BEACHES

Beaches are shoreline areas that are covered by sand, stone, coralline rubble or other materials that can come from the land or the sea. Beach sediments are moved continuously by the natural forces of wind, waves, currents, and tides. The shape, size and even the location of any beach is always changing. These same forces also sort beach sediments. High wave action "washes away" small, light particles, like sand grains. Beaches with high wave energy are made up of large, heavier materials while sandy beaches are found in calmer, protected areas.

TYPES OF BEACHES IN THE V.I.

In the V.I. beach sediments come from many sources, calcareous algal plates, coral particles (mainly produced by parrotfish grazing on dead coral), mineral grains (from erosion of quartz and feldspar rocks on land), gravel and boulders. While there is usually a mix of materials on any beach, the dominant type determines how the beach is classified.

Gravel/Rock beaches are made of minerals or rocks that erode from cliffs and soils and are transported to the shore by guts. Some gravel may be washed ashore from sea floor deposits by waves and currents. The "grain" sizes of gravel beach sediments ranges from a few millimeters to inches in diameter.

Coralline rubble or cobble is another common beach material in the V.I. Storms cause significant coral breakage and pieces of coral skeleton are carried to shore and deposited by wave, current, and tidal action.

Sandy beaches in the V.I. are made up of a mixture of several materials. Coral particles, shell and urchin fragments, and algal plates -- all composed of calcium carbonate -- give the sand its white color and fine texture. Natural forces such as wave and current action break these materials down into very fine particles. As the small grains are easily washed away, sandy beach stability depends on a constant supply of new sand from offshore or upstream sources. Man-made structures can interrupt movement of the natural sand supply and cause beaches to disappear.

MORE THAN JUST SAND!

Organisms that live in and provide materials for our sandy beaches include algae and many invertebrates are important living components of our beaches. Crabs, clams, worms, sea stars, sand dollars, urchins and many others live in and on sand both above and below the tide line. Many salt tolerant plants are found along beaches. These help to hold the sand in place and prevent beach or shoreline erosion from wind and waves.

Most sand beaches and vegetated back-beach areas in the V.I. provide sea turtles with vitally needed nesting areas. Terns, Oystercatchers, Sandpipers, and other shorebirds feed and nest there also.

WHY ARE BEACHES IMPORTANT?

Beaches are important to the organisms that live and feed on and near them. They are also important to people. Beaches:

• buffer coastal areas from storm energy. Beaches can absorb high-energy wave action due to their ability to change shape in response to storm forces.

• provide easy and safe access to the sea.

• provide us with recreation areas for picnics, parties, sunbathing, beachcombing, and for quiet contemplation and appreciation of our islands' beauty.

• enhance our tourist-based economy. Visitors are lured here by our beautiful beaches.

• act as filters for upland runoff, trapping soil particles and preventing them from clouding our coastal waters. This provides clear water for our seagrass beds and coral reefs to grow.

KEEP OUR BEACHES BEAUTIFUL

• **Always** dispose of trash properly. If there are no trash receptacles around, take your trash home or to the nearest dumpster! Garbage on the beach can be unsightly and unhealthy. Trash also attracts rats and mongooses who will eat bird and sea turtle hatchlings.

• **Never** remove sand from our beaches! It takes nature many years to make sand to replace any that is taken away.

• **Discourage** construction of man-made structures on, or near (<50') beaches. Beach sediments constantly move; anything that affects that movement can forever damage our beaches.

• **Protect** reefs and seagrasses. Without them, the sand supply for our beaches would disappear and eventually, so would our beaches.

• **Shield** all light fixtures near beaches, or use proper lights (low-pressure sodium) to prevent turtle hatchlings from wandering away from the sea to their deaths.

• **Never drive** on beaches! This will increase beach erosion and can crush turtle and bird nests. It is against the law.

