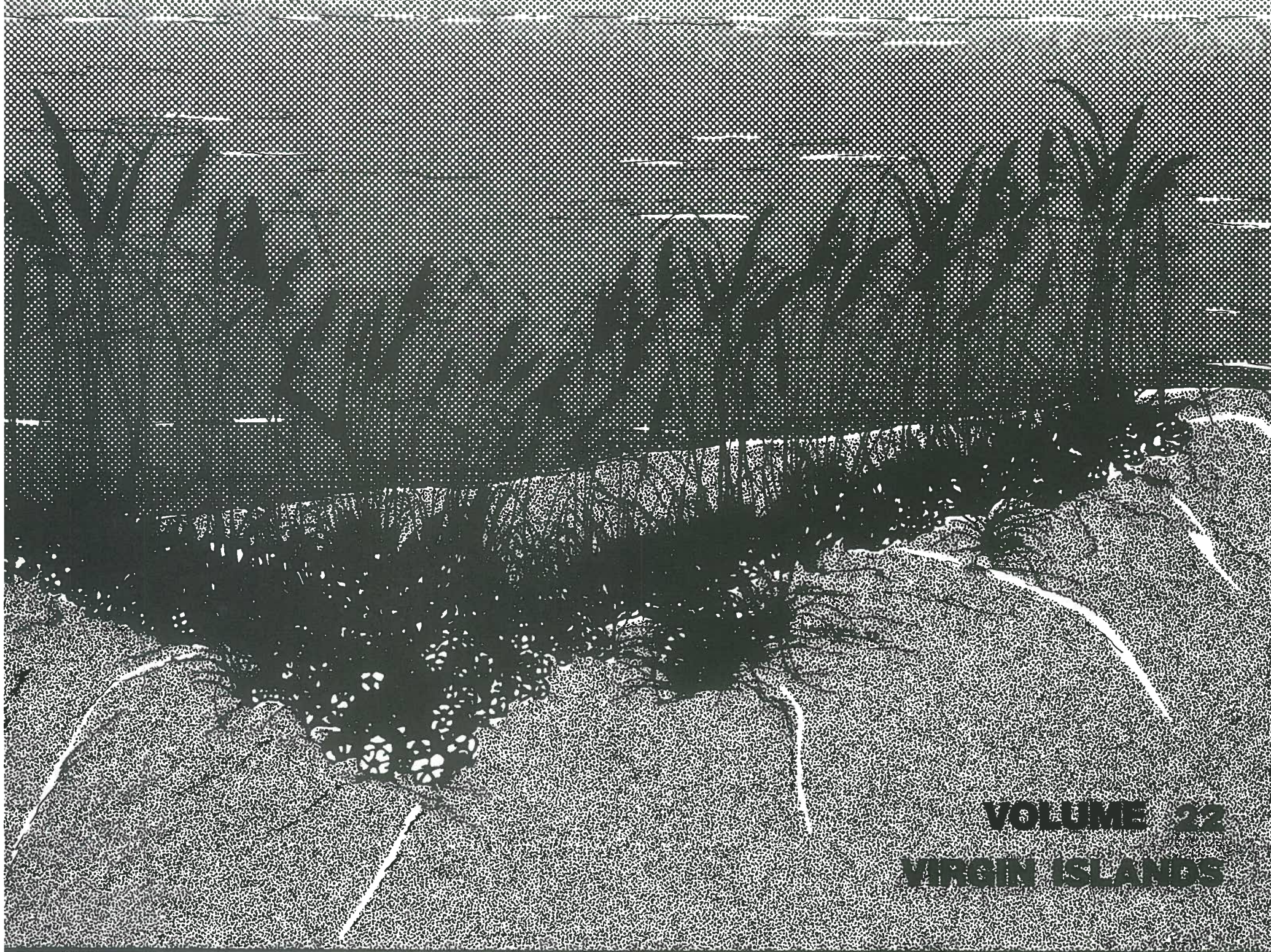


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REPORT TO CONGRESS: COASTAL BARRIER RESOURCES SYSTEM

Proposed Recommendations for Additions to or Deletions
from the Coastal Barrier Resources System



**VOLUME 22
VIRGIN ISLANDS**



REPORT TO CONGRESS: COASTAL BARRIER RESOURCES SYSTEM

VOLUME 22

**Proposed Recommendations for Additions to or Deletions from
the Coastal Barrier Resources System**

VIRGIN ISLANDS

Mapped, edited, and published by the Coastal Barriers Study Group

**United States Department of the Interior
William P. Horn, Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks**

February 1987

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VIRGIN ISLANDS

INTRODUCTION

The Coastal Barrier Resources Act (CBRA) of 1982 (Public Law 97-348) established the Coastal Barrier Resources System (CBRS), a system of undeveloped coastal barriers along the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coasts. This atlas of coastal barriers in the U.S. Virgin Islands has been prepared in accordance with Section 10 of CBRA (16 U.S.C. 3509), which states:

Sec. 10. Reports to Congress.

(a) In General.--Before the close of the 3-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall prepare and submit to the Committees a report regarding the System.

(b) Consultation in Preparing Report.--The Secretary shall prepare the report required under subsection (a) in consultation with the Governors of the States in which System units are located and with the coastal zone management agencies of the States in which System units are located and after providing opportunity for, and considering, public comment.

(c) Report Content.--The report required under subsection (a) shall contain--

(1) recommendations for the conservation of fish, wildlife, and other natural resources of the System based on an evaluation and comparison of all management alternatives, and combinations thereof, such as State and local actions (including management plans approved under the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1451 et seq.)), Federal actions (including acquisition for administration as part of the National Wildlife Refuge System), and initiatives by private organizations and individuals;

(2) recommendations for additions to, or deletions from, the Coastal Barrier Resources System, and for modifications to the boundaries of System units;

(3) a summary of the comments received from the Governors of the States, State coastal zone management agencies, other government officials, and the public regarding the System; and

(4) an analysis of the effects, if any, that general revenue sharing grants made under section 102 of the State and Local Fiscal Assistance Amendments of 1972 (31 U.S.C. 1221) have had on undeveloped coastal barriers.

