



Ramsar Information Sheet

Published on 10 November 2023

Netherlands (Kingdom of the) (Aruba) East Point



Designation date	10 November 2023
Site number	2525
Coordinates	12°28'05"N 69°53'50"W
Area	7 597,00 ha

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

Ramsar site East Point measures 7597 ha. It is a mainly marine site that curves around the eastern tip of Aruba. The site comprises a limestone plateau, (dry) stream beds, a fresh water pond, dunes, beaches and shallow and deeper marine waters with sea grass beds, coral reefs and reef islets.

The small, low lying, boulder-coral reef islets are located in San Nicolas Bay opposite a large oil refinery and the town of San Nicolas. These islets are famous for their diversity and abundance of breeding terns. No less than ten tern species are breeding here (Cayenne, Cabot's, Roseate, Common, Sooty, Bridled, Least and Royal Tern as well as Black and Brown Noddy), some of which in regionally significant numbers. The limestone plateau is an important breeding area for Least Terns as well, as also a resting place for sea birds.

The sites dune and beach area is important for shore birds and the beaches are nesting habitat for Green, Hawksbill, Loggerhead and Leatherback Turtles, especially the ca. 4 km stretch between Bachelor's Beach and Rincon. Monitoring data collected during 2016-2020 confirmed an average 22 nests per year. Juvenile Green and Hawksbill Turtles forage in the coastal waters.

The sea floor in the shallow and coastal waters is covered with corals and seagrass beds. A 2019-study revealed that Aruba's healthiest coral reefs can be found here, including stands of critically endangered Elkhorn Coral. This is partly due to the relatively clean waters and high biomass of herbivorous fish that can be found here. The shallow waters serve as a refuge for six dolphin species: Common Bottlenose, Rough-toothed, Atlantic Spotted, Striped, Spinner and Pantropical Spotted Dolphin. The latter two even give birth here. Further offshore the water drops deeper and there can be stronger currents and more swell on the surface. Two more dolphin species (Long-beaked Common and Risso Dolphin), four whale species (False Killer, Pilot, Humpback and Minke Whale) and Whale Shark have been observed here within and beyond the 2 km border of the site. Fact that the sites border extends 2 km into the Caribbean sea ensures that disturbance of sea mammals, like from underwater noise, can be better managed.

Besides biodiversity values the site also provides significant ecosystem services in terms of coastal protection, fish spawning and tourism (diving and snorkeling).

2 - Data & location

2.1 - Formal data

2.1.1 - Name and address of the compiler of this RIS

Responsible compiler

Institution/agency	Wageningen Environmental Research
Postal address	PO Box 47 6700 AA Wageningen The Netherlands

National Ramsar Administrative Authority

Institution/agency	Ministry of Agriculture Nature and Food Quality
Postal address	Bezuidenhoutseweg 73 P.O. Box 20401 2500 EK The Hague The Netherlands

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

From year	1997
To year	2023

2.1.3 - Name of the Ramsar Site

Official name (in English, French or Spanish)	East Point
Unofficial name (optional)	Oostpunt

2.2 - Site location

2.2.1 - Defining the Site boundaries

b) Digital map/image
<1 file(s) uploaded>

Former maps	0
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Boundaries description

The site runs from San Nicolas Bay, curves around the eastern tip of Aruba and overlaps with the borders of the Arikok National Park. The water catchment within Arikok is also part of the site. The site excludes the harbour area of San Nicolas. The site includes beaches, part of the limestone plateau in the east (till 50 m inland), dune area in the north (till 300 m inland) and three (dry) stream beds in the northwest of the site.

2.2.2 - General location

a) In which large administrative region does the site lie?	Caribbean Island of Aruba, which is a constituent country of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
b) What is the nearest town or population centre?	The village of San Nicolas/Sint Nicolaas.

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):	7597
Area, in hectares (ha) as calculated from GIS boundaries	7596.899

2.2.5 - Biogeography

Biogeographic regions

Regionalisation scheme(s)	Biogeographic region
Marine Ecoregions of the World (MEOW)	Realm: Tropical Atlantic, Province: Tropical North-western Atlantic, Ecoregion: Southern Caribbean.

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

The site contains the only natural fresh water pond of Aruba, named Fontein, which is an important drinking place for wildlife (and livestock).

