

Terrestrial Protected Area Nomination: Eastern Lighthouse Park, Cayman Brac

The eastern lighthouse area of Cayman Brac is a very popular landscape visited by residents and vacationers, who are attracted to the magnificent views from the cliff edges out to sea, the soaring seabirds, and the expansive natural “rock garden” landscape. This section of the cliffs also includes Brown Booby nesting habitat.

This nomination was made by the landowner in consultation with the Department of Environment, and remains subject to negotiation.



Jonathan Schutte



Protected Area Nomination

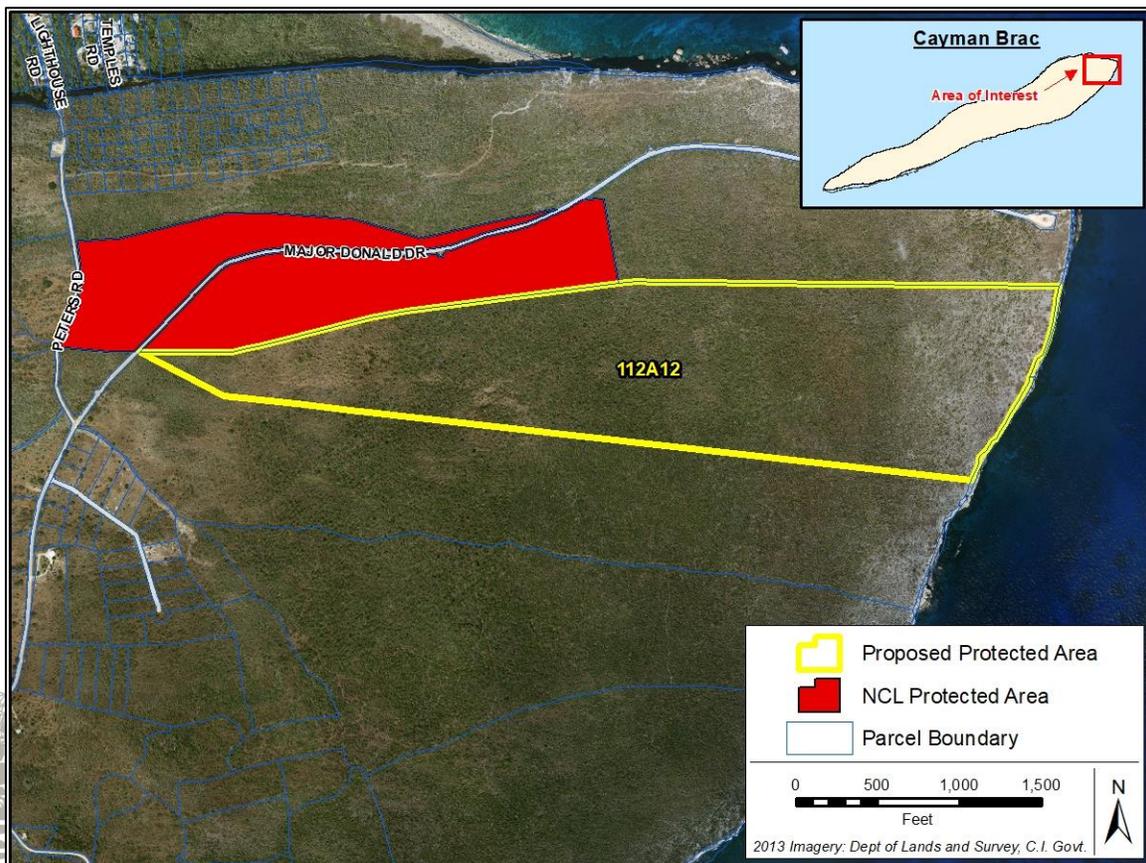
Eastern Lighthouse Park, Cayman Brac

This nomination is made under Section 9 of the National Conservation Law, 2013

1. Description of the Area

The nomination covers half of a single parcel of bluff top land at the eastern point of Cayman Brac, containing part of this area's dry shrubland and wilderness landscape:

Block	Parcel	Ownership	Part
112A	12	Private	Northern longitudinal half of parcel



2. Reasons for Nomination

Purposes and Objectives

2.1 Protection of the nominated lands will safeguard key habitats for a range of endangered, threatened, endemic and migrant species, as described below under “Species of Special Concern”. NCL Ref. 8 (1) (a)

