

# Sandy Point

## National Wildlife Refuge



photo: USFWS



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photo: Greg Hughes

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### Refuge Facts

- Established: 1984.
- Acres: 360.
- Location: the refuge is located at the southwest end of St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, just south of Frederiksted.
- Administered under Caribbean Island NWR complex.

### Natural History

- Sandy Point has the longest area in the Virgin Islands.
- It also hosts the largest nesting population of endangered leatherback sea turtles (largest sea turtle in the world) under United States jurisdiction.
- The peninsula that forms the refuge has stable geologic formations, but the beach is highly dynamic.
- Plant diversity is limited because of salt stress (225 species).

### Financial Impact of Refuge

- Two person staff with two seasonal employees for half a year.
- 11,000 visitors annually.

### Refuge Objectives

- To provide habitat and protection for threatened and endangered species, with particular emphasis on the leatherback sea turtle.
- To foster a sense of public commitment and understanding for sea turtles and the need for protection by providing opportunities for environmental education, interpretation, and compatible wildlife-oriented recreation.
- To support the Service's commitment to implement and carry out sea turtle recovery plans.
- To protect habitat for a natural diversity of plant and wildlife species.

### Management Tools

- Law enforcement.
- Wildlife surveys.
- Environmental education.

### Public Use Opportunities

Hiking, wildlife observation, and nature photography (the refuge is open 10:00 am-4:00 pm on Saturdays and Sundays, closed at all other times).

### Calendar of Events

**April-August:** During the leatherback nesting season, Earthwatch volunteers assist with data collection and nest relocation (from erosion zones).

### Questions and Answers

*Is the refuge a good place for birdwatching?*

Yes. Over 100 species have been recorded on the refuge, including the brown pelican, black-necked stilt, and yellow warbler.

*Are any other national wildlife refuges close to Sandy Point?*

Green Cay is an island refuge off the north coast of St. Croix; however, it is closed to the public due to fragile habitat and easily-disturbed wildlife.