Forestry Department
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

GLOBAL FOREST RESOURCES ASSESSMENT

COUNTRY REPORTS

BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

FRA2005/103
Rome, 2005

The Forest Resources Assessment Programme

Sustainably managed forests have multiple environmental and socio-economic functions important at the global, national and local scales, and play a vital part in sustainable development. Reliable and up-to-date information on the state of forest resources - not only on area and area change, but also on such variables as growing stock, wood and non-wood products, carbon, protected areas, use of forests for recreation and other services, biological diversity and forests' contribution to national economies - is crucial to support decision-making for policies and programmes in forestry and sustainable development at all levels.

FAO, at the request of its member countries, regularly monitors the world's forests and their management and uses through the Forest Resources Assessment Programme. This country report forms part of the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2005 (FRA 2005), which is the most comprehensive assessment to date. More than 800 people have been involved, including 172 national correspondents and their colleagues, an Advisory Group, international experts, FAO staff, consultants and volunteers. Information has been collated from 229 countries and territories for three points in time: 1990, 2000 and 2005.

The reporting framework for FRA 2005 is based on the thematic elements of sustainable forest management acknowledged in intergovernmental forest-related fora and includes more than 40 variables related to the extent, condition, uses and values of forest resources. More information on the FRA 2005 process and the results - including all the country reports - is available on the FRA 2005 Web site (www.fao.org/forestry/fra2005).

The Global Forest Resources Assessment process is coordinated by the Forestry Department at FAO headquarters in Rome. The contact person for matters related to FRA 2005 is:

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Report preparation and contact persons

No report has been received.

This report is the result of a desk study prepared by the FRA 2005 secretariat in Rome, which summarizes existing available information.

This country report comprises only the national reporting table T1 - Extent of forest and other wooded land.

Contents

1 Table T1 – Extent of Forest and Other wooded land

1.1 FRA 2005 Categories and definitions

Category	Definition
Forest	Land spanning more than 0.5 hectares with trees higher than 5 meters and a canopy cover of more than 10 percent, or trees able to reach these thresholds *in situ*. It does not include land that is predominantly under agricultural or urban land use.
Other wooded land	Land not classified as "Forest", spanning more than 0.5 hectares; with trees higher than 5 meters and a canopy cover of 5-10 percent, or trees able to reach these thresholds *in situ*; or with a combined cover of shrubs, bushes and trees above 10 percent. It does not include land that is predominantly under agricultural or urban land use.
Other land	All land that is not classified as "Forest" or "Other wooded land".
Other land with tree cover (Subordinated to "Other land")	Land classified as "Other land", spanning more than 0.5 hectares with a canopy cover of more than 10 percent of trees able to reach a height of 5 meters at maturity.
Inland water bodies	Inland water bodies generally include major rivers, lakes and water reservoirs.

1.2 National data sources

Reference to sources of information	Quality (H/M/L)	Variable(s)	Year(s)	Additional comments
FAOSTAT	H	Total land area	2005	Secondary source
Caribbean Conservation Association 1980**.** *Preliminary Data areas- British Virgin Islands: Toortula, Virgin Gorda & Anegada*. Caribbean Conservation Association. University of Michigan, USA.	M	Forest area	1980	Secondary source. Cited in: **Deutsche Forstinventur-service GmbH/Caribbean Development Bank.** 1983. *Regional Forestry Sector Study, Country Report- British Virgin Islands.* Deutsche Forstinventur-service GmbH/Caribbean Development Bank, Barbados
Blok-Meevwig, J. 1990. *Mangrove system of the British Virgin Islands: Resource Mapping and Assignment to protection Categories.* Conservation & Fisheries Department, Ministry of Natural Resources & Labour, British Virgin Islands, Technical Report No. 5; 45pp.	M	Area of Mangrove	1990	Cited in: **Bacon P.R.** 1993. Mangroves in the Lesser Antilles, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. In: Lacerda, L.D. 1993. *Conservation and sustainable utilization of mangrove forests in Latin America and Africa regions. Vol. 2 Part I- Latin America.* p. 155-210. Mangrove Ecosystems technical reports ITTO/ISME Project PD114/90 (F). Okinawa, Japan. 272 pp.
British Virgin Islands Government. 2001 *Use of the coastal zones and seabeds*	H		2001	Primary source.

