



# The Virgin Islands Post Irma

The Virgin Islands four months after the storm  
January 15th. 2018

Update June 2018



January 15th. Looking out across the familiar arc of white sand that forms the western end of Trellis Bay, adjacent to the Beef Island airport on Tortola, things looked good but undeniably different. I could quickly count at least ten yachts still up on the beach in varying forms of maritime distress. A large 57 catamaran was keel up and had apparently flipped before landing on the beach on the south side of the bay. Several more yachts of varying sizes lay close by, awkwardly arranged around it by mother nature.

I had arrived the previous afternoon on the ferry from St. Thomas, anxious to see first hand the impact of Hurricane Irma and how the recovery was moving along as the BVI struggled to revitalize itself in an effort to welcome guests by land and by sea. Having followed the news reports, viewed videos and images of the ravaged islands I now wanted to experience it for myself.



During the period from August 7th to September 19th, the BVI was affected by an unprecedented trio of extreme weather events. A tropical wave in early August deposited almost 15" of rain in less than a 20 hour period causing rock falls, land erosion and damage to infrastructure. On September 6th. the eye of the largest Atlantic hurricane in recorded history tore across the islands with consistent recorded wind speed of 185 mph and gusts to 225 mph! As recovery efforts were underway a second category 5 hurricane (Maria) passed just to the north depositing an additional 8" of rain and causing

severe coastal damage to the north side of the islands.

As writers and editors of the Cruising Guide to the Virgin Islands we are constantly asked by our customers "what does it look like now and is it still a good place to charter? What will I find? Where can I get fuel? What restaurants are open?" The answer is of course dynamic. Every week another business reopens its doors and every effort brings about change constantly, charter fleets are being revitalized with new equipment, marinas are reopening for business and restaurants are reopening constantly. Where infrastructure suffered severe damage it will take time to rebuild; beach bars recover quickly and the greenery grows back quickly in the heat of the tropical sun. This downloadable document is intended to be used in conjunction with the current Cruising Guide to the Virgin Islands and will be updated constantly in order to reflect the changes underway until things are settled enough for us to bring out a new edition.



When we first sailed around in the Virgin Islands in 1973, there was little of the shoreside infrastructure that we have come to expect in today's charter environment. The anchorages were sparsely populated by visiting cruising yachts, there were no mooring balls to pick up, restaurants and bars were few and far between but the sailing experience was fabulous, much as it is today. To be fair, not all is ideal, the damaged infrastructure will take time to be repaired, evidence of damage is almost everywhere and compared to previous years, there are

a few challenges when it comes to fuel, water and supplies, but the perennial favorite haunts like Foxy's at Great Harbour JVD, Soggy Dollar Bar at White Bay, Myett's at Cane Garden Bay and the Willy T in its new home at Great Harbour, Peter Island, are all up and running and doing what they have always done, delivering the quintessential cruising experience.

### **Ferries & Transportation:**

Jan 15th: The ferry from St.Thomas no longer services West End, Tortola owing to the destruction of the terminal. The ferries now run into Road Town and are utilizing the new Pier Park staging area by the cruise ship terminal for arrivals and departures and a temporary customs / immigration service area has been erected.

June 1st. The Main ferry terminal in Road Town is now repaired and fully functional. Therefore all Road Town ferry traffic will embark and disembark at this location

Jost Van Dyke is still serviced from the dock in West End since customs and immigration are not an issue. A new large catamaran ferry is now being utilized with service at 8am/10am/1pm and 6pm. The trip from JVD departs one hour earlier.

Virgin Gorda: Speedy's Ferry Service is running a normal schedule between Road Town and Virgin Gorda and to and from Beef Island / Trellis Bay. Service from VG to St.Thomas is on Saturday only.

Scrub Island: Since the resort and marina are closed at this point the ferry service from Beef Island is for staff only.

June 15: The resort is now open and ferry services have resumed to normal

### **Customs & Immigration:**

**Environmental Impact Fee:** All arriving passengers will be charged a \$10 fee, this is in addition to the normal departure tax (\$20) which is collected at the time of departure.

**Cruising Permit Fees:** There has been an increase for both foreign (non BVI registered) vessels of \$4 to \$16 per person per day and for BVI registered vessels of \$2 to \$6 per person per day. These fees apply to chartered vessels only and not to cruising vessels.

Hours of operation:

8:30 - 4:30 seven days a week. Overtime is charged on Sundays and public holidays.

Vessels arriving after hours from a foreign port are required to fly the yellow "Q" flag and stay on the vessel until cleared at which time a \$20 overtime fee will be charged.