This atlas of the U.S. Virgin Islands includes delineations of proposed recommendations for additions to the CBRS that will be provided to Congress by the Department of the Interior following public review and comment. No units were designated in the Virgin Islands when CBRA was enacted in 1982.

Under the direction of the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, this report has been prepared by the Coastal Barriers Study Group, a task force of professionals representing the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, and other Departmental offices.

BACKGROUND

The U.S. Virgin Islands lie about 40 to 65 miles east and southeast of Puerto Rico. The Territory includes the islands of St. Croix, St. Thomas, and St. John, and about 90 smaller islands. The combined area is about 133 square miles. To the north of the islands is the Atlantic Ocean, and to the south, the Caribbean Sea.

Coastal ecosystems in the Virgin Islands include mangroves, coral reefs, beaches, seagrass beds, and salt ponds. Mangroves are very productive ecosystems that support a high diversity of fish, birds, and other wildlife. They are vital feeding, nesting, and roosting areas for several species of birds and important nurseries for fish and shellfish species of commercial importance.

Seagrass beds and coral reefs are other highly productive ecosystems that are extensive in the shallow waters around these islands. Several species of commercially important fishes shelter in coral reefs during the day and feed in grass beds at night. Coral reefs have economic value for recreation and tourism, and provide vital protection for harbors and shorelines because they dissipate wave energies and reduce erosion. Harvestable coral reef resources include fish, spiny lobsters, octopuses, and conchs. The breakdown of corals produces sand for beaches. Reefs and seagrass beds buffer wave energies and promote beach stability.

Industrialization and tourism have placed enormous demands on the coastal resources of the U.S. Virgin Islands. Their population has tripled in the last three decades to about 100,000 people. The pressures on the shorelines are evident as marinas, hotels, and condominiums continue to be built. Dredging of bays, mining of beach sand, overfishing, and oil spills have caused other adverse impacts to coastal resources in these islands.

COASTAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

In 1917, Denmark ceded the Virgin Islands to the United States along with all Danish governmental interests in submerged lands (lands below the mean high tide line). Under the Organic Act of 1936 and Revised Organic Act of 1954, which provide the framework for the operation of the Virgin Islands government, the Territorial government has jurisdiction over Federal lands, including submerged and tidelands, but no authority to sell these lands.

Territorial control over these lands was expanded with the Territorial Submerged Lands Act of 1974. Together these Acts authorized the Secretary of the Interior to transfer Federal interests in submerged and other lands to the Virgin Islands upon the Governor's request and effectively conveyed all Federal right, title, and interest to Territorial submerged lands with certain restrictions.

The Department of Conservation and Cultural Affairs (DCCA) is the central Territorial agency for administration of coastal zone management. Other principal entities include the Governor, Legislature, Planning Office, Department of Public Works, and the Board of Land Use Appeals. The Coastal Zone Management Act of 1978 became effective in 1979. The Coastal Zone Management Program was prepared by the Virgin Islands Planning Office for the management of the coastal zone of the Virgin Islands and submitted by the Governor to the U.S. Department of Commerce, pursuant to the Federal Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972.

The Coastal Land and Water Use Plan is the comprehensive plan for the development of the first tier of the coastal zone. It is to serve as a guideline for making decisions related to development within this tier. The first tier is defined as the area extending from the outer limit of the territorial sea (including offshore islands) to distances inland as indicated on a set of maps. The second tier includes interior portions of the three major islands, including all areas not in the first tier.

The Coastal Zone Management Act created a Coastal Zone Management Commission within DCCA. There are three committees within the Commission, one for each major island. Each committee has authority over the issuance of coastal zone permits. A Division of Coastal Zone Management was also created within DCCA to assist the Commission in administration and enforcement of the Act. The Act defines major and minor coastal permits.

After completion of a major permit application, the Commissioner submits a copy to relevant public agencies for review and schedules a public hearing. Within 30 days of the hearing, the appropriate committee acts upon the application. Appeals of committee decisions can be filed with the Board of Land Use Appeals. The Board of Land Use Appeals must hold a public hearing on an appeal and then render a decision. Minor permit applications are acted upon by the Commissioner.

Water Pollution Control Act, Act 1979 (1967). This Act provides the Territorial authority to implement the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, establishing standards for water quality and pollutant discharge into Virgin Islands waters. The term "pollutant" refers to a variety of materials including rock, sand, and dredged spoils. The Act as amended only regulates point sources of pollution. DCCA administers the Act through a permit system which requires a public hearing and determination by the Commissioner that all water quality standards are met. The Commissioner is to cooperate with the Virgin Islands Planning Board on zoning of waters.

Under the Federal Act, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, with the Environmental Protection Agency, has regulatory authority over discharge of pollutants into navigable waters. Permits cannot be issued unless specified standards are met. The Secretary of the Army, acting through the Chief of the Corps of Engineers, issues permits for the discharge of dredged or fill material.

All development in tidelands, coastal wetlands, swamps, and lagoons are subject to review. Consequently, the Corps of Engineers has independent review and determination over dredging and filling of all U.S. Virgin Islands coastal waters.

Open Shorelines Act, Act 3063 (1971). This Act constituted a critical element for implementation of the Coastal Zone Management Program by establishing a legal basis for public use of shorelines. Shorelines are defined as the area between the low tide to a line of natural vegetation, a natural barrier, or a distance of 50 feet, whichever is shortest. The Act is intended to regulate extraction of natural products, including sand and marine life (such as coral and molluscs), with the exception of fish and wildlife. The DCCA Commissioner administers a permit program for the taking of all specified resources.

