

# Green Cay

## National Wildlife Refuge



photo: USFWS



photo: USFWS



photo: USFWS

### Photos (top to bottom):

*Green Cay NWR*  
*Brown Pelican*  
*St. Croix Ground Lizard*

### Refuge facts

- Acres: 14.
- Established: 1977.
- Location: This island refuge is directly off the north coast of St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI).
- Administration: Caribbean Islands National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) Complex. The headquarters of the complex is located in Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico.

### Natural History

- This refuge was established to protect the largest remaining natural population of the endangered St. Croix Ground Lizard. Its extirpation from the mainland is attributed to habitat loss and predation by the invasive Small Indian Mongoose. The lizard is one of the rarest reptiles in the world.
- The refuge has been improving habitat for protected species by planting native trees like sea grape, pink cedar, orange manjack, and buttonwood throughout the cay.
- Several bird species are known to feed, roost and nest on Green Cay. Brown pelicans and white crowned pigeons are two protected species that have been documented nesting in large numbers.
- Prehistoric conch shell middens once occurred along the shoreline demonstrating 1,000 years of human use and dating back as early as 1020 A.D., almost 500 years before Columbus.

### Refuge Objectives

- Conserve, enhance, restore and protect native wildlife populations and habitat. Conserve and protect cultural resources.
- Increase public awareness and appreciation of this refuge and its critical role in recovering the St. Croix Ground Lizard population.
- Support the Service's commitment to implement and carry out the St. Croix Ground Lizard recovery plan.

### Management Tools

- Wildlife monitoring and surveys.
- Scientific research.
- Invasive species control/eradication.
- Habitat restoration and reforestation.
- Law enforcement.

### Questions and Answers

*Is the refuge open to the public?*

No, this island refuge is closed due to fragile habitat and easily-disturbed wildlife such as the endangered St. Croix Ground Lizard.

*What is being done to help the endangered St. Croix Ground Lizard?*

In addition to invasive species removal and reforestation efforts, lizards from Green Cay were translocated to Buck Island National Monument in 2008 to establish a new population and increase the species range into a high quality habitat in a federally protected natural area. This new population is thriving.

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