

Conservation Outcomes • Caribbean Islands Hotspot

Caribbean Islands Hotspot



Key Biodiversity Areas in the Caribbean Islands Hotspot

The Caribbean Islands Hotspot consists of three large groups: the Bahamas, the Greater Antilles (Puerto Rico, Jamaica, Cuba, and Hispaniola), which includes the Dominican Republic, and the Lesser Antilles (an arc of islands in the eastern Caribbean Sea and in the southern Caribbean Sea just north of South America). While the hotspot spans more than 23,000 km², it contains less than 230 km² of land area, with the four islands of Cuba, Hispaniola, Jamaica and Puerto Rico making up around 90 percent of the land area.

The Caribbean Islands Hotspot supports a wealth of biodiversity within its terrestrial ecosystems, with a high proportion of species that are native to Earth. It includes over 11,000 plant species, of which 72% are endemics. For vertebrates, remarkably high proportions of endemic species characterize the herpetofauna (reptiles and amphibians) at 95% and 95% of 520 reptile species, likely due to their low dispersal rates, in contrast to the more mobile birds (26% of 564 species) and mammals (74% of 69 species). Species are known to be threatened 2.6% of the world's 300,000 known plant species and 3.5% of the world's 27,298 known vertebrate species.

Today, no more than 22,000 km², or 10% of the original habitat, remains intact in the hotspot. By percentage, amphibians and mammals are the most threatened of the taxonomic groups assessed by the IUCN, at 69% and 68% respectively. The Alliance for Zero Extinction is a joint initiative of 67 biodiversity conservation organizations dedicated to preventing the imminent extinction of the world's most imperiled species. Climate change is an increasingly significant threat. Targeted conservation is the best way to ensure the survival of the last remaining sites for 69 threatened species in the Caribbean Islands Hotspot. Among these sites is Hain's Massif de la Haute, a KBA that is the only home of the Hispaniolan salamander. Other sites in the hotspot also contain large numbers of globally-threatened species, such as Cockpit Country and Littlefield Mountain — Matheson's Run in Jamaica, which have 58 and 44 globally-threatened species, respectively.