Earth Change Law, Act 2967 (1971). This Act created an environmental protection program for the Virgin Islands to control soil erosion and restrict environmentally damaging land alterations within entire watersheds. Earth Change Permits are issued after approval by the Virgin Islands Water and Soil Conservation District or DCCA. The Commissioner of Public Works enforces the Act.

Trustlands, Occupancy and Alteration Control Act, Act 3667 (1975). Along with the Open Shorelines Act and the Earth Change Act, this Act provides Territorial authority over the development and alteration of the Virgin Islands coastal zone, including dredging and mining of sand and coral from the shoreline.

The DCCA Commissioner administers the permit system. An environmental assessment of the site or proposed development is required, and the Governor, Legislature, and Corps of Engineers must approve the work. A permit from the Corps of Engineers is required after the applicant receives a permit from the Territorial government.

Oil Spill Prevention and Pollution Control Act and Regulations, Act 3538 (1974). The objectives of the Act include (1) preservation of Virgin Islands waters and shorelines for recreation and (2) protection of environmental resources. The Act established a program to regulate the production and transport of pollutants as well as contingency plans to control the effects of pollution discharges and the cleanup of discharges. All discharges are to be reported to the U.S. Coast Guard and DCCA. The Governor has emergency powers under this Act.

Zoning Law, Act 3284 (1972). This law is an important element in the system of land use and environmental regulations in the Virgin Islands. It established 17 separate zoning districts, including agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial, waterfront, and public use classifications. Passed prior to the Coastal Zone Act, it fails to specify adequate criteria for development of the coastal zone. The Virgin Island Planning Office submits reviews of applications to the zoning administrator, who is the Commissioner of DCCA.

Any project involving potential impacts on coastal waters must be reviewed by several Federal agencies. All wetlands in the Virgin Islands lie in Tier One of the Coastal Zone. Accordingly, permits must be obtained from the Corps of Engineers. Projects must be reported to the National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, as well as to the Coastal Zone Management division of the Division of Conservation and Cultural Affairs.

The Corps of Engineers and the Department of Conservation and Cultural Affairs have developed a "Joint Permit Applications" form for projects requiring both agencies to issue permits for work in U.S. waters and for fills affecting wetlands. If a given proposal potentially endangers or threatens a protected species, notification must be made to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Marine Fisheries Service, and the Virgin Islands Division of Fish and Wildlife. The local Division of Fish and Wildlife, in the Department of Conservation and Cultural Affairs, serves as a representative of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. These agencies work together under a Memorandum of Agreement for Endangered Species.

At present, two areas in the Virgin Islands are classified as National Wildlife Refuges:

1. Sandy Point, St. Croix. This beach area is used by leatherback turtles for breeding and was recently designated a National Wildlife Refuge to provide protection for this endangered species.
2. Green Cay, St. Croix. This small island northeast of Christiansted is one of the last remaining habitats for the

endangered lizard, Ameiva polops.

These areas are part of the Caribbean Islands National Wildlife Refuge System.

The National Park Service has concurrent jurisdiction with the Virgin Islands government on federally owned land areas of the Virgin Islands National Park on St. John. Offshore water areas within the park are under the jurisdiction of the Park Service, Corps of Engineers, Virgin Islands government, and U.S. Coast Guard. Acts of the Virgin Islands government and the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations apply to lands and waters of the National Park. The Virgin Islands government has jurisdiction over the enforcement of traffic regulations on roads in the park. It retains rights-of-way for all dedicated roads, as defined by an official map that includes tracks now reverted to trails or completely overgrown.

The Territorial government exerts control over lands and activities on St. John through public health and safety laws. It also has legislation providing for the protection of water resources, wildlife, and the environment. The National Park Service cooperates with the Territorial government in these matters.

Zoning regulations of the Territorial government were approved August 8, 1972. They permit residential development on inholdings within the park.

EXISTING CBRS UNITS

No Coastal Barrier Resources System units were designated in the U.S. Virgin Islands when CBRA was enacted in 1982.

PROPOSED ADDITIONS

This section identifies proposed recommendations for additions to the Coastal Barrier Resources System. The Secretary of the Interior, as directed by Section 10 of the Coastal Barrier Resources Act, will make his final recommendations to the Congress after a 90-day public comment period. These proposed recommendations have been developed in response to public, State and Federal agency, and Congressional comments on the Coastal Barrier Draft Inventory developed by the Study Group. The inventory maps were available for public comment between March 4, 1985, and September 30, 1985. The process and criteria used in the inventory were described on March 4, 1985, in the Federal Register (Vol. 50, No. 42).

The Territorial Government did not respond to requests for comment on the draft inventory, nor did any other individual or organization offer an opinion about the Virgin Islands barriers.

The Department of the Interior proposes to recommend that all undeveloped, unprotected coastal barriers and associated aquatic habitat identified in the inventory be added to the CBRS. A table presenting the Department's current position on each unit identified in the inventory follows this discussion.

Public comment on these proposed recommendations is solicited.

