

Port Honduras Marine Reserve

A SPAW listed protected area



Country: Belize

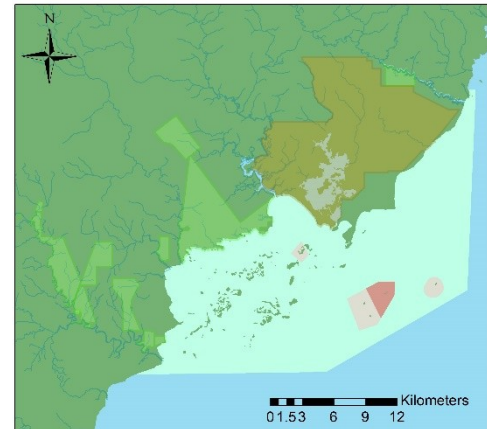
Management structure / authority: the Belize Fisheries Department and the Toledo Institute for Development and Environment (TIDE)

Date of establishment: 25 January 1987

Date of listing under SPAW: 09 December 2014

Size (Marine surface): 405 sq. km

TIDE managed lands - Updated for 2014



Legend

PCNP	No Take Zone
TPPL	Preservation Zone
PHMR	

Context:

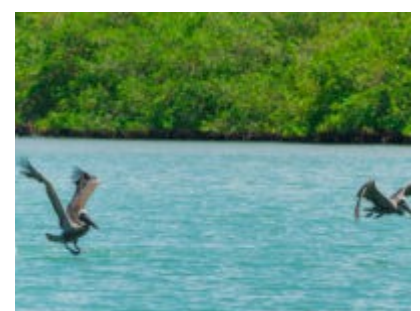
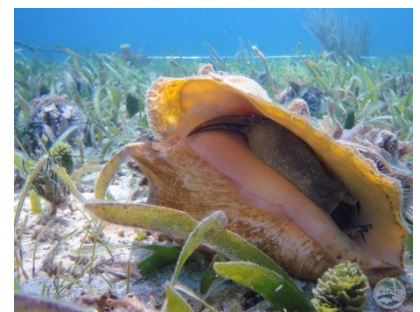
The Port Honduras Marine Reserve (PHMR) is unique along the coast of Central America in lagoon system size and the number of in-shore mangrove islands. The purpose of PHMR is the maintenance of coastal ecosystem functions and natural resource values, including water quality and nursery habitats of the area, in order to protect biodiversity and traditional fishers' livelihoods.

The ecological uniqueness of PHMR was first recognized in 1990 from a Critical Habitat Study. This study identified the area from the Bladen Nature Reserve to Port Honduras as a potential protected corridor from the Maya Mountains to the sea, preserving a wide range of biodiversity. Subsequently, PHMR was the subject of two rapid ecological assessments (REAs). The REAs revealed that PHMR serves extremely important ecological functions of regional significance.

Main fauna populations and/or those of particular importance present (resident or migratory) in the area:

The Marine Reserve contains assemblages of regionally important ecosystems of importance for several species of global conservation concern, among them the critically endangered staghorn and elkhorn corals, hawksbill turtle and goliath grouper. The area also protects the endangered green and loggerhead turtles and contributes towards the regional viability of important commercial species, including the queen conch and spiny lobster.

About seventy fish species were caught in the coastal zone of Port Honduras, almost forty of which had commercial value. These fish belonged to mostly the snapper, grunt, parrotfish, and mojarra families. The rest are small or non-palatable species that are usually common in seagrass habitats. These are anchovies, pipefishes, filefishes, small wrasses, gobies, and puffers.



Main ecosystems in the area:

The ecosystems in PHMR includes three related components: coastal and tidal wetlands, marine lagoons, and mangrove islands with associated shallow banks and fringing coral reefs. Almost all of the coastal and island vegetation, including mangroves, is intact.

Potential Threats:

TIDE identified the four highest threats for Port Honduras Marine Reserve as: climate change; transboundary fishing incursions; overfishing / unsustainable fishing practices; and inappropriate land use / unsustainable development.

MANAGEMENT PLAN

Natural Resource management

- Resource management and protection
- Research and monitoring
- Upgrade infrastructure and equipment for effective surveillance
- Protection of ecosystems for financial diversification

Community Stewardship

- Environmental education
- Community Development
- Improved baseline information on communities, community assets, socio-economic status and economic opportunities

Supporting policy implementation

- Policies and legislation
- Build public support for national policy implementation
- Improve awareness and understanding of local and national leaders of the importance of maintaining natural resources and ecosystem services

Sharing Successful Models

- Capacity building
- strengthen mechanisms for sharing knowledge across platforms
- Develop formal structures for knowledge transfer and training in TIDE's areas of strength

Institutional Strengthening

- Ensure TIDE has the administration, human resources and capacity
- Strengthen the governance framework
- Financial Sustainability Strategy
- Improve adaptive management, monitoring and evaluation

Contact:

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The Port Honduras Marine Reserve is part of the **SPAW protected areas managers network**.

For more information about it: <https://www.car-spaw-rac.org/?Protected-Areas>