• **Report violations to DPNR's Division of Environmental Enforcement. 340 773 5774 or 340 774 3320 ext. 5106**

For more information on beaches and other habitats, contact:
DPNR's Division of Fish and Wildlife

SPORT FISH RESTORATION

BEACHES:

WHERE THE LAND MEETS THE SEA

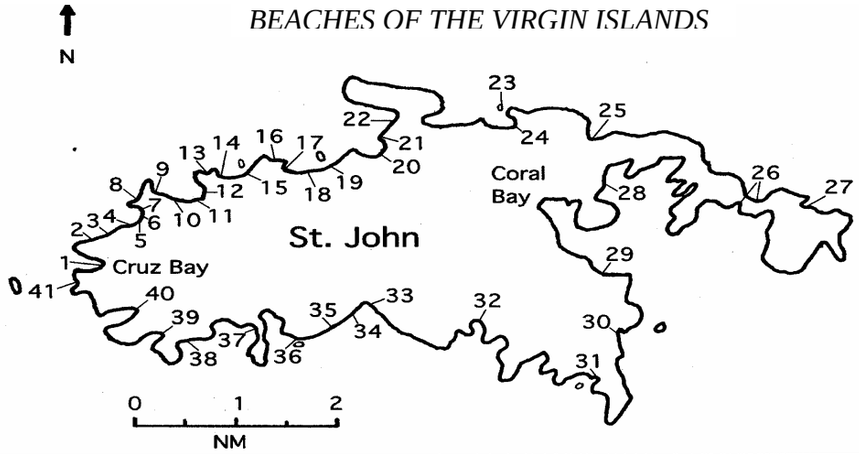
Department of Planning and Natural Resources

Division of Fish and Wildlife
6291 Estate Nazareth 101
St. Thomas, V.I. 00802
340 775 6762

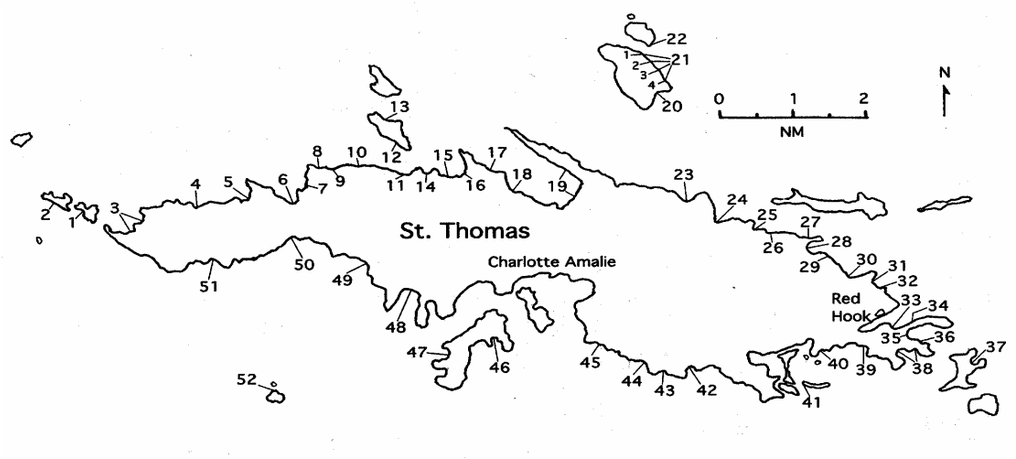
or

45 Mars Hill,
Frederiksted, St. Croix,
VI 00840
340 772 1955

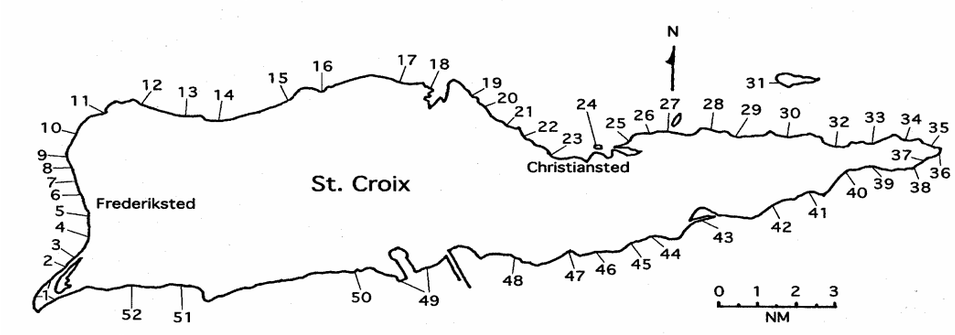
BEACHES OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS



