

TRAVEL

Visit Anguilla And Help Save Some Of The Island's Amazing Wildlife

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I write about travel.

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From birdwatching and hydroponic farms to saving turtles, conservation and eco-tourism aren't just ... [+] GETTY

The stunning island of Anguilla is not only home to many of the most beautiful beaches in the Caribbean; it also has a passion for preserving its wildlife. From birdwatching and hydroponic farms to saving turtles, conservation and eco-tourism aren't just buzzwords on Anguilla — they're a way of life. The island boasts more than 20 wetlands and five designated marine parks. Learn about just a few of the creatures calling Anguilla home and discover how you can use your next vacation to contribute to the conservation of the island's most special species.

Anguilla is a haven for three main species of turtles; the green, the leatherback and the hawksbill turtles. Sea turtles spend the majority of their lives in the ocean. Turtles are world travellers, migrating thousands of kilometres between their feeding and breeding grounds.



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Female turtles come ashore during the warmest months of the year to lay their eggs. The turtles nest mostly on sandy beaches, but in some cases in the brush or even on the shoulders of roads! Nesting along the side of the road is dangerous, and we know few survive. Divers and snorkellers will see tons of young green and hawksbill turtles as the island is a significant foraging site. They come to Anguilla to feed on the reefs and seagrass beds. As adults, these turtles will return to the nesting beaches, starting the circle of life all over again!

Learn about Anguilla's nesting sea turtles by taking part in a sea turtle night patrol. During the nights of September and October, volunteers are out to ensure turtles safely come ashore to nest, preferably on one of Anguilla's stunning 33 beaches! If the turtles are undisturbed, the females carefully dig a nest up to 1 metre

deep in the sand at the back of the beach and lay about 100 soft, white eggs. They can nest several times in a season, laying hundreds of eggs.

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Then, the eggs begin to hatch about 6 to 10 weeks later. As the hatchlings emerge from their nest, the group makes a mad dash for the ocean! Many of Anguilla's turtles prefer the quiet, undisturbed beaches of the outlying cays and islands. Guests are asked to report any nests found and leave them undisturbed.



Though these 'Turtle doves' are not accompanied by a partridge in a pear tree, the Zenaida Aurita is ... [+] GETTY

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Though these 'Turtle doves' are not accompanied by a partridge in a pear tree, the *Zenaida Aurita* is Anguilla's national bird and can be found foraging for seeds everywhere on the island.

Anguilla's offshore cays are a popular spot for nesting seabirds and act as a critical habitat for both resident and migratory species as they make their way through the Atlantic Flyway. Prickly Pear Cay, located just under 10 kilometres from the mainland, has been recognized by BirdLife International as an Important Bird Area due to the cays breeding seabirds. Prickly Pear Cay is also home to some aquatic adventures, with guests having the chance to snorkel and explore some of its crystal blue waters filled with schooling goatfish, nurse sharks, angelfish and more!

Scrub Island, a privately owned small island near the most eastern tip of Anguilla, has also been identified by BirdLife International as an Important Bird Area due to the cay's nesting seabirds. Although Scrub Island is without electricity and plumbing, it is the perfect retreat for those looking to unplug themselves from the world. There are tons of adventures to enjoy such as bird watching, snorkelling, exploring an abandoned airfield and even spotting a whale or two at the western part of the island!





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Get Involved

The Anguilla National Trust, founded in 1989, was built with conservation in mind to protect the island's natural resources and wildlife for future generations. Conducting vital research regarding the island's species and habitats, the ANT works towards increasing awareness of Anguilla's beautiful yet fragile ecosystem. The ANT's vision is to be a respected environmental centre, acting as a model for exceptional stewardship, management and conservation. Discover how to get involved with [this wonderful organization!](#)

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