		Notable wintering bird species

Phylum	Scientific name	Species qualifies under criterion				Species contributes under criterion				Pop. Size	Period of pop. Est.	% occurrence 1)	IUCN Red List	CITES Appendix I	CMS Appendix I	Other Status	Justification
		2	4	6	9	3	5	7	8								
CHORDATA / AVES	*Vireo flavifrons*	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		Notable migratory bird species
CHORDATA / AVES	*Vireo griseus*	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		Notable migratory bird species

1) Percentage of the total biogeographic population at the site

The Red-footed booby Sula sula colony numbered 4,839 pairs in 1997, which amounted to an estimated 20,000 birds, the largest colony of the species in the Caribbean representing c.14% of the global population. It had increased from 2,700 pairs in 1975 and 3,155 pairs in 1985, but the most recent population estimate in 2018 was for only 5,172 adult birds. The population estimate for the Magnificent frigatebird Fregata magnificens from 2018 was 958 adult birds. Other records include 20 breeding pairs of West Indian whistling-duck Dendrocygna arboreawere and similarly of Vitelline warbler Setophaga vitellina, 35 breeding pairs of Greater Antillean grackle Quiscalus niger bangsi, 250 pairs of Snowy egret Egretta thula, and c.500 Blue-winged teal Spatula discors, 400 Semipalmated sandpipers Calidris pusilla, 300 American coot Fulica americana, Greater Yellowlegs Tringa melanoleuca and Lesser Yellowlegs T. flavipes, and 130 Great egret Casmerodias albus.

3.4 - Ecological communities whose presence relates to the international importance of the site

<no data available>

4 - What is the Site like? (Ecological character description)

4.1 - Ecological character

The site comprises an enclosed, seasonally flooded, shallow, eutrophic, brackish-hypersaline lagoon system. It is 1800 m long and varies around 250 m wide, separated from the sea to the south by a narrow barrier of land 100-225 m wide. The water is derived from rainfall and groundwater seepage, varies in salinity depending on the season, and occasionally dries out completely in the spring. The configuration of the easternmost border of the pond points to a past connection to the sea. It is not known if this was a transient connection caused by storm driven currents, which naturally re-closed, or if it was a long-term connection that was closed when a coastal road was built along the South Coast.

The lagoon is irregularly fringed by mangrove communities, which are dominated on the south side by Black mangrove Avicennia germinans and White mangrove Laguncularia racemosa with some Red mangrove Rhizophora mangle. Along the northern boundary, a retreating mosaic of Red mangrove transitions through a Buttonwood Conocarpus erectus and Portia tree (plopnut) Thespesia populnea zone into xerophytic shrubland and forest mosaic on rock pavement. The shrubland is floristically diverse with the Cayman Islands endemics Cordia sebestena caymanensis and Coccothrinax protorii forming major components; also prominent are Bursera simaruba, Guapira discolor, Ficus aurea, Myrcianthes fragrans, Pilosocereus swartzii, Plumeria obtusa, Canella winterana and Guapira discolor.

The site provides a seasonally important habitat for resident and migratory waders and other waterfowl. The dominant terrestrial features are the breeding colonies of Red-footed boobies Sula sula and Magnificent frigatebird Fregata magnificens, the only such aggregations in the Cayman Islands. A sizeable number of other birds breed within the site, which includes a large heronry. The site is also an important feeding area for resident and passage and wintering Nearctic shorebirds. Nutrient rich run-off from the bird colonies contributes to the nutrient loading of the water.

The Sister Islands rock iguana Cyclura nubila caymanensis is found on site and is endemic to Little Cayman and Cayman Brac. The population on Little Cayman is declining (c. 850 individuals or less), while the Cayman Brac counterpart is close to extirpation. These declines are due to predation by feral cats and dogs and expansion of road systems. The Little Cayman green anole Anolis maynardi, which is endemic to Little Cayman, is also found on the site, and a small population of the Critically Endangered land snail Cerion nanus occur nearby (outside the Ramsar Site).