Other ecosystem services provided

The site contains a chain of reef islets, sea grass beds and coral reefs which ensures coastal protection of Aruba's southern coast. The sea grass beds, coral reefs and mangrove forests provide important nursery functions for Aruba's fisheries sector. These habitats are also important for the tourist sector mainly for scuba diving and/or snorkeling, while the white beaches provide important recreation and tourism services as well.
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- Criterion 2 : Rare species and threatened ecological communities

Optional text box to provide further information

The combination of substantial areas of habitats like beaches, dunes, reef islets, a limestone plateau, (dry) stream beds, sea grass beds and coral reefs provide important reproduction, nursery, resting and foraging functions for many species groups. Among others: four threatened sea turtles species use the site for nesting and foraging; the coral reefs are the healthiest of Aruba and encompass several threatened species; the diversity and abundance of terns, of which some species breed in regionally significant numbers, is quite unique. Altogether, the conservation of this site is crucial for the conservation of these rare species and threatened communities on Aruba and the wider Caribbean.
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- Criterion 3 : Biological diversity

Justification

The biological diversity is high with for example ten nesting tern species, four nesting sea turtle species and twelve dolphin and whale species. Six dolphin species seek refuge in the shallow waters or even give birth here. These areas are covered for a large extent with sea grass beds and coral reefs. The reefs are the healthiest of Aruba and biomass of herbivorous fish species is relatively high if compared to other Caribbean islands. The full extent of the biological diversity of the site is still being studied.

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

Optional text box to provide further information

The sites variety of habitats among which relatively healthy coral reefs and seagrass beds provide crucial reproduction, nursery, resting and foraging habitat for multiple species, like four species of sea turtles, ten species of terns and twelve species of sea mammals. The shallow coastal waters serve as a refuge area during adverse conditions like rough sea.
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- Criterion 5 : >20,000 waterbirds

Overall waterbird numbers

25000

Start year

1997

End year

2016

Source of data:

Delnevo 2009; A.J.Delnevo pers.comm 2016, unpublished data
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The figures below only refer to the tern colonies of the San Nicolas Bay Reef islands, which represents the sites main aggregation of birds. The entire coastline including a limestone plateau, dunes, beaches and reef islands are however also feeding, breeding, mating, and roosting areas for different species of local and migratory shore birds. Figures for bird numbers from these other parts of the Ramsar site are yet not available.

The nesting tern populations include the breeding pairs, failed breeding birds, and immature/non-breeding birds. Banded/ringed birds, capture/recapture models, and age-specific plumage variation has enabled estimates for each of these categories. Peak annual (year) number of individuals (includes breeders, non-breeders [immature] and known failed breeders) for each species are: Cayenne Tern (*T. a. eurygnatha*, 11,300, yr. 2003), Cabot's Tern (*T. a. acuffavidus*, 48, yr. 2006), Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*, 130, yr. 2000), Roseate Tern (*Sterna dougallii*, 210, yr. 2003), Royal Tern (*Thalasseus maxima*, 18, yr. 2008), Bridled Tern (*Onychoprion anaethetus*, 340, yr. 1999), Sooty Tern (*Onychoprion fuscatus*, 16,500, yr. 1999), Least Tern (*Sternula antillarum*, 210, yr. 2001), Brown Noddy (*Anous stolidus*, 650, yr. 2006) and Black Noddy (*Anous minutus*, 135, yr. 2001). Taking 'peak' years, the total numbers of individual terns associated with this site would be approximately 30,000. An 'average year' would contain between 20,000 – 25,000 individuals.

Optional text box to provide further information

Criterion 6 : >1% waterbird population

Criterion 7 : Significant and representative fish

Justification

The diversity in shallow and deeper marine habitats results in a relatively high diversity of fish species. The biomass of herbivorous fish in the site, like the Rainbow Parrotfish (*Scarus guacamaia*) is relatively high if compared to other Caribbean islands resulting in efficient grazing, lowering the growth of algae.

Criterion 8 : Fish spawning grounds, etc.

Justification

The site covers a relatively healthy area of seagrass beds and coral reefs, with Elkhorn Coral (*Acropora palmata*) among others, which have important fish spawning functions. These complex structures provide critical nursery habitat for specific reef fish species, like juveniles of the Smallmouth grunt (*Haemulon chrysargyreum*), Blue tang (*Acanthurus coeruleus*) and Ocean surgeonfish (*Acanthurus bahianus*) which depend on these (hydro)coral habitats.

