



Fact Sheet #2

Protected Areas in Jamaica

JAMAICA'S PROTECTED AREAS... towards safeguarding Jamaica's globally significant biodiversity

JANUARY 2013

Jamaica's policy framework for the national system of protected areas defines a protected area as *“an area of land or water that is managed for the protection and maintenance of its ecological systems, biodiversity and/or specific natural, cultural or aesthetic resources.”*

Jamaica has 249 protected areas. These protected areas are managed by the Fisheries Division, Forestry Department, Jamaica National Heritage Trust and the Natural Resources Conservation Authority/National Environment and Planning Agency or through legal co-management agreements by other government entities or non-governmental organizations.

Some of Jamaica's protected areas are:

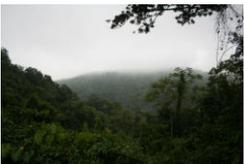
- Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park
- Montego Bay Marine Park
- Morant and Pedro Cays

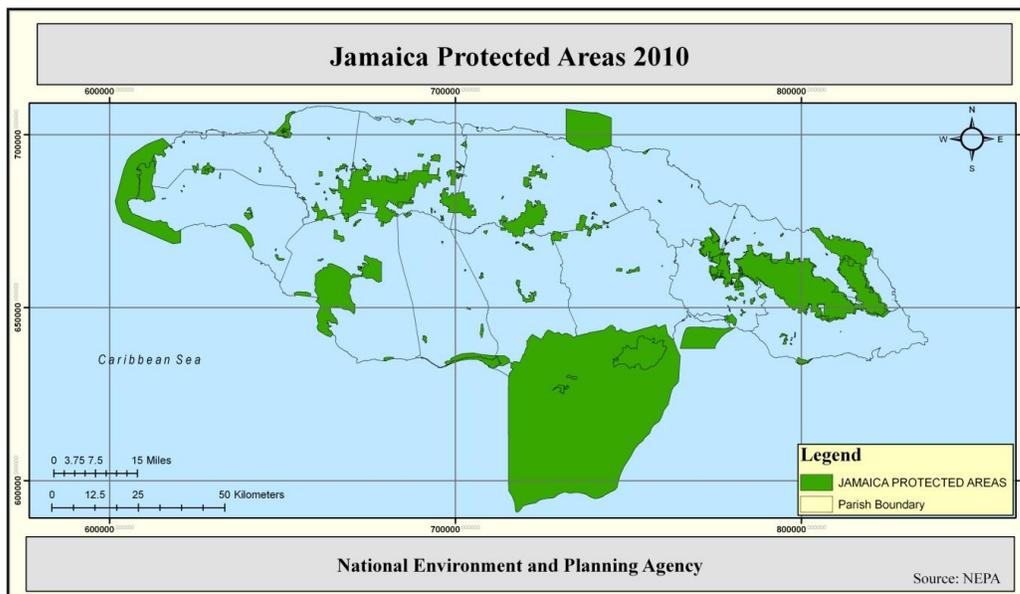
- Bull Head Forest Reserve
- Cockpit Country Forest Reserve
- Palisadoes – Port Royal Protected Areas
- Mason River Protected Area
- Rio Nuevo Taino Site
- Bogue Islands Special Fishery Conservation Area, Montego Bay
- Portland Bight Protected Area

Forest reserves (e.g. Cockpit Country Forest Reserve), heritage sites (e.g. Seville in St. Ann, or Mountain River Cave in St. Catherine) and special fishery conservation areas (e.g. Bluefields Bay, Westmoreland) also are protected areas.

Under the Strengthening the Operational and Financial Sustainability of the National Protected Area System project, the Government of Jamaica aims to consolidate the operational and financial sustainability of Jamaica's national system of protected areas.

This 6-year project supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) is being implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and executed by the National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA) in collaboration with the Forestry Department, Jamaica National Heritage Trust and the Fisheries Division.





Terrestrial (land-based) protected areas represent approximately 200,000 ha or approximately 18% of Jamaica’s total land area.

Marine protected areas account for 180,000 ha or approximately 15% of the country’s archipelagic waters (and 1.1% of Jamaica’s total marine area).

Jamaica's protected area system is critically important to maintaining the island's globally significant biodiversity. Biodiversity or biological diversity means the variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems.

Jamaica designates different types of protected areas under a number of pieces of legislation. The four principal government agencies – National Environment and Planning Agency, Forestry Department, Jamaica National Heritage Trust and Fisheries Division - commonly delegate authority to local partners, other government entities, NGO's and/or the private sector. These proxies manage protected areas through co-management agreements.

Protected Areas System Master Plan (Draft)

Jamaica recently drafted a Protected Areas System Master Plan (PASMP) as one of its commitments to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The Master Plan, developed by a multi-agency Protected Areas Committee, includes an ecological gap analysis to assess where the nation’s current protected areas fall short of protecting all biodiversity; the plan assesses the management effectiveness of existing protected areas and includes institutional arrangements, challenges to protected areas management as well as goals and activities; and, assesses the financial gap and planning for long-term financial sustainability of these areas.

Some Interesting Facts about Jamaica’s Protected Areas

The first forest reserves (Blue Mountains, Clydesdale and Hardware Gap) were declared in 1950. Jamaica's first national park was established in 1992. Jamaica's first marine park (Montego Bay Marine Park) was established in 1991. The first national park (Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park) was established 1993.



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