2.2 As the highest part of elevation of Cayman Brac and the easternmost extreme of the Cayman Islands, the nominated lands are biologically and geographically unique within the Cayman Islands, and their protection will support long term maintenance of the biodiversity that depends on them. NCL Ref. 8 (1) (b)

2.3 The brown booby population is requiring relief from alien invasive predators in this location. Protection would allow for facilitation of management protocols for seabird colony regeneration and safe-guarding following invasive species control. Regeneration is highly possible as brown boobies have known site fidelity and this section of cliffs has abundant suitable nesting habitat. NCL Ref. 8 (1) (d)

2.4 Protection of the nominated lands will secure their value as a cultural icon of the island with celebrated aesthetic value, in addition to their outstanding ecological value. NCL Ref. 8 (1) (e)

2.5 Protection of the nominated lands will enable sustainable management of one of the most frequently visited areas of Cayman Brac and will continue to contribute to the enjoyment of residents, visitors, photographers and artists who appreciate the area’s natural grandeur. NCL Ref. 8 (1) (f)

Criteria for Protection

2.6 The nominated lands are almost all pristine xerophytic shrubland, with some sparsely vegetated areas very close to the edge of the cliffs. NCL Ref. 8 (2) (a)

2.7 The nominated lands support a significant diversity of life, including a succession of different vegetation zones going inland from the cliff edges, including Species of Special Concern. NCL Ref. 8 (2) (b)

2.8 The nominated lands provide a suite of specialized ecological niches that are rare or absent elsewhere in the Cayman Islands, supporting the biodiversity which occurs there. NCL Ref. 8 (2) (c)

2.9 The nominated lands include biogeographic importance for brown boobies as it includes an area used annually for nesting; a critical life stage of the species. NCL Ref. 8 (2) (d)



2.10 The presence of Species of Special Concern continues to attract scientific interest associated with them. NCL Ref. 8 (2) (e)

2.11 The cliffs, as the highest point in the Cayman Islands, have cultural significance as a landscape. NCL Ref. 8 (2) (f)

2.12 Management of the nominated lands is feasible, though it will involve some challenges. See “Management Considerations” below for further details. NCL Ref. 8 (2) (g)

2.13 The nominated lands already serve as a nature tourism attraction for Cayman Brac, and their protection will maintain this tourism asset. The spectacular view, cliffs and trails in this area attract hikers, photographers, artists, and the general public. NCL Ref. 8 (2) (h)

3. Species of Special Concern

The following table lists the species of concern known to depend in part on the nominated parcel:

Common name	Scientific name	Description	NCL Schedule 1	Habitat use
Sister Islands Rock Iguana	<i>Cyclura nubila caymanensis</i>	Reptile	Part 1. Subspecies is Critically Endangered and only found in the Sister Isles	Uses rock holes as retreats. Feeding.
	<i>Harrisia gracilis</i>	Cactus	Part 2, Critically Endangered in the Cayman Islands	Grows on exposed land close to cliff edges
	<i>Consolea millspaughii caymanensis</i>	Cactus	Part 1, endemic subspecies	Grows on exposed land near cliff edges
	<i>Banara caymanensis</i>	Shrub	Part 1, endemic species	Grows in shrubland
Brown Booby	<i>Sula leucogaster</i>	Seabird	Part 1	Nests on cliff edges
Loggerhead Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus caudifasciatus caymanensis</i>	Bird	Part 1, endemic subspecies	Nests and feeds in shrubland thickets
Bananaquit	<i>Coereba flaveola sharpei</i>	Bird	Part 1, endemic subspecies	Nests and feeds in shrubland thickets
Vitelline Warbler or “Chip Chip”	<i>Dendroica vitellina crawfordi</i>	Bird	Part 1, endemic subspecies	Nests and feeds in shrubland thickets



Conservation Problems and Special Protective Measures Required

The most immediate conservation threat is feral cat predation of nesting brown boobies.

A goat farm is now operating to the south of the nominated area. Any escape of goats forming a feral population could be extremely damaging to the area and Cayman Brac generally. Management planning must seek agreements that will prevent negative impacts on the protected area and on Part 1 protected species generally.

4. Management Considerations

Invasive species control in this area would be the main point of action for management. The maintenance and visibility of current signs asking visitors not to disturb nesting birds should be sustained to curb any unintended disruption to nesting. Management planning for this area should be deferred until a final protected area configuration is achieved, at which time wide consultation should be undertaken to reflect the high level of public interest in this area.

