

Bahamas Protected Area Design



The Bahamas National Protected Area System currently protects approximately 10% of the country's marine environment. Under the Caribbean Challenge Initiative (CCI), the Bahamas has committed to effectively conserving and managing at least 20% of its marine coastal environment by 2020.

[A national marine gap analysis](#) was done to assist the government of the Bahamas in reaching its 2020 CCI goal by identifying priority areas for establishing new MPAs (Knowles et al, 2017).

The analysis builds upon the work completed during two previous national gap analyses (Thurlow and Palmer 2007; Moss and Moultrie 2014) and includes these new elements:

- Expanding the objectives beyond biodiversity protection to include climate change and socioeconomic objectives (e.g. to support Bahamian livelihoods);
- Specifying a planning area that aligns with multiple national planning processes;
- Applying evidence-based biophysical, socioeconomic, and governance principles for the design of the marine protected area (MPA) network;
- Incorporating new and refined spatial data layers; and
- Using innovative scientific approaches to maximise the benefits of the MPA network, so that protected areas can adapt to climate change, enhance coral reef fisheries and benefit local

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communities.

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Citation: J.E. Knowles , A.L. Green, C. Dahlgre, F. Arnett, and Lindy Knowles. 2017. Expanding The Bahamas Marine Protected Area Network to Protect 20% of the Marine and Coastal Environment by 2020: A Gap Analysis. A report prepared by The Nature Conservancy under the Bahamas Protected Project. August 21, 2017.

Bahamas Protected is a three-year initiative to effectively manage and expand the Bahamian marine protected areas (MPA) network. It aims to support the Government of The Bahamas in meeting its commitment to the Caribbean Challenge Initiative (CCI); a regional agenda where 11 Caribbean countries committed to protect 20% of the marine and coastal habitat by 2020. CCI countries have also pledged to provide sustainable financing for effective management of MPAs.

Bahamas Protected is a joint effort between The Nature Conservancy, Bahamas National Trust, Bahamas Reef Environment Educational Foundation and multiple national stakeholders, with major funding from the international philanthropic organization, Oceans 5.