4.2 - What wetland type(s) are in the site?

Marine or coastal wetlands

Wetland types (code and name)	Local name	Ranking of extent (1: greatest - 4: least)	Area (ha) of wetland type	Justification of Criterion 1
I: Intertidal forested wetlands		2	19	Representative

Inland wetlands

Wetland types (code and name)	Local name	Ranking of extent (1: greatest - 4: least)	Area (ha) of wetland type	Justification of Criterion 1
Saline, brackish or alkaline water > Lakes >> Q: Permanent saline/ brackish/ alkaline lakes		1	47	Representative
Fresh water > Marshes on inorganic soils >> W: Shrub-dominated wetlands		3	16	Representative

4.3 - Biological components

4.3.1 - Plant species

Invasive alien plant species

Phylum	Scientific name	Impacts	Changes at RIS update
TRACHEOPHYTA/MAGNOLIOPSIDA	*Leucaena leucocephala*	Actual (minor impacts)	No change

Optional text box to provide further information

The Allelopathic tree Leucaena leucocephala is highly invasive in the Cayman Islands; its leaves have well-studied allelopathic effects suppressing germination and growth of other plant species.

4.3.2 - Animal species

Invasive alien animal species

Phylum	Scientific name	Impacts	Changes at RIS update
CHORDATA/MAMMALIA	*Felis catus*	Actual (major impacts)	No change
CHORDATA/MAMMALIA	*Rattus norvegicus*	Actual (major impacts)	No change
CHORDATA/MAMMALIA	*Rattus rattus*	Actual (major impacts)	No change

Optional text box to provide further information

See section 5.2.1

4.4 - Physical components

4.4.1 - Climate

Climatic region	Subregion
A: Tropical humid climate	Am: Tropical monsoonal (Short dry season; heavy monsoonal rains in other months)

The site has a sub-humid tropical marine climate, with a warm summer wet season (May to November), when tropical storms or hurricanes may develop, and cool, relatively dry winters (November to April); average annual rainfall is 1174 mm and the mean annual temperature is 23-30°C (range 11.2-36.5°C).

4.4.2 - Geomorphic setting

a) Minimum elevation above sea level (in metres): 0

a) Maximum elevation above sea level (in metres): 3

- Entire river basin ☐
- Upper part of river basin ☐
- Middle part of river basin ☐
- Lower part of river basin ☐
- More than one river basin ☐
- Not in river basin ☑
- Coastal ☑

4.4.3 - Soil

- Mineral ☑
  - (Update) Changes at RIS update: No change ◉ Increase ○ Decrease ○ Unknown ○
- Organic ☑
  - (Update) Changes at RIS update: No change ◉ Increase ○ Decrease ○ Unknown ○
- No available information ☐

Are soil types subject to change as a result of changing hydrological conditions (e.g., increased salinity or acidification)? Yes ◉ No ○

Please provide further information on the soil (optional)

The soils are mainly organic (mangrove peat), but merge with very shallow oxisols in the shrubland north of the band of mangroves. The seasonally flooded lagoon contains extensive carbonate sand and silt washed in from the adjacent coast and beach ridge during hurricane storm surges, combined with organic matter from algal crusts and other biological activity.

4.4.4 - Water regime

Water permanence

Presence?	Changes at RIS update
Usually seasonal, ephemeral or intermittent water present	No change
Usually permanent water present	No change

Source of water that maintains character of the site

Presence?	Predominant water source	Changes at RIS update
Water inputs from groundwater	☐	No change
Water inputs from precipitation	☑	No change

Water destination

Presence?	Changes at RIS update
Marine	No change
Feeds groundwater	No change

Stability of water regime

Presence?	Changes at RIS update
Water levels fluctuating (including tidal)	No change

Please add any comments on the water regime and its determinants (if relevant). Use this box to explain sites with complex hydrology:

Surface water in Booby Pond is derived from a combination of rainfall and groundwater discharge from higher land to the north. It varies in salinity depending on the season and occasionally dries out completely in the spring. Most is lost to evaporation, but there is some very slow subdued seepage through the beach ridge and possibly drainage into downstream groundwater flows, which also ends up in the sea. Anecdotal evidence suggests some alteration of drainage at the eastern extent, possibly due to hurricane action landlocking the lagoon and/or due to construction of the coast road.

