



# Ramsar Sites Information Service

## Annotated List of Wetlands of International Importance

# Guatemala

7 Ramsar Site(s) covering 629,312 ha

### Eco-región Lachuá

Site number: 1,623 | Country: Guatemala | Administrative region: Alta Verapaz  
Area: 53,523 ha | Coordinates: 15°52'59"N 90°40'W | Designation dates: 24-05-2006  
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Eco-región Lachuá. 24/05/06; Alta Verapaz; 53,523 ha; 15°53'N 090°40'W. National Park. The Eco-región Lachuá comprises the "Laguna de Lachuá" National Park and its surrounding buffer zone. Among the most representative species reported in this site are the bat (*Thyroptera tricolor*) - only reported here for Guatemala - and a high concentration of mammals such as the cougar (*Puma concolor*), jaguar (*Panthera onca*), Baird's tapir (*Tapirus bairdii*), and various monkeys and reptiles including the well-known boa (*Boa constrictor*). Fisheries constitute an important resource for the local population. Potential oil exploration and disputes over the allocation of natural resources constitute the greatest threats to the site. Ramsar site no. 1623. Most recent RIS information: 2006.

### Humedal Manchón-Guamuchal

Site number: 725 | Country: Guatemala | Administrative region: San Marcos  
Area: 14,219.7 ha | Coordinates: 14°28'03"N 92°05'12"W | Designation dates: 25-04-1995  
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

In 2022 Guatemala updated this Site, amending its official area from 13,500 to 14,219 hectares. It is characterized by a combination of different plant communities including coastal dune flora, dry forest, mangrove forest, palm forest and freshwater marsh. The Site hosts rare and threatened species such as American crocodile (*Crocodylus acutus*) and leatherback and olive ridley sea turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea* and *Lepidochelys olivacea*). The wetland may be the only remaining site in Guatemala for migrating birds using the western flyway corridor. The Site possess the largest mangrove cover in Guatemala and hosts the greatest diversity of waterbirds in the country. Human activities inside the Site include shrimp farming, ranching, and cattle grazing. The main threats to the Site are the discharge of waste and toxic substances from agriculture and agroindustry in the upper parts of the watershed, and the over-exploitation of mangroves.

## Parque Nacional Laguna del Tigre

Site number: 488 | Country: Guatemala | Administrative region: El Petén

Area: 335,080 ha | Coordinates: 17°27'N 90°51'59"W | Designation dates: 26-06-1990

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Parque Nacional Laguna del Tigre. 26/06/90; Petén; 335,080 ha; 17°27'N 090°52'W. Added to the Montreux Record, 16 June 1993. Biosphere Reserve, Protected Biotope. An extensive complex of low-lying, seasonally flooded forest, slow-flowing rivers, marshes, permanent lagoons, and seasonal water bodies forming part of Guatemala's largest wetland. Most of the large vertebrates of Guatemala, and species limited to the Yucatán and El Petén peninsula, are supported. A group of families whose activities include maize and bean cultivation, hunting and fishing, inhabit the site. Several areas of archaeological importance have been identified. Included in the Montreux Record in 1993 due to threats by illegal hunting and wood cutting. Subject of a Ramsar Advisory Mission in 1997. Ramsar site no. 488. Most recent RIS information: 1998.

## Parque Nacional Yaxhá-Nakum-Naranjo

Site number: 1,599 | Country: Guatemala | Administrative region: Petén

Area: 37,160 ha | Coordinates: 16°57'49"N 89°23'19"W | Designation dates: 02-02-2006

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Parque Nacional Yaxhá-Nakum-Naranjo. 02/02/06; Petén; 37,160 ha; 17°09'N 089°25'W. National Park, UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. Located within the Reserva de la Biósfera Maya, 97% of the wetland is covered by forested lands, either high or seasonally flooded. It also contains various rivers, lagoons and pools such as the Yaxhá, Sacnab, Juleque, Lancajá and Champoxté. Among the species present are the Morelet's crocodile (*Crocodylus moreletti*), the white fish (*Petenia splendida*), the Central American river turtle (*Dermatemys mawi*), spider monkey (*Ateles geoffroyi*) and the collared peccary (*Tayassu tajacu*). It has been estimated that over 90% of the flora in the site has not been studied botanically nor chemically. There exist certain pressures on the site due to illegal extraction of natural resources, and a progressive deterioration in the quality of the water bodies has also been noted. Ramsar site No. 1599. Most recent RIS information: 2006.