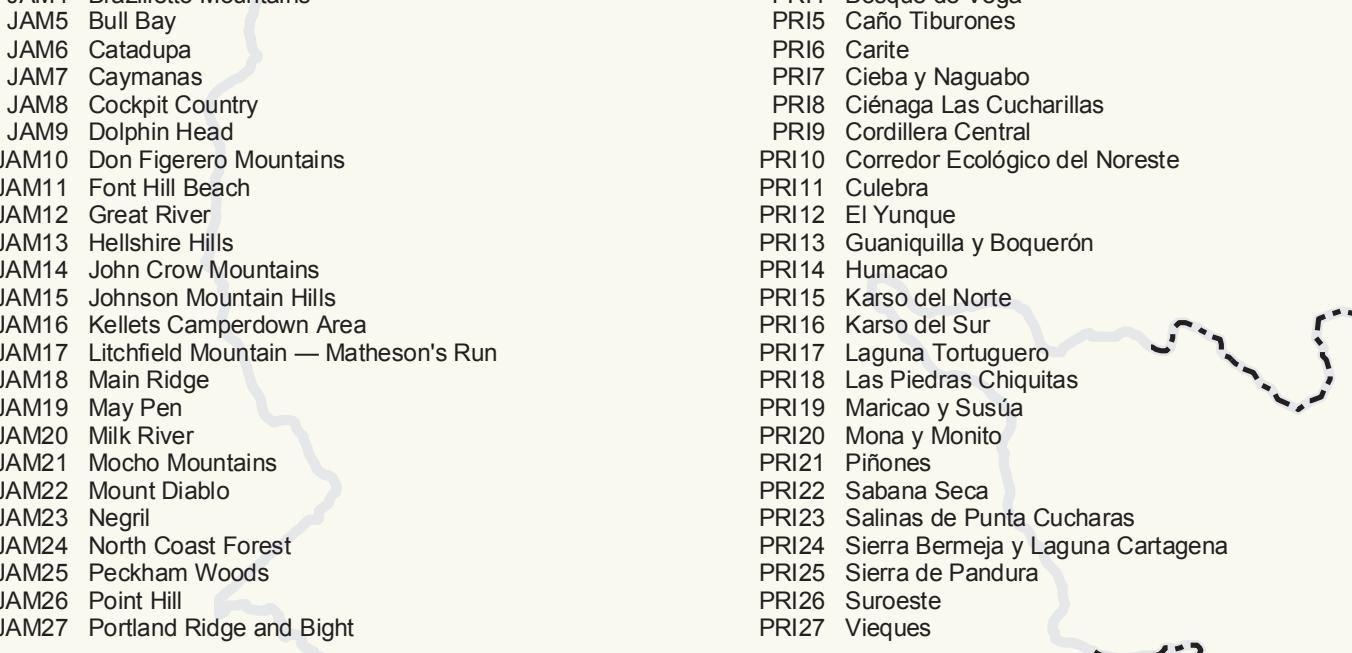
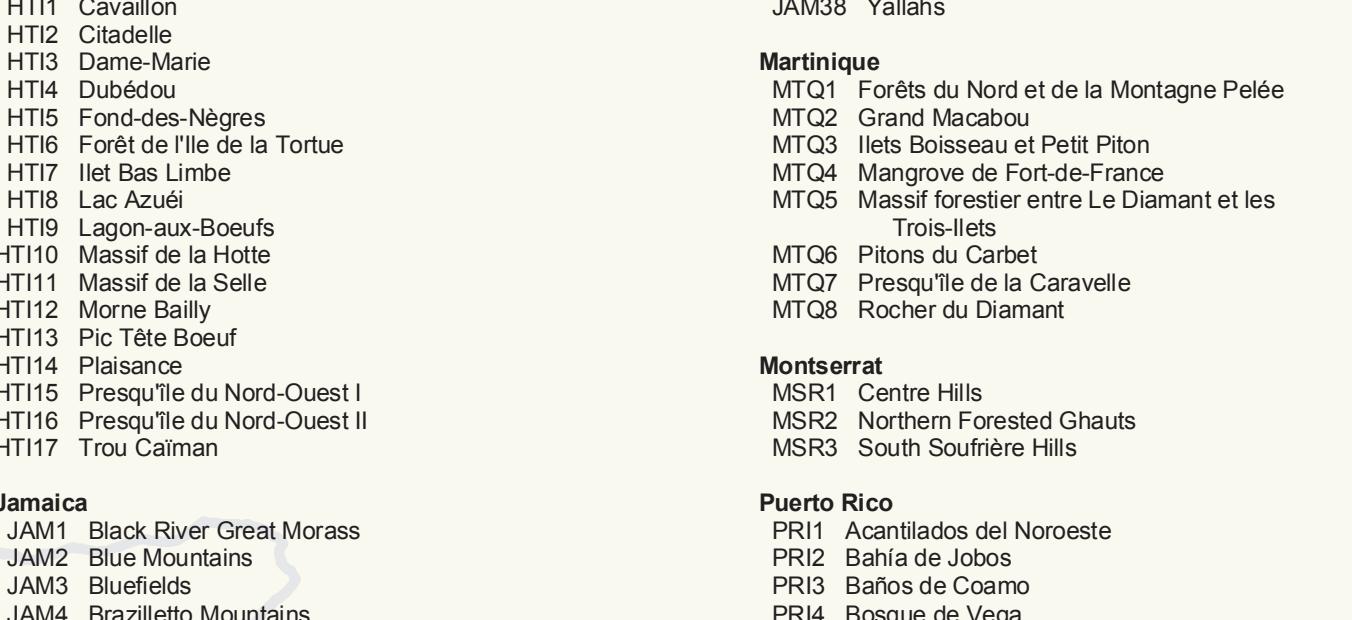
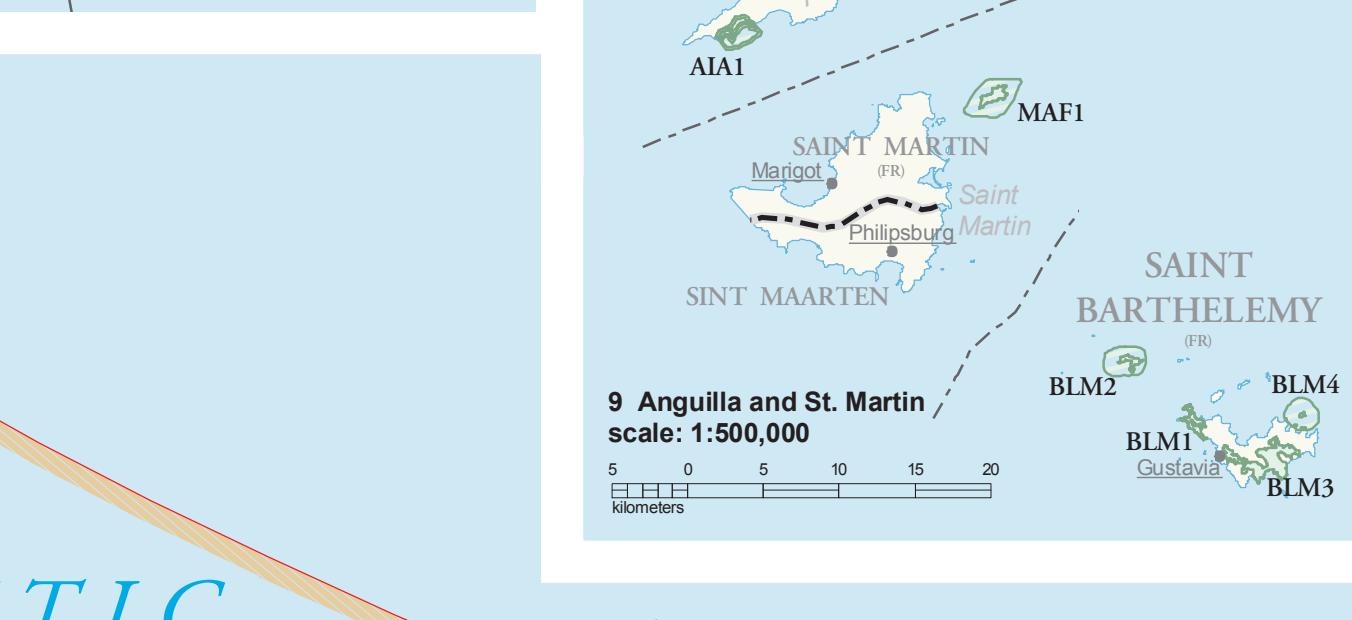
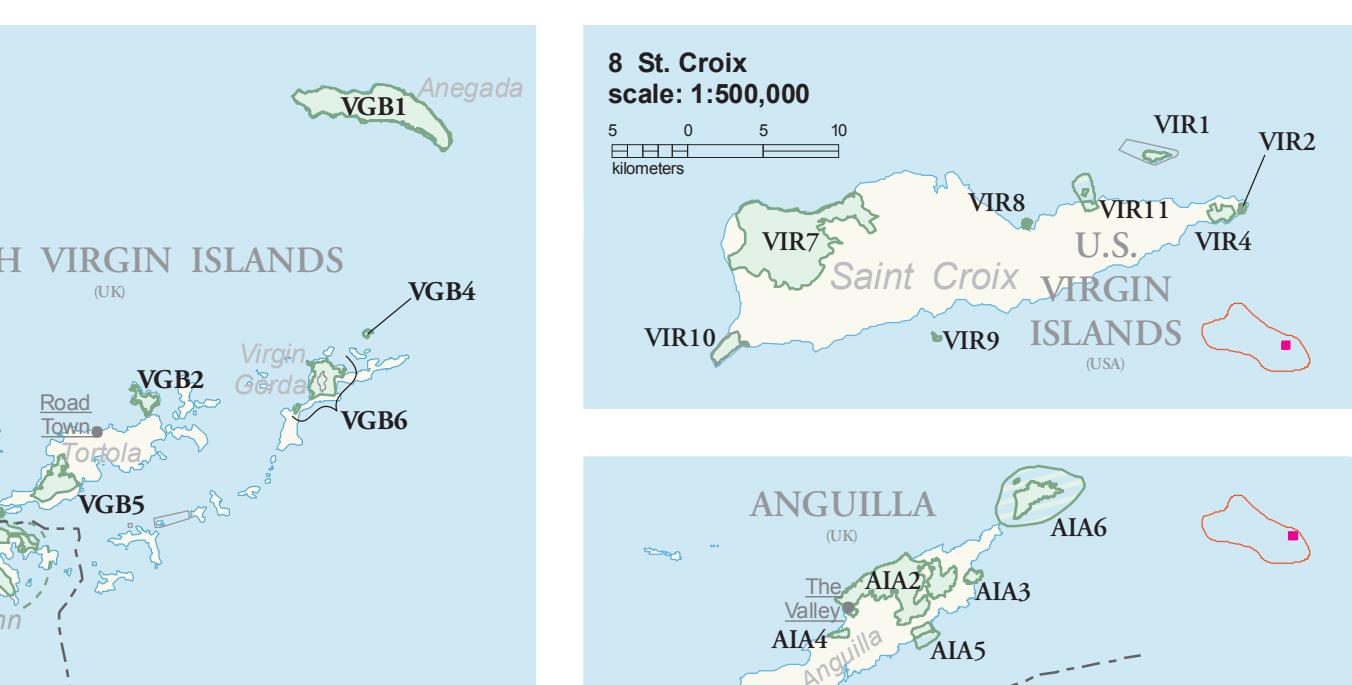
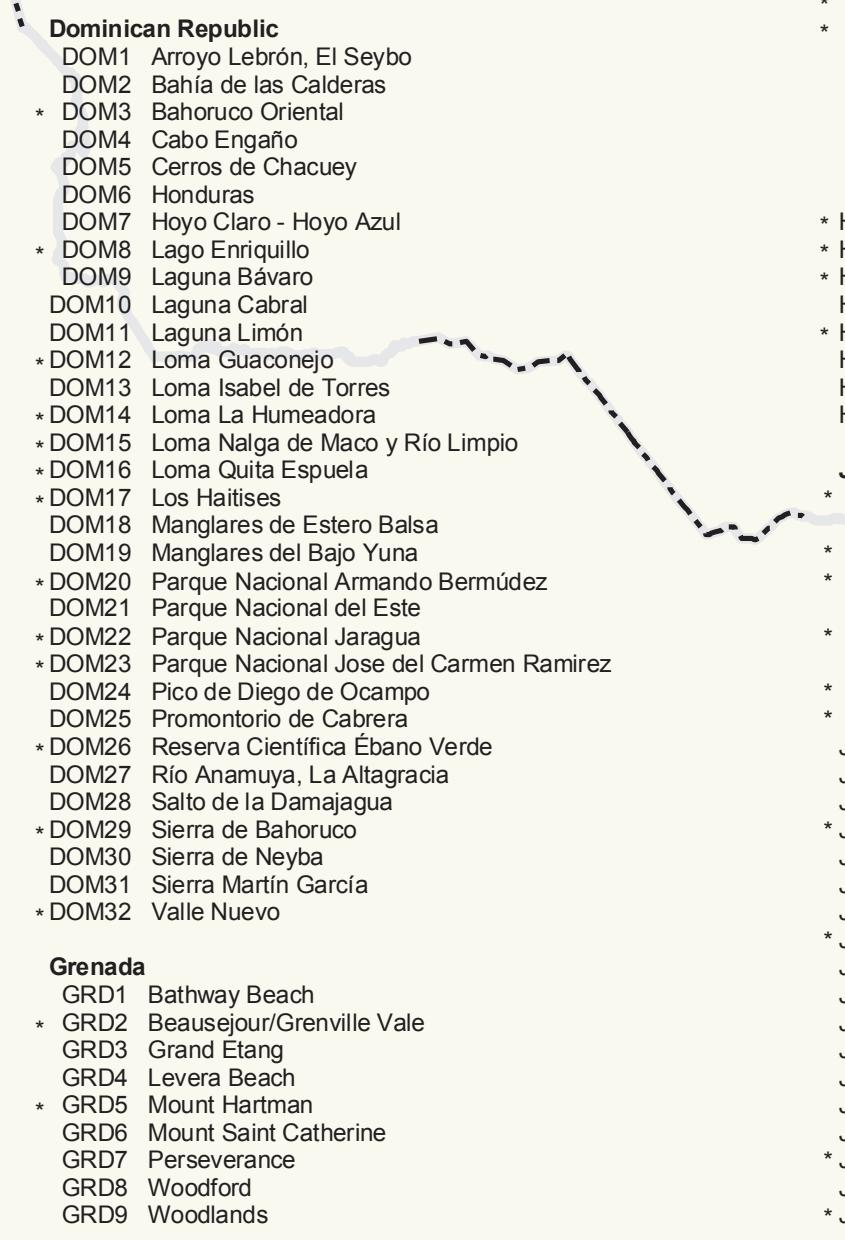
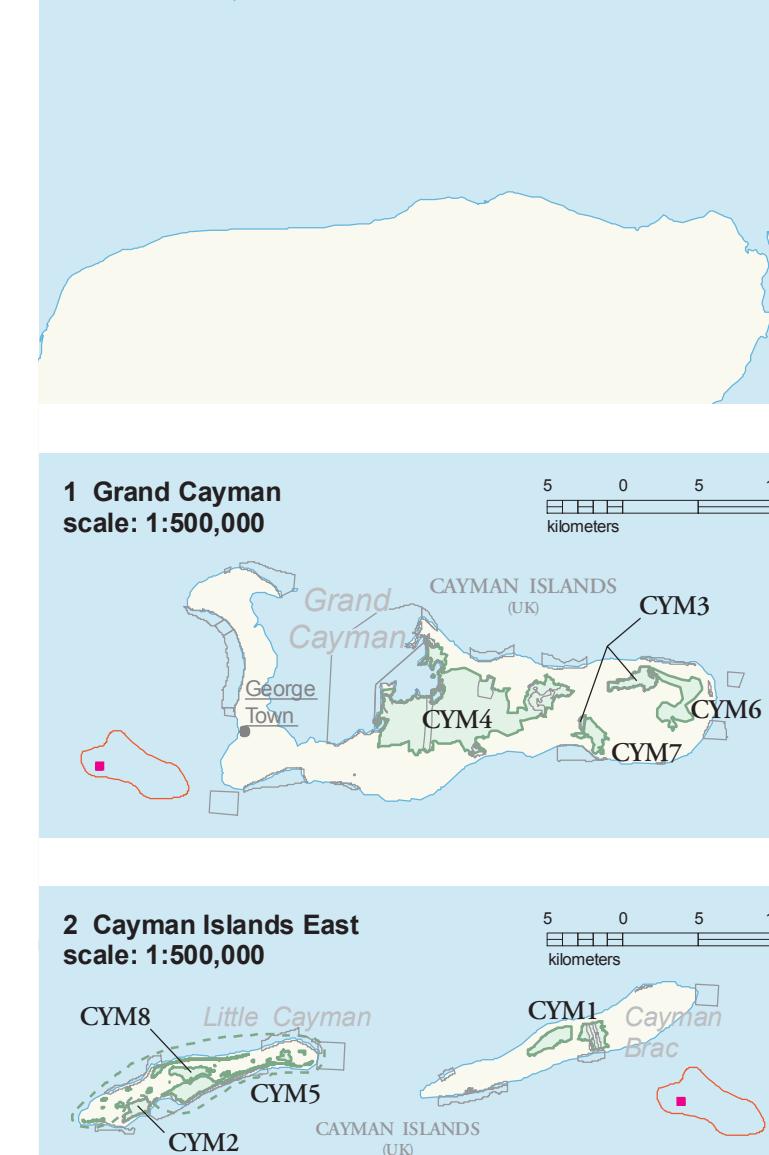
The main threats to the terrestrial biodiversity of the insular Caribbean are habitat conversion and fragmentation due to agriculture, urban tourism, and industrial/commercial development driven by increasing population and economic exploitation of living resources; and predation and competition by invasive alien species. Climate change is an increasingly significant threat. Targeted conservation is the best way to ensure the survival of the last remaining sites for 69 threatened species in the Caribbean Islands Hotspot. Protecting the biodiversity of the region by safeguarding KBAs may be achieved by declaring new protected areas, strengthening management of existing protected areas, working towards community-based resource management, implementing ecosystem service payments for conservation, promoting ecotourism, and other initiatives.