4.4.5 - Sediment regime

Sediment regime is highly variable, either seasonally or inter-annually ☑

(Update) Changes at RIS update: No change ◉ Increase ○ Decrease ○ Unknown ○

Sediment regime unknown ☐

Please provide further information on sediment (optional):

The site forms a low-lying, mangrove-fringed lagoon, separated from the sea by a narrow barrier of land, and which therefore functions as a sediment trap. Storm surges episodically bring wave action over the beach ridge carrying carbonate sands into the pond. This process has historically destroyed mangroves formerly growing in the current pond area and continues to cause mangrove retreat from the northern margins of the pond.

4.4.6 - Water pH

Circumneutral (pH: 5.5-7.4) ☑

(Update) Changes at RIS update: No change ◉ Increase ○ Decrease ○ Unknown ○

Unknown ☐

Please provide further information on pH (optional):

High marine-derived salinity buffers pH close to neutral.

4.4.7 - Water salinity

Mixohaline (brackish)/Mixosaline (0.5-30 g/l) ☑

(Update) Changes at RIS update: No change ◉ Increase ○ Decrease ○ Unknown ○

Euhaline/Eusaline (30-40 g/l) ☑

(Update) Changes at RIS update: No change ◉ Increase ○ Decrease ○ Unknown ○

Hyperhaline/Hypersaline (>40 g/l) ☑

(Update) Changes at RIS update: No change ◉ Increase ○ Decrease ○ Unknown ○

Unknown ☐

Please provide further information on salinity (optional):

Ranges from brackish to hypersaline.

4.4.8 - Dissolved or suspended nutrients in water

Eutrophic ☑

(Update) Changes at RIS update: No change ◉ Increase ○ Decrease ○ Unknown ○

Unknown ☐

Please provide further information on dissolved or suspended nutrients (optional):

Nutrient rich run-off from the bird colonies contributes to the nutrient loading of the water.

4.4.9 - Features of the surrounding area which may affect the Site

Please describe whether, and if so how, the landscape and ecological characteristics in the area surrounding the Ramsar Site differ from the site itself: i) broadly similar ○ ii) significantly different ◉

Surrounding area has greater urbanisation or development ☑

Surrounding area has higher human population density ☑

Surrounding area has more intensive agricultural use ☑

Surrounding area has significantly different land cover or habitat types ☑

Please describe other ways in which the surrounding area is different:

A low-use asphalt-topped road, separated by a narrow fridge of vegetation, runs along the southern border of the site. Moderate, mostly residential, development occurs on the land to the south of the road. Extensive primary xerophytic shrubland dry forest borders the site to the north.

4.5 - Ecosystem services

4.5.1 - Ecosystem services/benefits

Regulating Services

Ecosystem service	Examples	Importance/Extent/Significance
Hazard reduction	Flood control, flood storage	Medium
Hazard reduction	Coastal shoreline and river bank stabilization and storm protection	Medium

Cultural Services

Ecosystem service	Examples	Importance/Extent/Significance
Recreation and tourism	Nature observation and nature-based tourism	High
Spiritual and inspirational	Aesthetic and sense of place values	High

Supporting Services

Ecosystem service	Examples	Importance/Extent/Significance
Biodiversity	Supports a variety of all life forms including plants, animals and microorganizms, the genes they contain, and the ecosystems of which they form a part	High
Soil formation	Sediment retention	Low
Soil formation	Accumulation of organic matter	Low
Nutrient cycling	Carbon storage/sequestration	Low