## Punta de Manabique

Site number: 1,016 | Country: Guatemala | Administrative region: Izabal

Area: 132,900 ha | Coordinates: 15°50'N 88°28'W | Designation dates: 28-01-2000

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Punta de Manabique. 28/01/00; Izabal; 132,900 ha; 15°50'N 088°28'W. Area of Special Protection. Located in the Honduran Gulf on the Caribbean coast, the site includes a) marine; b) marshes and swamps; c) coastal; and d) terrestrial ecosystems. The marine area is shallow with a sandy bottom and a few patches of corals; the main vegetation here is *Tallasia*. The marshes and swamps serve as refuge for many species such as manatees (*Trichechus manatus*). The swamp is characterized by detritus and peat which have been transported by the Motagua River, the largest of Guatemala. The main plant communities are *Chrysobalanus icaco*, *Symphonia globulifera*, *Phragmites communis* and *Manicaria*. There are several threatened and vulnerable mammal species such as *Allouatta palliata*; *Tapirus bairdii*, *Tayassu tajacu*, *Tayassu pecari* and *Panthera onca* are also found in the area, as are *Crocodylus acutus* and *Iguana iguana*. Expansion of the grazing areas, use of pesticides and fertilizers, and development of tourist resorts present some threat. Access to the area is difficult, and the main economic activity, although restricted to a very small area, is fishing in shallow waters. Hunting of wildlife such as iguanas is also important, as well as grazing and rice plantations in the borders of the wetland. The management plan for the area is being prepared by FUNDARY (Fundación Mario Dary) with the support of CONAP (El Consejo Nacional de Areas Protegidas). Ramsar site no. 1016. Most recent RIS information: 2000.

## Refugio de Vida Silvestre Bocas del Polochic

Site number: 813 | Country: Guatemala | Administrative region: Izabal

Area: 21,227 ha | Coordinates: 15°24'59"N 89°21'59"W | Designation dates: 20-03-1996

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Refugio de Vida Silvestre Bocas del Polochic. 20/03/96; Izabal; 21,227 ha; 15°25'N 089°22'W. Special Protected Area, Refugio de Vida Silvestre Bocas del Polochic. One of the most important and varied areas of tropical rainforest in Guatemala. The site consists of various seasonal wetland habitats supporting diverse aquatic plants and lowlands of broad-leaved forest. The site has high species diversity, supporting numerous species at critical stages of their life cycle and whose populations are threatened or have disappeared in Guatemala. The natural isolation has led to endemic communities of fauna. The site serves as a biological corridor for large mammals inhabiting nearby ecosystems. Human activities include subsistence fishing, hunting, firewood cutting, agriculture, and cattle ranching. Ramsar site no. 813. Most recent RIS information: 1996.

## Reserva de Usos Múltiples Río Sarstún

Site number: 1,667 | Country: Guatemala | Administrative region: Izabal

Area: 35,202 ha | Coordinates: 15°51'N 88°58'W | Designation dates: 22-03-2007

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Reserva de Usos Múltiples Río Sarstún. 22/03/05; Izabal; 35,202 ha; 15°51'N 088°58'W. Multiple Use Reserve. Located along the southern border with Belize and adjacent to the Amatique Bay. The reserve is formed by a series of wetlands, ranging from continental and coastal to artificial. It has a transboundary character, since it acts as a buffer zone for the wetland of the Sarstoon-Temash Ramsar site in Belize. It is an important stop-over and breeding site for migratory waterbirds, including several flagship species. It also assists in the regulation of the local microclimate and promotes other hydrological processes, including aquifer recharge. It possesses the remains of the Caribbean Biological Corridor ecosystems and karstic wetlands that have unique characteristics. Endangered species such as the manatee (*Trichechus manatus*), the river turtle (*Dermatemys mawii*), the tapir (*Tapirus bairdii*) and the howler monkey (*Alouatta pigra*) are present in the site. The main habitat type is predominantly mangrove forests, including white, red, and black mangrove, forming the second largest system of mangroves in the Caribbean coast of Guatemala. Negative factors affecting the site are the exploitation of precious woods, hunting, agriculture and livestock grazing. Ramsar site no. 1667. Most recent RIS information: 2007.