

# Caribbean Islands

## *National Wildlife Refuges*



photo: USFWS



photo: Scott A. Eckert ©



photo: J. Saliva



photo: USFWS

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### Refuge Facts

- The Caribbean Islands National Wildlife Refuges are a complex of nine refuges in Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and the Jamaica Passage. The nine refuges are Cabo Rojo, Culebra, Desecheo, Buck Island, Green Cay, Sandy Point, Laguna Cartagena, Navassa, and Vieques. Each unit has a unique composition of plant and animal species. Four refuges are staffed: Cabo Rojo, Culebra, Vieques and Sandy Point.
- Headquarters location: from Mayaguez, drive south on Route 2 (main highway) and exit Route 100 toward Cabo Rojo. When Route 100 ends, turn left on to Route 101 and then right on Route 301. Drive approximately three miles and look for Cabo Rojo NWR sign on the left.

### Financial Impact of Refuge

- 24-person staff (10 at Vieques NWR).
- Current budget (FY 07) \$1,997,100.

### Primary Issues

- Invasive species (monkeys, goats, rats, several species of invasive plants).
- Restoration of subtropical dry forest.
- Restoration of freshwater wetlands that provide habitat for migratory and resident waterfowl.
- Law enforcement.
- Management of habitat for migratory and resident shorebirds.
- Ongoing preparation of Comprehensive Conservation Plans.
- Ongoing clean-up of unexploded ordnance on both Vieques (U.S. Navy) and Culebra (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers).

### Management Tools

- Biological research and surveys.
- Propagation and planting of native dry forest species.
- Seasonal manipulation of water levels in both salt ponds and fresh water wetlands.
- Environmental education, interpretation and community involvement.
- Law enforcement patrols on all refuges accompanied by outreach.

### Public Use Opportunities

- Cabo Rojo Headquarters and Salt Interpretative Center (operated by Friend's Group).
- Opportunities for wildlife dependent activities at refuges open to the public (Culebra, Vieques, Cabo Rojo, Laguna Cartagena, Sandy Point, and Buck Island).
- Extensive opportunities for volunteer work, including monitoring of threatened and endangered sea turtles, wildlife surveys, outreach, and habitat restoration.