Optional text box to provide further information

This is a visually impressive site with good access. It is the primary terrestrial nature tourism attraction on Little Cayman. There is a high-quality visitor centre, built by the National Trust in 1997 and run by National Trust volunteers, which provides fixed telescopes and interpretation of the site. The Trust has published a poster of the Red-footed Boobies with a conservation message. Supporting information is available through the National Trust website: www.nationaltrust.org.ky

The pond acts as a buffer between the coastal beach ridge and sea and the natural dryland habitats to the north which are rich in biodiversity. It can also accommodate and store a huge inflow of rain or storm water, thereby acting as a flood control feature, and function as a sediment trap. Organic material slowly accumulates in the form of mangrove-derived peat.

The pond acts as a buffer between the coastal beach ridge and sea and the natural dryland habitats to the north which are rich in biodiversity. It can also accommodate and store a huge inflow of rain or storm water, thereby acting as a flood control feature, and also functions as a sediment trap. Organic material slowly accumulates in the form of mangrove-derived peat.

Outside the site: 1000s

Have studies or assessments been made of the economic valuation of ecosystem services provided by this Ramsar Site? Yes ○ No ◉ Unknown ○

4.5.2 - Social and cultural values

i) the site provides a model of wetland wise use, demonstrating the application of traditional knowledge and methods of management and use that maintain the ecological character of the wetland ☐

ii) the site has exceptional cultural traditions or records of former civilizations that have influenced the ecological character of the wetland ☐

iii) the ecological character of the wetland depends on its interaction with local communities or indigenous peoples ☐

iv) relevant non-material values such as sacred sites are present and their existence is strongly linked with the maintenance of the ecological character of the wetland ☐

<no data available>

4.6 - Ecological processes

<no data available>

5 - How is the Site managed? (Conservation and management)

5.1 - Land tenure and responsibilities (Managers)

5.1.1 - Land tenure/ownership

Public ownership

Category	Within the Ramsar Site	In the surrounding area
National/Federal government	☐	☑

Private ownership

Category	Within the Ramsar Site	In the surrounding area
Foundation/non-governmental organization/trust	☑	☐

Provide further information on the land tenure / ownership regime (optional):

The Ramsar Site is in owned by the National Trust for the Cayman Islands (NTCI) and is contiguous with a larger protected area that is predominantly in NTCI ownership with some Crown-owned protected land managed by the Cayman Islands Government.

5.1.2 - Management authority

Please list the local office / offices of any agency or organization responsible for managing the site: Territorial jurisdiction of the site lies with the Cayman Islands Government Ministry of Sustainability and Climate Resiliency, whilst the National Trust for the Cayman Islands is responsible for the management of the site.

Provide the name and/or title of the person or people with responsibility for the wetland: The Executive Director, National Trust for the Cayman Islands

Postal address: National Trust for the Cayman Islands, PO Box 31116, Grand Cayman KY1-1205, Cayman Islands

E-mail address: director@NationalTrust.org.ky

5.2 - Ecological character threats and responses (Management)

5.2.1 - Factors (actual or likely) adversely affecting the Site's ecological character

Human settlements (non agricultural)

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	Changes	In the surrounding area	Changes
Housing and urban areas	Medium impact	High impact	☐	No change	☑	No change
Tourism and recreation areas	Medium impact	High impact	☑	No change	☑	No change

Transportation and service corridors

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	Changes	In the surrounding area	Changes
Aircraft flight paths		Medium impact	☐	No change	☑	No change

Human intrusions and disturbance

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	Changes	In the surrounding area	Changes
Recreational and tourism activities	Low impact	Low impact	☑	No change	☐	No change

Invasive and other problematic species and genes

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	Changes	In the surrounding area	Changes
Invasive non-native/ alien species	High impact		☑	No change	☑	No change

Pollution

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	Changes	In the surrounding area	Changes
Household sewage, urban waste water	Medium impact	Medium impact	☑	No change	☐	No change

