

QUICK FACTS ABOUT JOST VAN DYKE

(and its surrounding Cays)

Conserving Biodiversity— Salt Ponds

Summarised from the Environmental Profile for Jost van Dyke

1. Salt ponds act as sediment traps for runoff from surrounding uplands, thereby preventing sediment and pollution from reaching sensitive coral reefs, sea grass beds and other important coastal habitats.
2. The sediments in salt ponds can help scientist understand the sequence of events on earth as far back as the last Ice Age, some 10, 000 to 12, 000 years ago.
3. Many forms of wildlife depend on the salt ponds of Jost van Dyke such as migrant waterfowl and shorebirds, the resident White-cheeked Pintail Duck, insects such as butterflies and dragon flies, land crab and shrimp.
4. During tropical storms and torrential rains, salt ponds act as retention systems holding back potentially destructive flood waters and slowly passing the excess to the ocean.
5. In the past sea salt was collected from a few of the Salt Ponds, in particular the Cape Wright and White Bay salt ponds.
6. Water can only hold a certain amount of salt in solution and when the salinity of a salt pond reaches this point, the salt crystallizes.
7. Sea salt obtained from Salt Ponds is tasty and healthy, containing all the minerals present in the sea, which are essential to the human body.
8. Up to four mangrove species may be found in and around the Salt Ponds on Jost van Dyke : the Red Mangrove (*Rhizophora mangle*), Black mangrove (*Avicennia germinans*), White mangrove (*Laguncularia racemosa*) and the Buttonwood (*Conocarpus erectus*).
9. There are currently seven salt ponds on Jost van Dyke.
10. Until recently there were eight salt ponds on Jost van Dyke, unfortunately, the salt pond located south of Beasli Hill along Batson Bay was converted to the island's official waste disposal and landfill site and no longer functions as a salt pond.