### **BVI Anchorages:**

**Road Town ( Road Harbour) - Guide Pages: 78 - 101**

- Road Reef Marina - Full operations have been maintained since Irma
- Doyle Sails - Open
- Penn's Marina - Open
- Conch Charters - Open
- Moorings Marina - Full operations and services are open

- Village Cay Marina - Fuel, water and ice are available. Some docks were damaged and repairs are underway. The restaurant is open
- BVI Yacht Charters and Marina - Open
- All supermarkets and provisioning services are open for business

### **Eastern Tortola:**

#### **Hodges Creek / Maya Cove - Pages 106-109**

- The approach to Hodges Creek should be with extreme caution since many of the approach markers to the channel markers are missing. There are two key port and starboard markers at the reef entrance still in place.
- There are no mooring balls available for transient yachts.
- The marina has no fuel, water or electricity as of June 1st.
- The marina hotel and restaurant are closed.
- The Catamaran Company are running at 100% and much of the fleet has been replaced and have been functional since just two months after the storm.
- Underwater Seafaris are operational.
- Riteway Supermarket is open and fully operational.
- MarineMax moved their operations to Scrub Island right after the storm but will be relocating permanently to Nanny Cay in July.

#### **Fat Hogs Bay / East End Bay**

- Navigation markers intact
- Riteway Supermarket open
- Harbourview (James Young) Marina open
- Emile's Restaurant open
- Chalwell Marina open
- Penn's Landing open
- Fuel is available alongside the bulkhead at Alphonso's gas station

#### **Trellis Bay - Pages 114-123**

The aftermath of the storm left many boats up on the beach at Trellis Bay - the BVI Government along with private parties continue to struggle with their removal.

- The mooring field is intact and fees will be collected by Ken & G
- The Trellis Bay Market is open and their new dinghy dock is in place.
- The laundry facilities are not in operation at this time.
- Ferry services have all resumed.
- Marché is open for business.
- Aragorn's Studio is open and the Full Moon Parties have resumed.
- De Loose Mongoose is open for business and the beach bar has been rebuilt.





- Bellamy Cay, The Island Resort remains closed at this time.

### **Marina Cay** - Pages 124-127

- The Pussers bar and restaurant was severely impacted by the storm but a temporary bar and restaurant is now open at the head of the dock where the old Pusser's Store used to be.
- The marina is closed.
- We understand that the iconic British telephone booth that blew away in the storm has been found, salvaged and is being restored.

### **Scrub Island** - Pages 128-130

- The resort, restaurants and bars are all open for business.
- The marina is fully functional.
- Ferry service from Trellis Bay

### **Western Tortola:**

#### **Cane Garden Bay** - Pages 144-149

Cane Garden Bay suffered severe flooding and storm damage and a \$1.7 million dollar grant was made from the BVI government to repair and upgrade the beach and general environment at both Cane Garden and Brewers Bay. Progress continues daily with more businesses opening their doors to the tourist trade.

- The mooring field is intact and fees are collected as normal.
- The dinghy landing dock is intact but some damage was sustained and therefore caution should be exercised when landing a dinghy.
- Myett's Garden and Grill were operational shortly after the storm and although damaged, operations continue with the bar and restaurant.
- The Paradise Club is also open for business.
- The stairway to the road also suffered some damage and extreme caution should be taken when descending to the beach near Quito's bar and restaurant.
- Bobby's Market remains closed.
- Some supplies are available at Rhymer's Beach Bar and Pleasure Boats and Provisioning next to Quito's.



#### **Soper's Hole / West End** - Pages 150-155

The iconic village on Frenchman's Cay was severely damaged by the storm and regrettably slow progress is evidenced in the rebuilding process.

- Customs & Immigration is functioning.
- The dinghy landing area adjacent to customs was destroyed and has not been replaced.
- Extensive damage was done to the entire Frenchman's Cay dock system and infrastructure with parts of it remaining in an unsafe condition.

- Caution should be exercised when landing dinghies. A safe landing area is available at the Lighthouse Marina at the head of the bay.
- The mooring fields remains active and mooring fees are collected by Voyage Yacht Charters who operate the Soper's Hole Marina.
- Soper's Hole Marina remains closed as of June 1st.
- Voyage Yacht Charters are operating from the West End Slipway complex.
- Harbour Market - Closed, no provisioning services available at this time
- Pusser's Pub is open and serving food from the 2nd floor.
- Admiral Marine's (Lighthouse Marina) docks, at the head of the harbor, are open for business with fuel, electricity and water available. They are planning to have food service available for the season.
- Various stores and boutiques are open for business.
- Blue Water Divers are operating out of the Nanny Cay location at this time
- Rental cars are available from Shaun Smith's Soper's Hole Car Rental.
- The Scaramouche restaurant is closed.
- Fish and Lime Restaurant on the west side of the bay remains closed.

#### **Nanny Cay - Pages 156-163**

The management team at Nanny Cay have done a great job at clearing the channel and replacing the entire dock structure. All of the new docks to the east are currently in use and the entire dock infrastructure to the west has recently been replaced and is now up and running.

- Call the dock master on VHF 16 before entering the marina.
- Fuel services are available.
- Horizon Yacht Charters have replaced much of their fleet with new vessels and will be at 90% by the start of the 2018/19 season.
- All marine service providers are open for business.
- The boatyard is fully operational.

#### **Sea Cows Bay / Manuel Reef Marina - Pages 164-167**

- The channel is clear.
- All services associated with the marina are open.
- There are still a few vessels and debris in the adjacent mangroves.