Comments should be directed to:

The Coastal Barriers Study Group
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, DC 20013-7127.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COASTAL BARRIERS
IN THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

Unit ID Code ^a	Unit Name ^b	Municipality	Shoreline Length (miles)	Area (acres)	Proposed Recommendation ^c
VI-01	Rust Up Twist	St. Croix	0.26	31	Add to CBRS; no change from inventory
VI-02	Altona Lagoon	St. Croix	1.21	230	Add to CBRS; no change from inventory
VI-03	South Gate Pond	St. Croix	0.40	47	Add to CBRS, except Green Cay, Federally protected (FWS)
VI-04	Coakley Bay	St. Croix	0.42	49	Add to CBRS; no change from inventory
VI-05	Robin Bay	St. Croix	0.42	18	Add to CBRS; no change from inventory
VI-06	Great Pond	St. Croix	0.79	160	Add to CBRS; no change from inventory
VI-07	Krause Lagoon	St. Croix	—	—	Developed; no further consideration
VI-08	Long Point	St. Croix	0.53	41	Add to CBRS; no change from inventory
VI-09	Sandy Point	St. Croix	—	—	Federally protected (FWS); no further consideration
VI-10	Cinnamon Bay	St. Thomas and St. John	—	—	Federally protected (NPS); no further consideration
VI-11	Maho Bay	St. Thomas and St. John	—	—	Federally protected (NPS); no further consideration
VI-12	Mary Point	St. Thomas and St. John	—	—	Federally protected (NPS); no further consideration
VI-13	Annaberg Point	St. Thomas and St. John	—	—	Federally protected (NPS); no further consideration
VI-14	Newfound Bay	St. Thomas and St. John	0.39	31	Pond Bay added to inventory delineation; add to CBRS
VI-15	Lagoon Point	St. Thomas and St. John	0.26	9	Add to CBRS; no change from inventory
VI-16	Drunk Bay	St. Thomas and St. John	—	—	Federally protected (NPS); no further consideration
VI-17	Kiddel Bay	St. Thomas and St. John	—	—	Less than 0.25-mile shoreline; no further consideration

(continued)

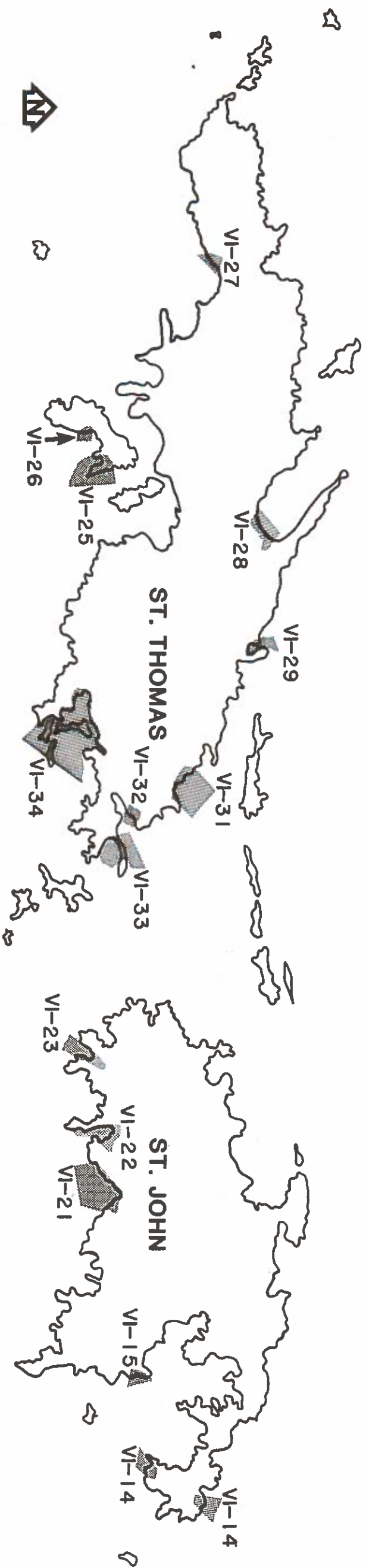
SUMMARY OF PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COASTAL BARRIERS
IN THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS (CONCLUDED)

Unit ID Code ^a	Unit Name ^b	Municipality	Shoreline Length (miles)	Area (acres)	Proposed Recommendation ^c
VI-18	Grootpan Bay	St. Thomas and St. John	—	—	Less than 0.25-mile shoreline; no further consideration
VI-19	Great Lameshur Bay	St. Thomas and St. John	—	—	Federally protected (NPS); no further consideration
VI-20	Europa Bay	St. Thomas and St. John	—	—	Federally protected (NPS); no further consideration
VI-21	Reef Bay	St. Thomas and St. John	1.06	65	Add to CBRS; no change from inventory
VI-22	Fish Bay	St. Thomas and St. John	0.37	25	Delete federally protected (NPS) area; add balance to CBRS
VI-23	Chocolate Hole	St. Thomas and St. John	0.28	24	Add to CBRS; no change from inventory
VI-24	Great Cruz Bay	St. Thomas and St. John	—	—	Developed; no further consideration
VI-25	Sprat Point	St. Thomas and St. John	0.40	22	Add to CBRS; no change from inventory
VI-26	Limestone Bay	St. Thomas and St. John	0.25	8	Add to CBRS; no change from inventory
VI-27	Perseverance Bay	St. Thomas and St. John	0.66	40	Add to CBRS; no change from inventory
VI-28	Enighed	St. Thomas and St. John	0.51	44	Add to CBRS; no change from inventory
VI-29	Mandal Bay	St. Thomas and St. John	0.35	20	Add to CBRS; no change from inventory
VI-30	Water Bay	St. Thomas and St. John	—	—	Developed; no further consideration
VI-31	Smith Bay	St. Thomas and St. John	0.73	50	Add to CBRS; no change from inventory
VI-32	Vessup Bay	St. Thomas and St. John	0.29	20	Add to CBRS; no change from inventory
VI-33	Great Bay	St. Thomas and St. John	0.47	32	Add to CBRS; no change from inventory
VI-34	Jersey Bay	St. Thomas and St. John	2.49	137	Add to CBRS; no change from inventory
VI-35	Buck Island	St. Thomas and St. John	—	—	Federally protected (FWS); no further consideration
Total - CBRS as Recommended			12.54	1,103	