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/ MAGNOLIOPSIDA	<i>Conocarpus erectus</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	SPAW Annex 3	http://datazone.birdlife.org/site/factsheet/san-nicolas-bay-reef-islands-iba-aruba-(to-netherlands)/text
TRACHEOPHYTA/ LILIOPSIDA	<i>Syringodium filiforme</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	SPAW Annex 3	Fish spawning function
TRACHEOPHYTA/ LILIOPSIDA	<i>Thalassia testudinum</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	SPAW Annex 3	Fish spawning function

Three of the five San Nicolas Bay reef islets are covered with a variety of salt-resistant plants that have become more prolific in recent years. The vegetation is dominated by Buttonwood (*Conocarpus erecta*), Sea Purslane (*Sesuvium portulacastrum*) and Bay Cedar (*Suriana maritima*). Some Red Mangrove (*Rhizophora mangle*) and Black Mangrove (*Avicennia nitida*) are also trying to get hold on these islands. The substrate includes sand, shell and is dominated by boulder coral. The dune vegetation is still to be studied.

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 / ANTHOZOA	<i>Acropora palmata</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				CR	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SPAW Annex II	Spawning, nursery function (Spalding 2004; Wouters, 2018)
CHORDATA / MAMMALIA	<i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SPAW Annex II	Wintering/migration
CHORDATA / REPTILIA	<i>Caretta caretta</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				VU	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SPAW Annex II	Nesting, feeding
CHORDATA / REPTILIA	<i>Chelonia mydas</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				EN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SPAW Annex II	Nesting, feeding
CHORDATA / REPTILIA	<i>Cnemidophorus arubensis</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Endemic, Inhabits the reef islets among others
CHORDATA / MAMMALIA	<i>Delphinus capensis capensis</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SPAW Annex II	Feeding
CHORDATA / REPTILIA	<i>Dermochelys coriacea</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				VU	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SPAW Annex II	Nesting, feeding
CHORDATA / REPTILIA	<i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				CR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SPAW Annex II	Nesting, feeding
CHORDATA / MAMMALIA	<i>Globicephala macrorhynchus</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SPAW Annex II	Feeding
CHORDATA / MAMMALIA	<i>Grampus griseus</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SPAW Annex II	Feeding
CHORDATA / MAMMALIA	<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				LC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SPAW Annex II	Wintering/migration
CHORDATA / MAMMALIA	<i>Pseudorca crassidens</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				NT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SPAW Annex II	Feeding
CHORDATA / MAMMALIA	<i>Stenella attenuata</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SPAW Annex II	Refuge, birthing
CHORDATA / MAMMALIA	<i>Stenella coeruleoalba</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SPAW Annex II	Nursery
CHORDATA / MAMMALIA	<i>Stenella frontalis</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SPAW Annex II	Refuge, birthing, nursery
CHORDATA / MAMMALIA	<i>Stenella longirostris</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SPAW Annex II	Nursery
CHORDATA / MAMMALIA	<i>Steno bredanensis</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SPAW Annex II	Refuge, birthing, nursery
CHORDATA / MAMMALIA	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SPAW Annex II	Refuge, birthing, nursery
Fish, Mollusc and Crustacea																	
CHORDATA / ELASMOBRANCHII	<i>Carcharhinus perezii</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Resident
CHORDATA / ELASMOBRANCHII	<i>Galeocerdo cuvier</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				NT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Juvenile specimen indicate reproduction of the species.
MOLLUSCA / GASTROPODA	<i>Lobatus gigas</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cites Annex II; SPAW Annex III	Reproduction, feeding

