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USVI to Receive Over \$970,000 to Support Detection of and Response To Invasive Species

The funding aids ecological surveys across St. Croix, St. Thomas, and St. John

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Majestic cowboy sharks circle in unison amidst Indonesia's vibrant coral reefs, their graceful dance a testament to the ocean's harmony. By. GETTY IMAGES

The U.S. Department of the Interior [announced last week](#) that almost \$4 million had been allocated to projects and programs in several U.S. territories, including the U.S. Virgin Islands, that would “advance biosecurity efforts, restore coastal areas and flora ecosystems and support the eradication of invasive species.”

The USVI is set to receive \$971,000 of this sum in order to support the development of an early detection and rapid response framework of invasive species. The money will also be used to support “surveys of plant communities that connect northern and southern shorelines across St. Croix, St. Thomas, and St. John,” the announcement said.

The projects are funded through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and according to DOI, the funding also advances President Joe Biden’s Justice40 Initiative, which seeks to “deliver 40 percent of the overall benefits of certain federal investments to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized by underinvestment and overburdened by pollution.”

Following the announcement, Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland remarked that “the U.S. territories are an integral part of the fabric of America. As the Department stewards new investments from the President’s Investing in American agenda, we are working closely with our territorial partners to ensure they make the largest impact and reach as many communities as possible.”

Ms. Haaland noted that territories including the Virgin Islands “increasingly face the acute impacts of the climate crisis on their communities and ecosystems.”

In total, nearly \$7 million in funding will be funneled to the USVI, Puerto Rico, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and Guam, aimed at combating climate change, restoring coastal areas, and eradicating invasive species.