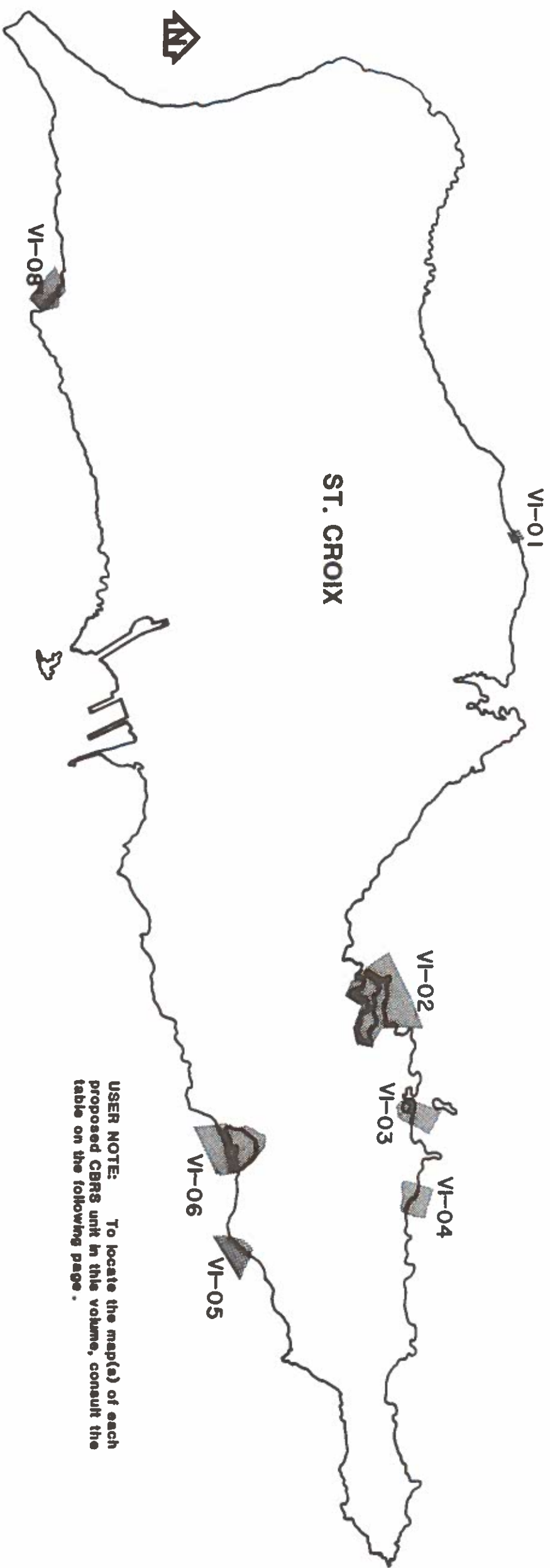
^aUNIT ID CODE - Territory's initials plus a number identify each separate proposed unit.

^bUNIT NAME - A provisional name based on a prominent local feature.

^cPROPOSED RECOMMENDATION - A brief explanation of the differences between the 1985 inventory and the recommendations proposed in this revised inventory. For more detailed explanations, please contact the Study Group. Abbreviations: FWS = Fish and Wildlife Service, NPS = National Park Service, CBRS = Coastal Barrier Resources System.



INDEX TO PROPOSED CBRs UNITS IN THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS



USER NOTE: To locate the map(s) of each proposed CBRs unit in this volume, consult the table on the following page.

