

A WETLAND OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS

TO BE INCLUDED IN THE LIST OF WETLANDS OF

INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE

Name: Inagua National Park

Area: 32,600 ha.

Location:	Longitude	Latitude	Point ¹
	73 36' 01" W	21 08' 12" N	A
	73 35' 22" W	21 04' 30" N	B
	73 30' 33" W	21 04' 29" N	C
	73 30' 34" W	20 58' 29" N	D
	73 09' 52" W	21 00' 27" N	E
	73 09' 45" W	21 10' 00" N	F

Description: Two maps of the Inagua National Park are attached

The wetlands within the Inagua National Park are the most significant and because of their status conform to the qualifications of the Convention. The Park boundary encompasses the most significant areas, namely the eastern portion of Lake Rosa, Close-in-Point Lakes and the lake areas along the central northern shore. While there are wetlands beyond the boundaries of the Park, they do not qualify under the terms of the Ramsar Convention.

The wetlands have not been colour coded because the interior Inagua National Park is an inter-connected system. The land areas throughout the Park act as a basin which renews the wetlands. To isolate the northlands for designation would be incomplete.

1. Physical.

The most significant physical feature of the Inagua National Park is the eastern section of Lake Rosa, a large permanent shallow lake at sea level and up to 1.5m deep, throughout which are scattered a number of small islands. Other wetlands in the National Park include: Union Creek, a saline lagoon with openings to the sea, extensive salt marshes and scattered mangroves; a permanent brackish marsh to the north of Lake Rosa, with many scattered pools and some mangroves; and Close-in-point Lakes, a permanent brackish marsh with dense mangrove swamps to the east of Lake Rosa.

¹ On large Map.

2. Vegetation.

There are dense mangrove swamps on the northern and eastern borders of Lake Rosa, with *Avicennia germinans* and *Conocarpus erectus*. There is also open scrub with seasonal marshes and some broad-leaf coppice on higher and drier ground.

3. Birds.

Lake Rosa and other open waters and marshes in the National Park are important areas for breeding, passage and wintering of many species of waterfowl. Lake Rosa is particularly important for its large breeding colony of the Caribbean Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus ruber ruber*). The population was estimated at about 21,000 birds in the early 1970's, but under close protection, the population has risen to an estimated 40,000 to 50,000 birds in recent years. The flock is now repopulating neighbouring islands.

Other breeding species include the Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*), Olivaceous Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax olivaceus*), Yellow-crowned Night Heron (*Nyctanassa violacea*), Green Heron (*Butorides virescens*), Egret (*Egretta caerulea*), Louisiana Heron (*E. tricolor*), Reddish Egret (*E. rufescens*), Great Egret, (*E. alba*), Roseate Spoonbill (*Ajaia ajaja*), West Indian Tree Duck (*Dendrocygna arborea*), Bahama Duck (*Anas bahamensis*), Kildeer (*Charadrius vociferus*), Snowy Plover (*C. alexandrinus*), Common Stilt (*Himantopus himantopus*), Gull-billed Tern (*Gelochelidon nilotica*), Least Tern (*Sterna albifrons*), Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) and Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica petechia*). The White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*) and Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*) occur on passage, and the Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) is common in winter.

The endangered Inagua Island Turtle (*Chrysemys malonei*), endemic to Great Inagua, is restricted to a few fresh or brackish pools on the island. Union Creek serves as a captive breeding and research site for Green Turtles. The rare Bahama Parrot (*Amazona leucocephala bahamensis*), an endemic sub-species now occurs only in Inagua and on the northern island of Abaco.

4. Legal Protection.

The entire Inagua National Park is Crown Land, but is under the jurisdiction and management of The Bahamas National Trust (BNT) (which was created in 1959 by Act of Parliament on a 99-year lease which expires in the year 2062. Under The Bahamas National Trust Act, the BNT has the power to create by-laws to manage and protect the resources within all national parks. As a result, the Trust can develop protection for habitats as a matter of course. The National Park is patrolled by three National Trust Wardens.

Protection of birds is also afforded under the Wild Bird (Protection) Act (last revised in 1972) and of other animals by the Wild Animals Protection Act (1952), both of which are administered by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. The same Ministry also administers the Fisheries Resources (Jurisdiction and Conservation) Act and its Amendments, which govern marine resources. The Flamingo is the National Bird of The Bahamas.

Environmental issues in The Bahamas are coordinated by The Bahamas Environment, Science and Technology Commission, which was established in 1992 in the Office of the Prime Minister.