Climate change and severe weather

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	Changes	In the surrounding area	Changes
Habitat shifting and alteration	High impact	High impact	☑	No change	☑	No change

Please describe any other threats (optional):

The site is threatened by several factors. There is pressure from residential and commercial development impacting the narrow southern pond margins. Pond odour, which is exacerbated by increased potential for polluted inputs into the water system, may lead to demands from residents for control measures (e.g. dredging/drainage/modification of the site). Disturbance of breeding birds through any future change to airstrip expansion or relocation may result in a conflict situation of bird-strike; this may also arise from lights at night and noise emanating from tourism and residential developments on the south coast; and occasionally humans walking into the nesting bird colony without permits. Non-native cats and rats are a major threat: feral cats prevent effective recruitment of adult breeding Sister Isles rock iguanas and it is strongly suspected that they predate Booby and Frigatebird chicks; rats predate both live animal prey and plant seeds and have far-reaching ecological impacts. Disturbance and habitat change may cause breeding Boobies to relocate, which has been recorded at least twice in the past, potentially out of the site altogether. Hurricane storm surges, exacerbated by climatic change, may result in habitat shifts in the form of mangrove retreat and death.

5.2.2 - Legal conservation status

National legal designations

Designation type	Name of area	Online information url	Overlap with Ramsar Site
Protected Area under National Conservation Act 2013	Booby Pond Nature Reserve		whole
animal sanctuary			whole

Non-statutory designations

Designation type	Name of area	Online information url	Overlap with Ramsar Site
Important Bird Area	Booby Pond Nature Reserve	http://datazone.birdlife.org/site/factsheet/booby-pond-nature-reserve-iba-cayman-islands-(to-uk)/text	partly

5.2.3 - IUCN protected areas categories (2008)

Ia Strict Nature Reserve ☐

Ib Wilderness Area: protected area managed mainly for wilderness protection ☑

II National Park: protected area managed mainly for ecosystem protection and recreation ☐

III Natural Monument: protected area managed mainly for conservation of specific natural features ☐

IV Habitat/Species Management Area: protected area managed mainly for conservation through management intervention ☐

V Protected Landscape/Seascape: protected area managed mainly for landscape/seascape conservation and recreation ☐

VI Managed Resource Protected Area: protected area managed mainly for the sustainable use of natural ecosystems ☐

5.2.4 - Key conservation measures

Legal protection

Measures	Status
Legal protection	Implemented

Habitat

Measures	Status
Habitat manipulation/enhancement	Proposed

Species

Measures	Status
Control of invasive alien plants	Proposed

5.2.5 - Management planning

Is there a site-specific management plan for the site? Yes

Has a management effectiveness assessment been undertaken for the site? Yes ○ No ◉

If the site is a formal transboundary site as indicated in section Data and location > Site location, are there shared management planning processes with another Contracting Party? Yes ○ No ◉

Please indicate if a Ramsar centre, other educational or visitor facility, or an educational or visitor programme is associated with the site:

There is a high-quality visitor centre, built by the National Trust in 1997 and run by National Trust volunteers, which provides fixed telescopes and interpretation of the site; supporting information is available through the National Trust website.

URL of site-related webpage (if relevant): https://nationaltrust.org.ky/our-work/environmental/booby-pond-nature-reserve/

5.2.6 - Planning for restoration

Is there a site-specific restoration plan? No, but restoration is needed

5.2.7 - Monitoring implemented or proposed

Monitoring	Status
Birds	Implemented

Recent monitoring includes: (i) tracking and assessments of the Red-footed booby population carried out by the Cayman Islands Department of Environment and University of Liverpool during 2016-2019; and (ii) assessments of the Red-footed booby and Magnificent frigatebird populations during 2019-2022 made by the Department of Environment.