PROPOSED CBRS UNITS AND THEIR LOCATION IN THIS VOLUME

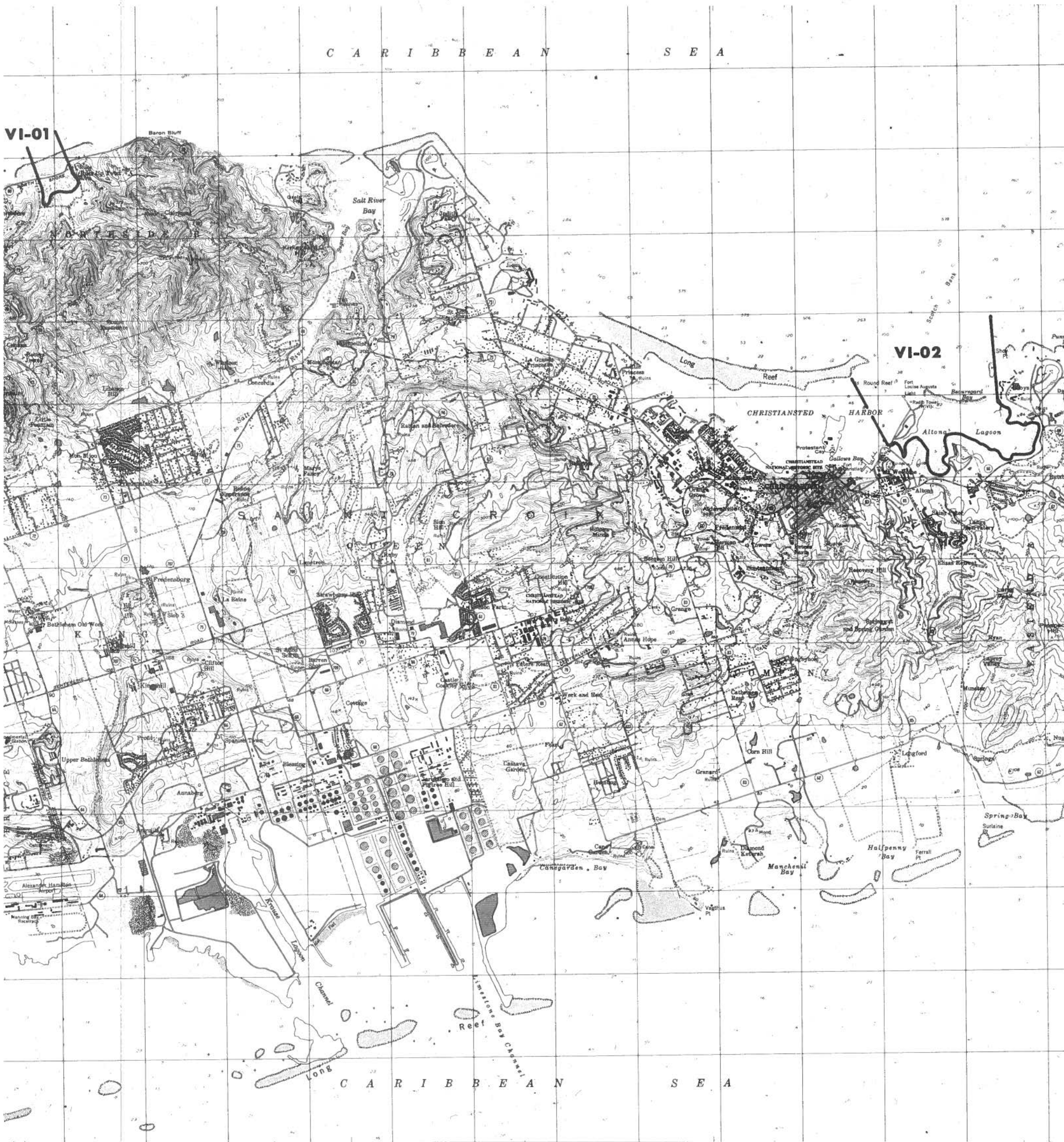
Unit ID Code	Unit Name	USGS Topographic Map	Page
VI-01	Rust Up Twist	Christiansted	9
VI-02	Altona Lagoon	Christiansted	9
VI-03	South Gate Pond	East Point	10
VI-04	Coakley Bay	East Point	10
VI-05	Robin Bay	East Point	10
VI-06	Great Pond	East Point	10
VI-08	Long Point	Frederiksted	11
VI-14	Newfound Bay	Eastern St. John	12
VI-15	Lagoon Point	Western St. John	13
VI-21	Reef Bay	Western St. John	13
VI-22	Fish Bay	Western St. John	13
VI-23	Chocolate Hole	Western St. John	13
VI-25	Sprat Point	Central St. Thomas	14
VI-26	Limestone Bay	Central St. Thomas	14
VI-27	Perseverance Bay	Central St. Thomas	14
VI-28	Enighed	Central St. Thomas	14
VI-29	Mandal Bay	Eastern St. Thomas	15
VI-31	Smith Bay	Eastern St. Thomas	15
VI-32	Vessup Bay	Eastern St. Thomas	15
VI-33	Great Bay	Eastern St. Thomas	15
VI-34	Jersey Bay	Eastern St. Thomas	15

MAP KEY

—————
EXCLUDED

Proposed unit boundary

Area excluded from a proposed CBRS
unit because it is developed or it
is otherwise protected



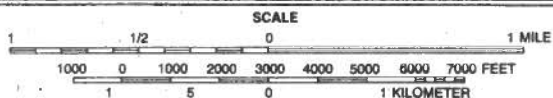
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
DONALD P. MODEL, SECRETARY



9

Report to Congress on the Coastal Barrier Resources System

QUADRANGLE
CHRISTIANSTED
VIRGIN ISLANDS



— Solid lines depict proposed recommendations for additions or deletions to the Coastal Barrier Resources System. (Section 10 of P.L. 97 - 348.)
--- Dash lines depict approximate boundaries of existing units in the Coastal Barrier Resources System, for reference purposes only.

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by the Coastal Barriers Study Group
U.S. Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

Base Map is the U.S. Geological Survey 1:24,000 scale quadrangle.

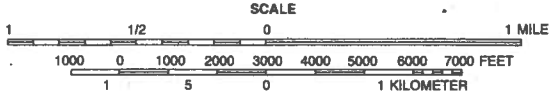


Report to Congress on the Coastal Barrier Resources System

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
DONALD P. MODEL, SECRETARY



QUADRANGLE
EAST POINT
VIRGIN ISLANDS



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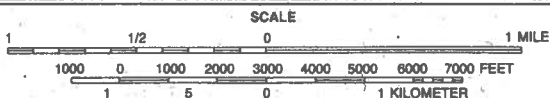
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11