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 / ELASMOBRANCHII	<i>Rhincodon typus</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				EN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SPAW Annex III	Often recorded by scuba divers near Rincon
CHORDATA / ACTINOPTERYGII	<i>Scarus guacamaia</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				NT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Large specimen available. Important for keeping the reef healthy
Birds																	
CHORDATA / AVES	<i>Anous minutus</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	144	1997-2011	0.007	LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Birdlife B4i	Breeding, foraging. Del Nevo, 2009; Delnevo pers.comm, 2016
CHORDATA / AVES	<i>Anous stolidus</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	520	1997-2011	0.05	LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Birdlife B4i	Breeding, foraging. Del Nevo, 2009; Delnevo pers.comm, 2016
CHORDATA / AVES	<i>Larus atricilla</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	800	1997-2011	1.5	LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Birdlife A4i	Breeding, foraging. Del Nevo, 2009; Delnevo pers.comm, 2016
CHORDATA / AVES	<i>Onychoprion anaethetus</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	132	1997-2011	0.01	LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Birdlife B4i	Breeding, foraging. Del Nevo, 2009; Delnevo pers.comm, 2016
CHORDATA / AVES	<i>Sterna dougallii</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	225	1997-2011	1.7	LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Birdlife A4i	Breeding, foraging. Del Nevo, 2009; Delnevo pers.comm, 2016
CHORDATA / AVES	<i>Sterna fuscata</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	14340	1997-2011	1.6		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Birdlife B4i	Breeding, foraging. Del Nevo, 2009; Delnevo pers.comm, 2016
CHORDATA / AVES	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	90	1997-2011	6	LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Birdlife A4i	Breeding, foraging. Del Nevo, 2009; Delnevo pers.comm, 2016
CHORDATA / AVES	<i>Sterna maxima</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	30	1997-2011	0.02		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Birdlife B4i	Breeding, foraging. Del Nevo, 2009; Delnevo pers.comm, 2016
CHORDATA / AVES	<i>Sternula antillarum</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	255	1997-2011	0.49	LC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Birdlife B4i	Breeding, foraging. Del Nevo, 2009; Delnevo pers.comm, 2016
CHORDATA / AVES	<i>Thalasseus acutifavidus</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	10500	1997-2011	29.2		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	IBA A4i	Breeding, foraging. Del Nevo, 2009; Delnevo pers.comm, 2016
CHORDATA / AVES	<i>Thalasseus acutifavidus eurygnatha</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3974	2009	11		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	IBA A4i	Breeding, foraging. Del Nevo, 2009

1) Percentage of the total biogeographic population at the site

The list of plant and animal species was compiled with support of Fundacion Parke Nacional Aruba (FPNA) in collaboration with local nature NGOs Turtugaruba (Save-the-Sea-Turtles Organization of Aruba), Aruba Marine Mammal Foundation (AMMF) and Aruba Birdlife Conservation (ABC).

For some tern species, marked annual variation in nesting pairs has been observed (1997-2011), and probably represents bird inter-colony movements (as suggested by banding/ringing studies) following years of marked disturbance (humans and rats), changes in nesting substrate (following winter storms and marked vegetation growth or die-back), and variation in food availability (based on variable foraging ecology with shifts in fish size and species composition).

Future inventory and monitoring research will reveal the sites full biodiversity value, like potential feeding grounds for juvenile sharks.

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

Name of ecological community	Community qualifies under Criterion 2?	Description	Justification
Coral reefs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Spawning and nursery function for fish among others	Combination of fringing islets, coral reefs and sea grass beds
Sea grass beds	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Spawning and nursery function for fish etc.; feeding function for sea turtles etc.	Combination of fringing islets, coral reefs and sea grass beds

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

4.1 - Ecological character

The site comprises a limestone plateau (approx. 50 ha), (dry) stream beds (approx. 5 ha), dunes, beaches and shallow and deeper marine waters with sea grass beds, coral reefs and reef islets.

The low lying reef islets are comprised of broken coral debris with a thin (<20cm) layer of sand. Increased incidences and intensity of winter storms has resulted in changes (increase) in rainfall effecting vegetation growth, and substrate (nesting) availability. Consequently, the substrate and vegetative ecology is dynamic and subject to inter-year variability, which profoundly affects nesting suitability and availability. Habitat (vegetation) management can be (and has partially been) manipulated to facilitate suitable nesting areas for arboreal or ground-nesting tern species. No less than ten tern species are breeding here (Cayenne, Cabot's, Roseate, Common, Sooty, Bridled, Least and Royal Tern as well as Black and Brown Noddy), some of which in regionally significant numbers. The limestone plateau is an important breeding area for Least Terns as well, as also a resting place for sea birds.

Three (dry) streambeds (Rooien in local language) have been included in the north of the site. They discharge rainwater into the sea. The small bays (Boca in local language) are important habitat for small fauna like crustaceans and reptiles. The sites dune and beach area is important for shore birds as well as it is nesting habitat for Green, Hawksbill, Loggerhead and Leatherback Turtles. Juvenile Green and Hawksbill Turtles forage in the coastal waters. The sea floor in the shallow and coastal waters is covered with relatively healthy sea grass beds and coral reefs, including stands of critically endangered Elkhorn Coral. This is partly due to the relatively clean waters and high biomass of herbivorous fish, like Rainbow Parrotfish, that can be found here. The shallow waters serve as a refuge for six dolphin species: Common Bottlenose, Rough-toothed, Atlantic Spotted, Striped, Spinner and Pantropical Spotted Dolphin. The latter two even give birth here. Further offshore the water drops deeper and there can be stronger currents and more swell on the surface. Two more dolphin species (Long-beaked Common and Risso Dolphin), four whale species (False Killer, Pilot, Humpback and Minke Whale) and Whale Shark have been observed here feeding on fish.

