



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Grand Opening of Viewing Platforms at Malportas Pond Bird Sanctuary Celebrated**

**3 March 2026** – The National Trust for the Cayman Islands proudly celebrated the grand opening of new viewing platforms at the Malportas Pond Bird Sanctuary in North Side with an official ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by government representatives, sponsors, and members of the community. Over 40 guests gathered to mark the occasion and recognise the importance of protecting one of Cayman’s most significant wildlife habitats.

The North Side Constituency Office Manager, Felisiana Ebanks, performed the official ribbon-cutting, and the Honourable Katherine Ebanks-Wilks, Minister of Health, Environment, and Sustainability, was in attendance to show support for the project and the ongoing protection of Cayman’s natural environment. Light refreshments were provided by Zelmalee Ebanks.

The new viewing platforms were made possible through the generous support of community partners including Pestkil, Dart, Caribbean Utilities Company (CUC), AMR Consulting Engineers, Chad Hextall, and Johnson Design and Architecture. Cayman National (CNB) donated 50 native trees to the site in celebration of their 50th anniversary, while KPMG funded the creation of a butterfly garden. These generous contributions have created a welcoming space where people can experience the sanctuary’s biodiversity and observe Cayman’s wildlife.

Malportas Pond forms part of an internationally recognised Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA) and provides essential feeding and nesting habitat for both resident and migratory birds. The pond and surrounding vegetation are known to support over 80% of known bird records for the Cayman Islands and are considered a bird-watching hotspot. In addition to birdlife, the site supports a diverse range of native plants and animals, including reptiles, insects, and salt-tolerant vegetation adapted to Cayman’s dry coastal conditions.

The National Trust acquired land bordering the pond to create a protected wildlife sanctuary where the public can connect with nature while ensuring the long-term conservation of this



fragile ecosystem. The addition of viewing platforms is part of the National Trust’s vision of providing educational and recreational opportunities while safeguarding habitats for future generations. And while the project is not yet completely finished, they are already popular with residents and visitors looking for an accessible nature experience.

“We are grateful to everyone who contributed to making these viewing platforms a reality,” said Frank Roulstone, Executive Director of the National Trust. “Malportas Pond is an incredibly special place for wildlife and for our community, and these new structures allow people to enjoy the sanctuary while helping us protect what makes it so important.”

The National Trust encourages the public to visit Malportas Pond Bird Sanctuary and experience one of the Cayman Islands’ most treasured natural areas. If you are interested in exploring more National Trust protected areas, bird sanctuaries and hiking trails download our FREE app, to discover 39 National Trust sites including interesting facts and geo maps to their location. For more information visit our website <https://nationaltrust.org.ky/get-involved/download-national-trust-app/>



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## **About the National Trust for the Cayman Islands**

The National Trust for the Cayman Islands is a non-governmental organization whose mandate under the National Trust Law (2010 Revision) includes the preservation of the historic, natural and maritime heritage of the Cayman Islands for present and future generations.

## **About the Blue Iguana Conservation Programme**

The Blue Iguana Recovery Programme began in 1990 with only 30 dedicated Blue Iguanas and the primary goal to restore the wild population to 1,000 Blue Iguanas, encouraging viable population in the long-term. Having met its primary goal in 2018, the initiative formally transitioned to the Blue Iguana Conservation Programme in 2019 with a new focus of sustainably conserving the native species of Grand Cayman.

## **About the National Trust's Environmental Programme**

The National Trust for the Cayman Islands' environmental programme was founded on the concept that the protection of native plants and animals is best achieved by protecting the natural areas in which they depend.

## **About the National Trust Conservation Programme**

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The National Trust for the Cayman Islands' conservation programme strives to protect Cayman's native species and the habitats in which they live, and includes the endemic Blue Iguana of Grand Cayman, the Sister Islands Rock Iguana and Cayman's native bat species.

### **About the National Trust Historic Preservation Programme**

The National Trust for the Cayman Islands introduced the launching of its *Historic Preservation Fund* at its Annual General Meeting in September 2021 for the purpose of inviting increased support of its continuing efforts to encourage the preservation and protection of historic homes and buildings for present and future generations of the Cayman Islands.