1.3 Classification and Definitions

National Class	Definition
Cactus/scrub	A dry evergreen scrub with cacti is typical of steep slopes, cliffs, and headlands overlooking the sea. Typically it consists of a low, open growth of small-leaved, prickly bushes, bare soil exposed between them, scattered with tall columnar cacti, agaves, and prickly pears. Nopalea dejecta, an arborescent species, is common at West End, Tortola, and Opuntia dillenii is general.
Dry woodland	The original deciduous seasonal forest of these islands in its original state probably consisted of a two-storied forest, but all the original forests of this type have been very thoroughly cut over and reduced to a much smaller and degraded bush. When land is abandoned by the shifting cultivator and reverts to bush, an invasive thicket fills up between these standard trees. At a later stage, young trees and shrubs proper to the deciduous seasonal forest join the succession, but the selective cutting of the peasantry has gradually favoured an abnormal preponderance of the worthless Pisonia and Bursera. Buceras bucida (gigri) is now rare but was probably once common along low ground
Mangroves	There are some small swamps of stunted mangrove in various places around the coasts.
Moist Forest	Probably found in the moister places of the woodland: Andira inermis (angelin) and Hura crepitans (sandbox) are present.
Rain Forest	An evergreen forest is found but reduced and xerophytic, not a true rain forest. It is found mainly on Sage Mountain, Tortola. Xerophytic Rain Forest is a low forest only 12-18 m high. Occasional trees reach considerable thicknesses, but for most part the trees are small and pole sized. The most abundant tree species are laticiferous or contain essential oils: they are evergreen with hard, shiny, thickly cutinized leaves, simple, and mesophyllous in size. Many of them have a particular type of bark, peeling off in sheets or flakes. The forest is dense and ground vegetation is sparse. Lianes and epiphytes are not much in evidence. Manilkara bidentata is clearly the dominant tree.

1.4 Original data

1980

	Area (ha)		
National Classes	**Tortola Island**	**Virgin Gorda Island**	**Anegada Island**
Rain Forest	57		
Moist Forest	378		
Dry woodland	851	1482	315
Cactus Scrub	567	865	252
Mangroves	37	123	63
TOTAL	**1890**	**2470**	**630**

1990
Mangroves = 627 ha

2001
Mangroves = 587 ha

1.4.1 Analysis and processing of national data

The 1980 data refers only to the three biggest islands: Tortola, Virgin Gorda and Anegada.

The 1990 data on mangroves refers to seven islands: Tortola, Virgin Gorda, Anegada, Great Camanoe, Jost van Dyke, Sandy Cay and Beef Island.

For the 2001 estimate of mangroves, it has been assumed that the islands covered were the same as for the1990 estimate.

The mangrove estimates for 1990, 2000 and 2005 reporting years were estimated by linear regression using the available data for 1990 and 2001. Due to lack of other information the estimate of forest area as reported in 1980-less the area of mangroves (equaling 3083 ha) was added to the mangrove estimate for each reporting year to obtain the total forest area.

1.4.2 Reclassification into FRA 2005 classes

1980

National Classes	FRA Classification
Rain Forest	100% Forest
Moist Forest	100% Forest
Dry woodland	100% Forest
Cactus Scrub	100% Other Wooded Land
Mangroves	100% Forest

1990
Mangroves = 100% Forest

2001
Mangroves = 100% Forest

1.5 Data for National reporting table T1

FRA 2005 Categories	Area (1000 hectares)		
	1990	2000	Forecast 2005
Forest	3.71	3.67	3.66
Other wooded land	1.68	1.68	1.68
Other land	9.61	9.65	9.66
...of which with tree cover	NDA	NDA	NDA
Inland water bodies	0	0	0
TOTAL	**15**	**15**	**15**

1.6 Comments

The original data for this table are from 1980 and cover only three islands, except for the estimates of mangroves which cover six islands and date from 1990 and 2001.