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
A: Permanent shallow marine waters		1		Representative
B: Marine subtidal aquatic beds (Underwater vegetation)		3		Representative
C: Coral reefs		2		Representative
E: Sand, shingle or pebble shores		4		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
Fresh water > Lakes and pools >> O: Permanent freshwater lakes	Fontein	0		Unique

Other non-wetland habitat

Other non-wetland habitats within the site	Area (ha) if known
Dunes	
Limestone plateau	
Deeper marine waters	

(ECD) Habitat connectivity

In the south, the site is only some 1 km apart from the marine Ramsar site South Coast.

4.3 - Biological components

4.3.1 - Plant species

Invasive alien plant species

Phylum	Scientific name	Impacts
TRACHEOPHYTAMAGNOLIOPSIDA	<i>Carpobrotus edulis</i>	Actual (major impacts)
TRACHEOPHYTALILIOPSIDA	<i>Halophila stipulacea</i>	Potential

4.3.2 - Animal species

Other noteworthy animal species

Phylum	Scientific name	Pop. size	Period of pop. est.	% occurrence	Position in range /endemism/other
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>				
CHORDATA/AVES	<i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i>				

Invasive alien animal species

Phylum	Scientific name	Impacts
CHORDATA/REPTILIA	<i>Boa constrictor</i>	Actual (minor impacts)
CHORDATA/ACTINOPTERYGII	<i>Pterois volitans</i>	Actual (major impacts)
CHORDATA/MAMMALIA	<i>Rattus norvegicus</i>	Potential
CHORDATA/MAMMALIA	<i>Rattus rattus</i>	Potential

Optional text box to provide further information

Rats predate on tern eggs and chicks.

4.4 - Physical components

4.4.1 - Climate

Climatic region	Subregion
B: Dry climate	BWh: Subtropical desert (Low-latitude desert)

Increased levels of winter rains has promoted substantial vegetation growth, particularly the non-native Hottentot fig/Ice plant (*Carpobrotus edulis*) on the reef islets which hinders nesting areas for ground nesting tern species (Cayenne tern, Common tern, Sooty tern, Least tern, and Roseate tern).
 The increased rainfall has also constrained nesting access for those tern species nesting in, or below, the taller vegetation as the excess growth has limited 'the edge habitat' which several tern species (Brown noddy, Black noddy, Sooty tern), preferentially select. The increased rains have also been associated with winter storms that often involve higher seas/wave action that deposit boulder coral and / or change the ground nesting substrate for Bridled terns.

4.4.2 - Geomorphic setting

a) Minimum elevation above sea level (in metres)

a) Maximum elevation above sea level (in metres)

- 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

Please name the river basin or basins. If the site lies in a sub-basin, please also name the larger river basin. For a coastal/marine site, please name the sea or ocean.

Southern Caribbean Sea

4.4.3 - Soil

- Mineral
- Organic
- No available information

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

4.4.4 - Water regime

Water permanence

Presence?	
Usually permanent water present	No change

Source of water that maintains character of the site

Presence?	Predominant water source	
Marine water	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No change
Water inputs from groundwater	<input type="checkbox"/>	No change

Water destination

Presence?	
Marine	No change

Stability of water regime

Presence?	
Water levels fluctuating (including tidal)	No change
Water levels largely stable	No change

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

Several streambeds (Rooien in local language) are included in the northwest of the site. These streambeds discharge the rainwater into the sea. The small permanent fresh water stream and Fontein pond are also part of the site.

