

Dominican Republic



The Caribbean Marine Biodiversity Program is a five-year project (2014-2019), funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development and The Nature Conservancy, that aims to achieve sustained biodiversity conservation, maintain and restore critical ecosystems and realize tangible improvements in human and community wellbeing. Operating in five target countries—Dominican Republic, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica and St. Vincent & the Grenadines—the Program focuses on creating and effectively managing marine conserved areas and establishing and promoting sustainable fisheries. By addressing direct and indirect threats to coastal and marine biodiversity, the Caribbean Marine Biodiversity Program works to ensure a sustainable future where nature and people can thrive.

Caribbean Marine Biodiversity Program in the Dominican Republic

Samaná Bay is the largest semi-enclosed bay in the Caribbean, over 75,000 hectares, and contains the most extensive mangroves and shrimp fisheries in the country. The bay is also the most important sanctuary for humpback whales in the North Atlantic, serving as critical calving and nursery grounds, and whale watching provides a substantial contribution to the local economy. Approximately 2,000 fishers depend on the bay for their livelihood and as a source of food for their families, however unsustainable fishing practices have significantly depleted fish stocks.

To reduce threats to marine biodiversity in Samaná Bay, The Nature Conservancy and the Center for Conservation and Eco-Development of Samaná Bay and Its Surroundings (CEBSE), are actively working with collaborating partners to protect critical fish habitat, establish new locally managed marine conserved areas and promote the growth of ecotourism to foster alternative livelihoods. The Caribbean Marine Biodiversity Program supports the Marine Mammal Sanctuary Banks of La Plata and La Navidad, which help protect the humpback whale population and other marine species. The Program also supports Los Haitises National Park and Manglares del Bajo Yuna National Park, which wrap around part of Samaná Bay and shelter a large mangrove forest.

PROGRAM GOALS ACROSS FIVE TARGET COUNTRIES

- Establish effective, functional marine conserved areas and sustainable fisheries
- Protect and successfully manage at least 3.9 million hectares of nearshore coastal and marine habitat
- Establish reliable funding for marine and coastal conservation through the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund—an endowment fund providing long-term financial support for conserved area management today and into the future
- Demonstrate sustainable fishing practices and alternate livelihoods to benefit hundreds of fishers and community members
- Establish relationships with key private sector companies that promote ecotourism in support of marine conservation efforts



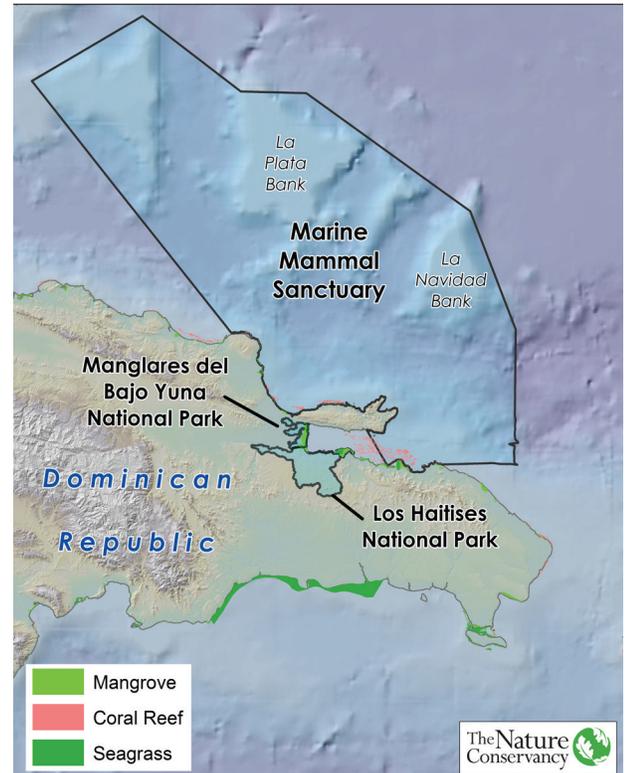
PROGRAM GOALS IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

- Support the commitment made by the Dominican Republic to protect at least 20% of its marine and coastal areas by 2020 as part of the Caribbean Challenge Initiative—a collaborative effort in the Caribbean to achieve unprecedented, lasting conservation goals throughout the region
- Help establish sustainable funding to support marine conserved area through the National Conservation Trust Fund of the Dominican Republic, which awards grants each year for on-the-ground conservation projects
- Support national fisheries policy planning and action
- Demonstrate and promote more sustainable fishing practices, such as substituting destructive bottom trawls with suripera nets for the shrimp fisheries
- Help strengthen fisher associations and cooperatives, empowering them to support sustainable fisheries and marine conserved areas
- Build local constituencies for conservation by promoting environmental awareness campaigns targeting communities living adjacent to marine conserved areas
- Promote ecotourism activities, such as kayak tours and whale watching, as alternative livelihood options that help reduce threats to marine biodiversity
- Promote other alternative livelihood options such as aquaculture
- Strengthen management of marine and coastal conserved areas in Samaná Bay, improving monitoring programs and supporting community outreach
- Support the establishment and successful local management of new marine conserved areas

PARTNERS

- The Center for Conservation and Eco-Development of Samaná Bay and Its Surroundings (CEBSE)
- Ministry of Environment and Natural Resource (MARENA)
- Dominican Council for Fisheries and Aquaculture (CODOPESCA)
- Center for Marine Conservation (CIBIMA/ Autonomous University of Santo Domingo UASD)
- Reef Check - Dominican Republic
- Local community groups and fisher associations

Marine Conserved Areas - Samaná Bay Seascape



FRONT PAGE LEFT TO RIGHT Mother and calf humpback whales in the Marine Mammal Sanctuary in the Samaná Bay seascape © CEBSE; A mangrove forest along the south coast of Samaná Bay © Mark Godfrey THIS PAGE LEFT TO RIGHT The Caribbean Marine Biodiversity Program is training Samaná Bay fishers to knit and use suripera nets, which are less damaging to marine habitat than equipment traditionally used. © Juan Carlos Ibarra; Fishermen pulling nets along the south coast of Samaná Bay © Mark Godfrey; Mangrove roots along the Samaná Bay coast © Mark Godfrey; MAP Marine conserved areas supported by the Caribbean Marine Biodiversity Program in the Samaná Bay seascape



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