For more information, visit www.cepf.net.

This map depicts site-scale targets for biodiversity conservation within Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) in the Caribbean Islands Hotspot. These are sites that are globally significant for biodiversity conservation and are considered actually or potentially manageable for conservation. KBAs are:

- BirdLife International
- BirdLife International Science & Knowledge Division
- Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust
- Global Environment Monitoring System Data Center
- Gruppo Jangada
- New York Botanical Garden
- Ornithological Protection Program
- Société Audubon Haiti
- Windover Research Center
- Worldwide Fund for Nature - Protected Areas

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CRITICAL ECOSYSTEM PARTNERSHIP FUND

The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) is a joint initiative of Conservation International, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan, the MacArthur Foundation, USAID, UNEP World Conservation Strategy, and the World Bank. A fund for biodiversity conservation, CEPF is unique in that it is a public-private partnership that brings together the world's leading experts in biodiversity science and policy, and civil society is engaged in biodiversity conservation.

The political and geographic designations shown on this map do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of CEPF or any of its partners concerning the legal status or definition of the frontiers of any country, territory or area.

Biodiversity hotspots are regions that harbor especially high numbers of endemic species and, at the same time, are highly threatened by human activities. Each hotspot faces extreme threats and has already lost at least 70 percent of its original natural vegetation. Over 15 percent of the world's plant species and 42 percent of all terrestrial vertebrates are found in the biodiversity hotspots, making them urgent priorities for biodiversity conservation on a global scale.

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