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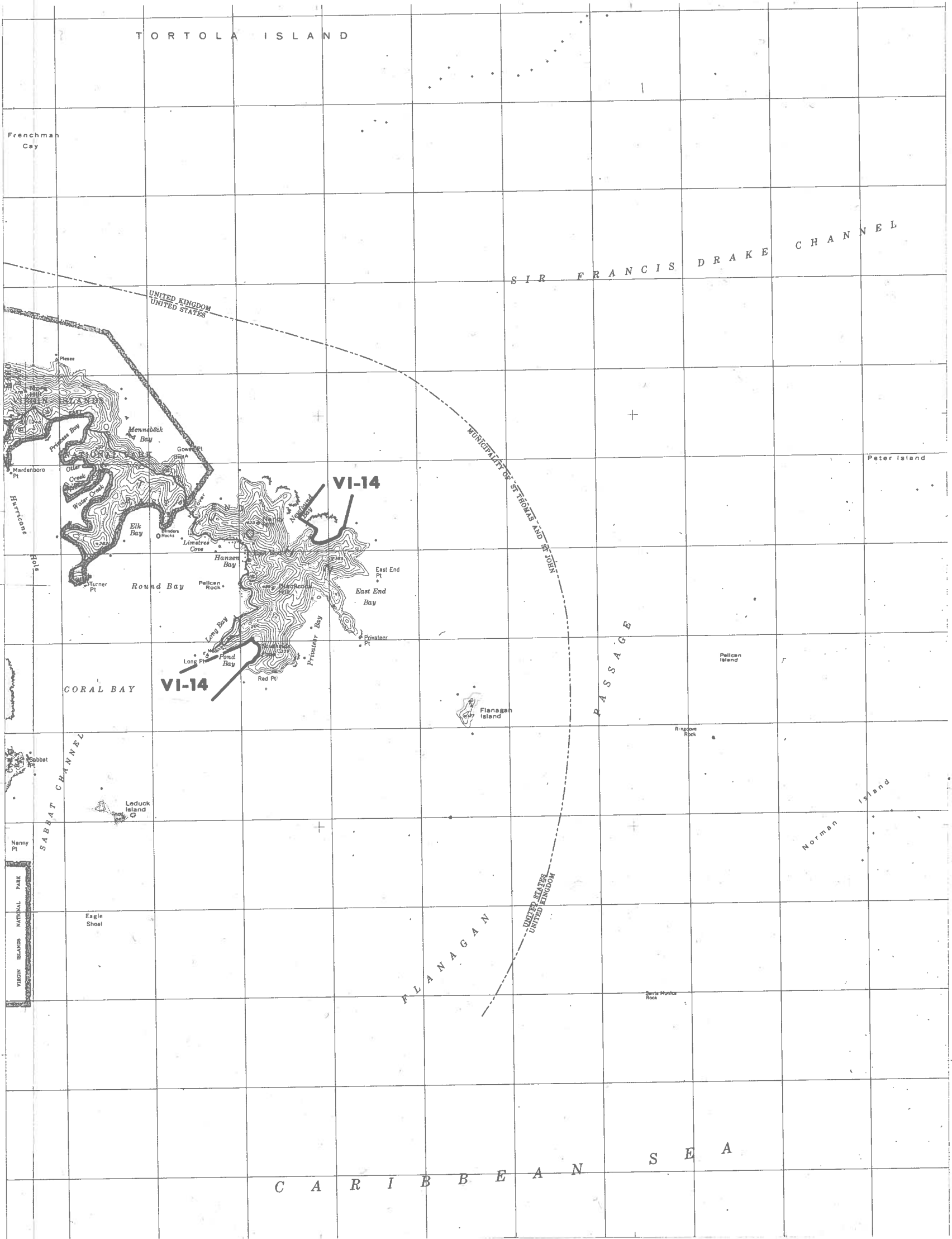
QUADRANGLE
FREDERIKSTED
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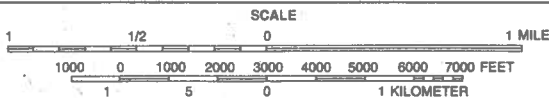


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Report to Congress on the Coastal Barrier Resources System

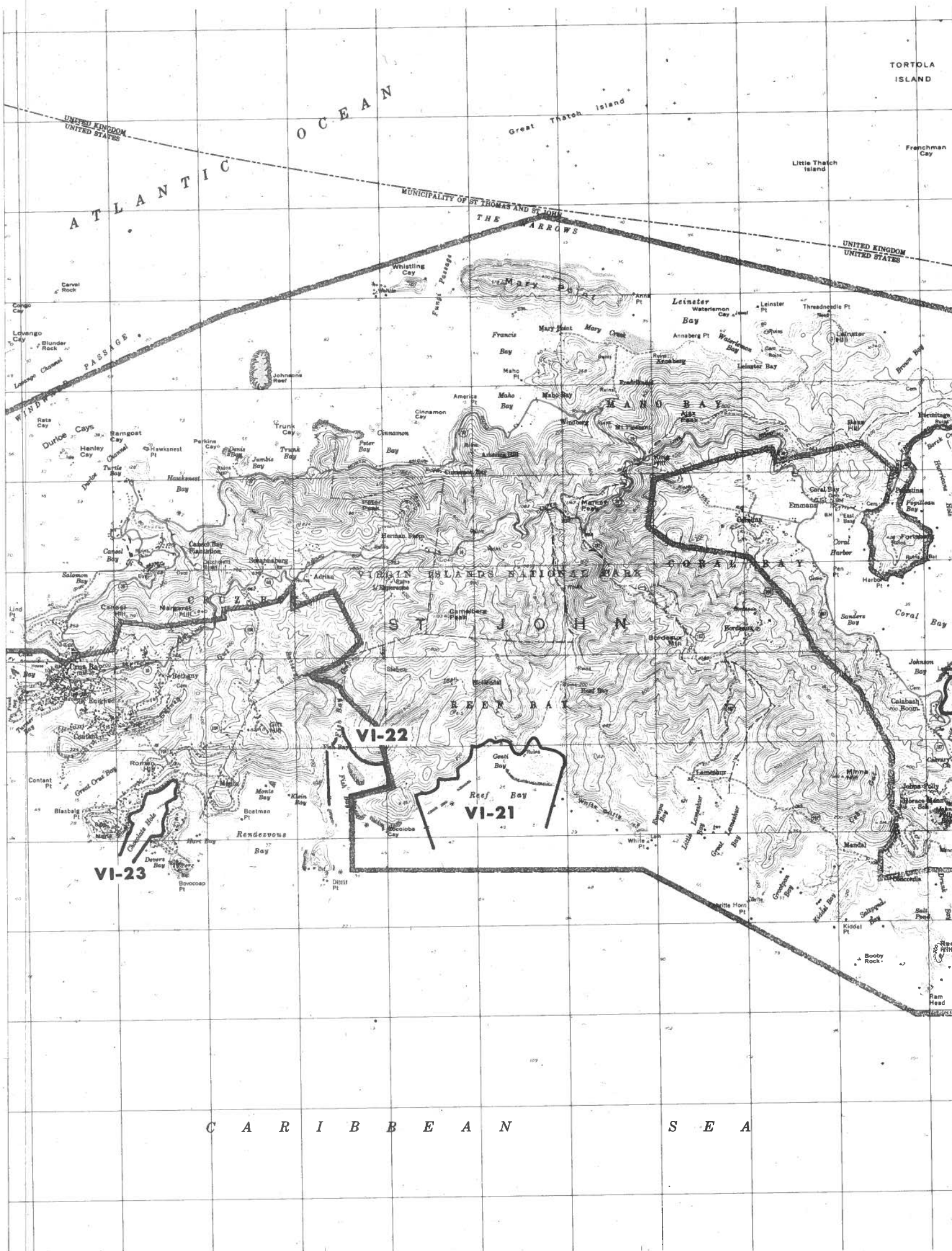
QUADRANGLE
EASTERN ST. JOHN
VIRGIN ISLANDS