4.4.5 - Sediment regime

- Significant erosion of sediments occurs on the site
- Significant accretion or deposition of sediments occurs on the site
- Significant transportation of sediments occurs on or through the site
- Sediment regime is highly variable, either seasonally or inter-annually
- Sediment regime unknown

4.4.6 - Water pH

- Acid (pH<5.5)
- Circumneutral (pH: 5.5-7.4)
- Alkaline (pH>7.4)
- Unknown

4.4.7 - Water salinity

- Fresh (<0.5 g/l)
- Mixohaline (brackish)/Mixosaline (0.5-30 g/l)
- Euhaline/Eusaline (30-40 g/l)
- Hyperhaline/Hypersaline (>40 g/l)
- Unknown

4.4.8 - Dissolved or suspended nutrients in water

- Eutrophic
- Mesotrophic
- Oligotrophic
- Dystrophic
- Unknown

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:

The site curves around the eastern tip of the (terrestrial) island of Aruba. Further offshore, the surrounding area is the Caribbean sea.

4.5 - Ecosystem services

4.5.1 - Ecosystem services/benefits

Provisioning Services

Ecosystem service	Examples	Importance/Extent/Significance
Food for humans	Sustenance for humans (e.g., fish, molluscs, grains)	Medium

Regulating Services

Ecosystem service	Examples	Importance/Extent/Significance
Erosion protection	Soil, sediment and nutrient retention	Low
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	Medium
Spiritual and inspirational	Contemporary cultural significance, including for arts and creative inspiration, and including existence values	Medium
Scientific and educational	Long-term monitoring site	High

Supporting Services

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

Other ecosystem service(s) not included above:

Cultural, historical significance and national pride in having one of the most diverse, and abundant tern colonies in the Caribbean and globally.

Within the site: 100s

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

Where economic studies or assessments of economic valuation have been undertaken at the site, it would be helpful to provide information on where the results of such studies may be located (e.g. website links, citation of published literature):

Aruba's government has set itself a goal to move towards Sustainable Development, which in its essence means balancing out three interconnected spheres; social welfare, economic responsibility and ecological resilience. In order to make sound decisions about the management of ecosystems, it is necessary to estimate the socio-economic value that these ecosystems provide to Aruba and incorporate Natural Capital in policy-making. In February 2016, the Aruban Government therefore commissioned a TEEB study (The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity) to research the importance of nature for economic and social prosperity of Aruba. This is an important step towards the development of a Sustainable Island Economy on Aruba. It was found that for ecosystem services related to tourism, culture, fishing and carbon, the value of Aruba's natural capital exceeded US\$ 287 million per year (Polaszek et al., 2018).

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

Description if applicable

The San Nicolas Bay reef islets provide substantial national pride because of its species diversity and abundance. Recognized by broad sectors of the community for its historic value for eggs, but now as a source of global conservation pride.

- 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

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
Local authority, municipality, (sub)district, etc.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Private ownership

Category	Within the Ramsar Site	In the surrounding area
Other types of private/individual owner(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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

Public Entity of Aruba

5.1.2 - Management authority

Please list the local office / offices of any agency or organization responsible for managing the site:

FPNA - Fundacion Parke Nacional Aruba (National Park Foundation Aruba)

Provide the name and/or title of the person or people with responsibility for the wetland:

Tyson Lopez (CEO), Natasha Silva Chief Conservation Officer

Postal address: San Fuego 70
Aruba

E-mail address: info@arubanationalpark.org

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	In the surrounding area
Tourism and recreation areas	Medium impact	High impact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Transportation and service corridors

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	In the surrounding area
Shipping lanes	High impact	High impact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Human intrusions and disturbance

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	In the surrounding area
Recreational and tourism activities	Medium impact	High impact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Natural system modifications

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	In the surrounding area
Unspecified/others	High impact	High impact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Invasive and other problematic species and genes

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	In the surrounding area
Invasive non-native/ alien species	High impact	High impact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Problematic native species	Medium impact	Medium impact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Pollution

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	In the surrounding area
Industrial and military effluents	Medium impact	High impact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Garbage and solid waste	Medium impact	Medium impact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Excess heat, sound, light	Medium impact	Medium impact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Climate change and severe weather

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	In the surrounding area
Temperature extremes	Low impact	High impact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Storms and flooding	High impact	High impact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Please describe any other threats (optional):

Wave action changes island substrate. Excessive vegetative growth associated with increased levels of winter storms. Vegetation is attractive to Iguana that may swim across from the mainland, and predate on tern eggs. Increased vegetation growth enhances opportunities for increased visits from Iguana.