1. Cruz Bay	8. Turtle Bay	15. Trunk Bay	22. Francis Bay	29. Johnson's Bay	36. Cocoloba Beach
2. Salomon Bay	9. Hawksnest Caneel	16. Windswept Beach	23. Waterlemon Cay	30. John's Folly	37. Dittlif Beach
3. Honeymoon Bay	10. Skinny Beach	17. Peter Bay	24. Leinster Bay	31. Saltpond Bay	38. Hart Bay
4. Little Caneel	11. Public Hawksnest	18. Little Cinnamon	25. Brown Bay	32. Little Lameshur	39. Chocolate Hole
5. Caneel Beach	12. Private Hawksnest	19. Cinnamon Bay	26. Haulover Bay	33. Reef Bay	40. Great Cruz Bay
6. Scott Beach	13. Denis Bay	20.Big Maho Bay	27. Newfound Bay	34. Genti Bay	41. FrankBay
7. Paradise Beach	14. Jumby Bay	21. Little Maho Bay	28. Zootenvaal	35. Western Reef	



1. West Cay	10. Penn Bay	19. Magen's Bay	28. Water Bay	37. "Bareass" Bay	46. Sprat Bay
2. Salt Cay	11. Neltjeberg Bay	20. Hans Lollick – Coconut Bay	29. Sugar Bay	38. Cowpet Bay	47. Honeymoon
3. Botany Bay	12. Inner Brass – Sandy Bay	21. Hans Lollick – Dry Bays 1-4	30. Lindquist Beach	39. Secret Harbor	48. Lindberg Bay
4. Bordeaux Bay	13. Inner Brass – Hard Bay	22. Little Hans Lollick	31. Pelican Beach	40. Scott Beach	49. Brewer's Bay
5. Stumpy Bay	14. Dorothea Bay	23. Mandahl Bay	32. Sapphire Beach	41. Cas Cay	50. Preseverance Bay
6. Santa Maria Bay	15. Palm Bay	24. Tutu Bay	33. Skinny Beach	42. Bolongo Bay	51. Fortuna Bay
7. Hendricks Bay	16. Hull Bay	25. Sunsi Bay	34. Vessup Bay	43. Limetree Bay	52. Saba Bay
8. Sorgenfri Bay	17. Tara Bay	26. Spring Bay	35. Bluebeards Beach	44. Frenchman's Bay	
9. Caret Bay	18. Barrett Bay	27. Coki Point	36. Turtle Cove	45. Morningstar	



1. Sandy Point	10. Butler Bay	19. Judith Fancy	28. Prune	37. Isaac Bay	46. Halfpenny
2. Stony Ground	11. Ham's Bay	20. St. Croix By The Sea	29. Coakley	38. Jack Bay	47. Manchenil
3. Second Target	12. Maroon Hole	21. Pelican Cove	30. Tague Bay	39. Grapetree Bay	48. Canegarden Bay
4. Dorst	13. Davis Bay	22. Turqouise Bay	31. Buck Island	40. Turner Hole	49. Krause Lagoon
5. First Target	14. Northstar	23. Princesse	32. Smuggler's Cove	41. Rod Bay	50. Manning Bay
6. LaGrange	15. Cane Bay	24. Protestant Cay	33. Knight Bay	42. Robin Bay	51. Campo Rico
7. Prosperity	16. Rust-Op-Twist	25. New Fort	34. Boiler Bay	43. Great Bay	52. White Lady
8. Williams	17. Gentle Winds	26. Shoy's	35. Cramer's Park	44. Fareham Bay	
9. Sprat Hall	18. Columbus Landing	27. Green Cay	36. East End Bay	45. Spring Bay	

These maps show only major sand beaches around the Virgin Islands. Cobble/gravel beaches and very small sand pocket beaches are not shown. Many beaches throughout the VI are continuous with different segments having different names, making boundaries very uncertain.

These maps do not show the location of every natural pond in the U.S.V.I.
The ponds shown are the largest and most important, for wildlife and sediment reduction.