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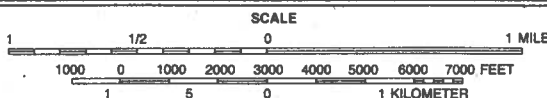


13



Report to Congress on the Coastal Barrier Resources System

QUADRANGLE
WESTERN ST. JOHN
VIRGIN ISLANDS



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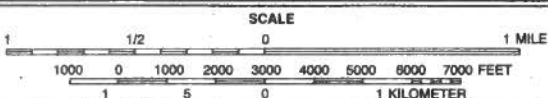


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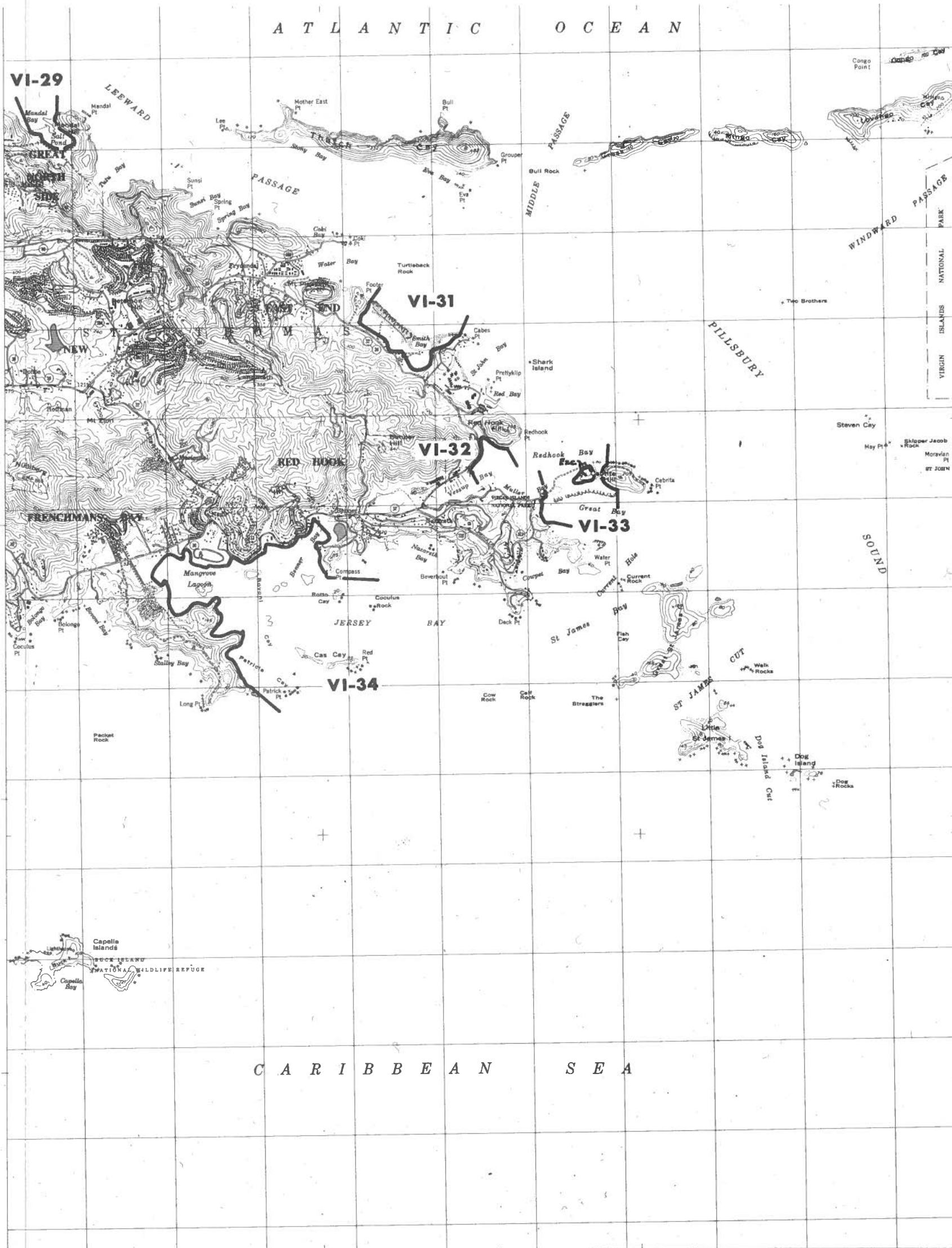
QUADRANGLE
CENTRAL ST. THOMAS
VIRGIN ISLANDS



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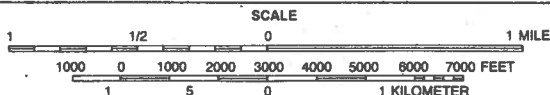
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15

Report to Congress on the Coastal Barrier Resources System

QUADRANGLE
EASTERN ST. THOMAS
VIRGIN ISLANDS



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