5.2.2 - Legal conservation status

National legal designations

Designation type	Name of area	Online information url	Overlap with Ramsar Site
Marine National Park	MPA Sero Colorado	http://www.arubanationalpark.org/main/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/PNA_Management-Plan-REV1.pdf	whole

Non-statutory designations

Designation type	Name of area	Online information url	Overlap with Ramsar Site
Important Bird Area	San Nicolas Bay Reef Islands	http://datazone.birdlife.org/site/factsheet/20854	whole
Other non-statutory designation	KBA Arikok National Park	http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/26842	partly
Other non-statutory designation	KBA San Nicolas Bay Reef Islands	http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/site/factsheet/20854	whole

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	Partially implemented

Habitat

Measures	Status
Habitat manipulation/enhancement	Proposed

Species

Measures	Status
Control of invasive alien plants	Proposed
Control of invasive alien animals	Partially implemented

Human Activities

Measures	Status
Regulation/management of wastes	Proposed
Research	Partially implemented

Other:

Periodic management of native predators, like Iguana, at tern nesting islets. Also management of Lionfish.

5.2.5 - Management planning

Is there a site-specific management plan for the site? In preparation

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:

The management authority FPNA has a visitor centre at the entrance of the Aruba National Park (also known as Arikok National Park). FPNA also manages MPA Sero Colorado, which is part of the Ramsar site. The actual Ramsar site is much larger.

URL of site-related webpage (if relevant): http://www.arubanationalpark.org/main/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/PNA_Management-Plan-REV1.pdf

5.2.6 - Planning for restoration

Is there a site-specific restoration plan? Yes, there is a plan

Further information

<https://www.wur.nl/en/research-results/research-institutes/environmental-research/show-wenr/turning-the-tide.htm>

5.2.7 - Monitoring implemented or proposed

Monitoring	Status
Animal community	Implemented
Birds	Implemented

Building on preliminary surveys and awareness efforts in the 1980s, a detailed study of tern population ecology has been conducted since 1997 by Applied Ecological Solutions Inc. in collaboration with the government of Aruba, the oil refinery owners and Caribe Alaska. A scientific assessment of the shallow water reefs has been carried out in 2019 (Vermeij 2019). Reef restoration sites are being monitored as part of the Turning the Tide project in 2023/2024.

6 - Additional material

6.1 - Additional reports and documents

6.1.1 - Bibliographical references

The Dutch Caribbean Biodiversity Database (www.dcbd.nl) provides the most complete overview of data, maps and documents on the Dutch Caribbean Islands.

References used for this RIS:

- BirdLife International, 2008. Important Bird Areas in the Caribbean: Key sites for Conservation. Cambridge, UK: BirdLife International. (BirdLife Conservation Series No. 15).
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- Polaszek, Timothy, Lacle, Francielle, Beukering, Pieter van, and Esther Wolfs, 2018. The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity, Aruba January 2018 Updated version. 129p.
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- Vermeij, Mark, Marhaver, Kristen, Estep, Andrew and Stuart Sandin, 2020. Coral Reefs Baseline Study for Aruba, 2019. Carmabi Foundation Curaçao. 48p.
- Voous, K. H. 1983. Birds of the Netherlands Antilles. Zutphen, De Walburg Pers.:
- Wetlands International. Waterbird Population Estimate 5 (WPE5). <http://wpe.wetlands.org>
- Wouters, Oriana, E., 2018. Parke Marino Aruba. Baseline survey. DNM and TNO Caribbean. 39p.

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

<no file available>

6.1.3 - Photograph(s) of the Site

Please provide at least one photograph of the site:



The San Nicolas Bay Reef islands in the back are breeding habitat for thousands of terns from 10 species. (René Henkens, 15-11-2019)



Brown Pelican at San Nicolas Bay (René Henkens, 15-11-2019)



One of the turtle nesting beaches in front and the harbour area at San Nicolas in the back. (René Henkens, 15-11-2019)



Queen conch (Strombus gigas) (Giancarlo Nunes, 17-04-2020)



Caribbean Blue Tang (Acanthurus coeruleus) and Black sea rod (Plexaura homomalla). (Giancarlo Nunes, 17-04-2020)



Green turtle (Chelonia mydas). (Giancarlo Nunes, 18-04-2020)



Cayenne tern (Thalasseus eurygnathus). (Greg Peterson, 07-03-2019)



Cayenne tern (Thalasseus eurygnathus and Cabot's tern (Thalasseus aculeatus)). (Greg Peterson, 07-03-2019)



Fresh water pond Fontein. (René Henkens, 04-03-2023)

6.1.4 - Designation letter and related data

Designation letter

<1 file(s) uploaded>

Date of Designation 2023-11-10