6 - Additional material

6.1 - Additional reports and documents

6.1.1 - Bibliographical references

BirdLife International (2022) Important Bird Areas factsheet: Booby Pond Nature Reserve. http://datazone.birdlife.org/site/factsheet/booby-pond-nature-reserve-iba-cayman-islands-(to-uk)/tex t
Booby Pond Nature Reserve Management Plans 1997-2001 and 2012-2015. Unpublished documents produced by the National Trust for the Cayman Islands.
Bradley, PE (1986) The Cayman Islands. In: A directory of Neotropical wetlands, ed. by DA Scott & M Carbonnell, 469- 482. IUCN, Gland & Cambridge.
Bradley, PE (2000) The birds of the Cayman Islands. An annotated checklist. British Ornithologists' Union, Tring (BOU Checklist, No. 19).
Bradley, PE (2002) Management plan to conserve and sustain the brown booby colony on Cayman Brac, 2002–06 Cayman Islands Government, Department of the Environment.
Bradley, PE, Cottam, M, Ebanks-Petrie, G & Soloman, J (2004) Cayman Islands. Important Bird Areas in the UK Overseas Territories. RSPB, Sandy.
Burton FJ (1998) Survey of flight lines and foraging range of red-footed boobies Sula sula, from Little Cayman. Unpublished report to the American Bird Conservancy (Project P-DEC02196).
Burton FJ, Bradley PE, Schreiber EA & Burton RW (1999): Status of red-footed boobies Sula sula on Little Cayman, British West Indies. Bird Conservation International, 9, 227-233.
Cayman Islands Government (1993) The Animals (Sanctuaries) (Amendment) Regulations, 1993. Cayman Gazette No. 24 of 1993.
Clapp, RB (1987) Status of the red-footed booby colony on Little Cayman Island. Atoll Research Bulletin, 304, 1-15
Clench, WJ (1964) Land and freshwater Mollusca of the Cayman Islands, West Indies. Occasional Papers on Mollusks, 2, 345-380.
Diamond, AW (1975) The red-footed booby colony on Little Cayman. Atoll Research Bulletin 241, 165-170.
Hepburn, I, Oldfield, S & Thompson, K (1992) UK Dependent Territories Ramsar study: Stage 1. Unpublished report to Department of the Environment, European and International Habitat Protection Branch, Bristol, from International Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Bureau/ NGO Forum for Nature Conservation in UK Dependent Territories, Slimbridge/ Sandy (Research contract, No. 7/2/126).
IUCN (2022) The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. https://www.iucnredlist.org/
Pienkowski, MW (ed.) (2005) Review of existing and potential Ramsar sites in UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies. (Contractor: UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum, Peterborough.) Final report on Contract CR0294 to the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Bristol. www.ukotcf.org
Proctor, D & Fleming, LV (eds.) (1999) Biodiversity: the UK Overseas Territories. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough.

Previous versions of RIS
Booby Pond and Rookery Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands, Ref 6UK002. Dated 13.9.94.
Booby Pond and Rookery Ramsar Information Sheet UK42001. Version 3.0, 13/06/2008, produced by JNCC.

6.1.2 - Additional reports and documents

i. taxonomic lists of plant and animal species occurring in the site (see section 4.3)
<no file available>

ii. a detailed Ecological Character Description (ECD) (in a national format)
<no file available>

iii. a description of the site in a national or regional wetland inventory
<no file available>

iv. relevant Article 3.2 reports
<no file available>

v. site management plan
<1 file(s) uploaded>

vi. other published literature
<2 file(s) uploaded>

6.1.3 - Photograph(s) of the Site

Please provide at least one photograph of the site:

View of Bobby Pond and surrounding vegetation (*National Trust for the Cayman Islands, 2022*)

View of Bobby Pond Nature Reserve National Trust visitor centre (*National Trust for the Cayman Islands, 2022*)

View of Red-footed booby chick on nest in the Bobby Pond and Rookery Ramsar Site (*Cayman Islands Department of Environment, 2022*)

6.1.4 - Designation letter and related data

Designation letter
<1 file(s) uploaded>

Date of Designation: 1994-09-21