#### **The Channel Islands**

##### **The Bight / Norman Island - Pages 170-177**

- Pirates Bight is open for business although some rebuilding is still underway.
- The Willy T has been relocated to Great Harbour, Peter Island.
- The mooring field remains intact and fees are collected by Pirates Bight.

##### **Little Harbour / Peter Island - Pages 184-185**

Since many of the docking facilities sustained damage on Tortola, many of the crewed yachts have taken to spending their off charter time across the channel in Little Harbour. Since the anchorage is limited and fairly deep, it is recommended that you take a stern line ashore to restrict movement.

**Great Harbour / Peter Island - Pages 186-187**

- The Willy T has now been replaced with a “new” vessel and relocated from the Bight in Norman Island to its new home at Great Harbour.
- All the mooring balls are intact and serviceable.

**Sprat Bay / Peter Island - Pages 188-189**

- The Peter Island Resort remains closed during the rebuilding of the resort, plans are still calling for a late 2018 opening date.
- Marina services are not available at this time

**Deadman's Bay / Peter Island - Pages 190-191**

The hotel is closed so no services are available at this time.

**Salt Island Bay - Pages 198-201**

Lee Bay - The wreck of the Rhone sustained some damage during the storm when the bow section collapsed. Non of the dive operators are allowing the swim through although there is some visibility at the mid section of the wreck

**Cooper Island - Pages 202-205**

- The Cooper Island Beach Club did sustain considerable storm damage however quick action and application of resources allowed them to be fully functional last April.
- The mooring field is intact.
- Underwater Seafaris is fully operational.

**Virgin Gorda****The Baths - Pages 214-217**

- The mooring field is intact.
- The trail is open.
- Top of the Baths is open.

### **Spanish Town ( St.Thomas Bay) - Pages 218-221**

- The mooring field at St.Thomas Bay is operational.
- All wrecks have been cleared and the channel is free from obstructions.
- Navigation markers are operational.
- The Bath & Turtle and Chez Bamboo are open and fully functional.

### **Virgin Gorda Yacht Harbour**

- Fuel dock is fully operational.
- Most of the slips are available with water and electric (some pedestals are being replaced)
- A new bar and restaurant (Snapper's) is operational.
- Both boatyards are fully operational and taking bookings for the season.
- A new service manager (Jeremy Dugan) has been hired to coordinate all services and sub-contractors in the yard. His contact information is : [jdugan@vgyh.net](mailto:jdugan@vgyh.net) or call 284-499-5552.
- A new grocery store / provisioning service will be ready for the 2018/19 season.



### **Gorda Sound ( North Sound)**

#### **Vixen Point / Sandbox**

- Moorings intact and serviced by Moorsecure.
- The Sandbox bar and restaurant is open.

### **Saba Rock - Pages 228-229**

- The Saba Rock infrastructure was severely damaged by the storm and it is our understanding the resort has been sold to a high profile European investor who is rebuilding and plans to be open for the season.

### **The Bitter End - Pages: 230-236**

June - The Bitter End team tell us that they are working hard to rebuild the infrastructure but considering the magnitude of the project they anticipate that they will have the marina operational by the beginning of the season along with some limited food service. The rest of the infrastructure will be completed in 2019.

### **Biras Creek- Page 238**

The hotel is closed until further notice.

### **Yacht Club Costa Smeralda - Page 241**

Closed until further notice

### **Leverick Bay - Pages 242-245**

- The docks, marina, hotel and restaurant are all 100% operational.
- The mooring field is intact.



### **Anegada / Setting Point- Pages 250-260**

Fortunately Anegada sustained less damage from the storm than initially expected as a result of its northerly location relative to the storm track.

- Navigation markers intact
- Mooring field operational
- All restaurants in Setting Point are open for business.

### **Jost Van Dyke - Pages: 262-279**

#### **Great Harbour**

- Navigation markers in place
- Mooring field operational
- Dinghies can be landed at the government dock
- North Latitude Marina open with fuel and water
- Foxy's Tamarind Bar and Boutique is open for business and the new floating dock awaits you.
- Corsairs has been rebuilt and is now open with a limited menu.
- Ali Baba's is open.
- JVD Scuba / Laid Back Bar and Grill - open

#### **White Bay**

- The navigation markers are in place
- Soggy Dollar Bay is open and still serving the famous Painkillers
- Hendo's Hideaway suffered very little damage and is open and serving the same great menu
- Ivan's Stress Free Bar & Restaurant is rebuilding and the bar is open and serving.
- Seddy's One Love is open.
- Gertrude's is open.

#### **Little Harbour**

- Mooring field operational
- Sydney's Peace and Love - Open for business and the "honour" bar is back.
- Abe's-by-the-Sea is open.

#### **Little Jost Van Dyke ( East End Bay)**

- The mooring field is intact as far as we know but we have not received confirmation.
- The B-Line Beach Bar is open.
- Foxy's Taboo bar and restaurant is closed.



**Resources:** Additional BVI recovery information and updates are available at [bvitraveller.com](http://bvitraveller.com)