

Dominican Republic - Samaná Bay



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Overview

Fed by the Yuna River, Samaná Bay is one of the largest estuaries in the Caribbean and is an important habitat for humpback whales, sea turtles, manatees, as well as corals and seagrasses. The nutrient-rich waters of the bay also create ideal conditions for commercially-valuable seafood. In response to increasing sedimentation in the bay due to fishing and deforestation, as well as increasing demands for freshwater diverted from the Yuna River, planning team conducted outreach to fishers and tourism operators in communities surrounding the bay. Through interviews and public meetings, the team used Marxan with Zones to create draft zoning schemes involving a range of potential uses, and obtained stakeholder feedback on the zoning design. Other project outreach activities included trainings on how to use marine planning tools, public access to the project database, and efforts to promote public awareness of environmental issues.

The team ultimately selected a zoning scheme with four different categories:

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- Areas of natural resource reserves protecting critical seagrass and coral reef habitats
- Conservancies which prohibit extractive uses maintaining systems for controlling and monitoring other, permitted activities
- Tourist areas which offer recreation and tourism opportunities to the public while maintaining systems for monitoring and control of these activities
- Fishing areas that are also monitored to better understanding fisheries resources

The project team selected this scheme as its official technical recommendation to the authorities of the Dominican government and recommended a second phase of planning that would continue engagement of key stakeholders while filling data gaps for these sectors and establishing ecological monitoring activities in the planning area.

TNC's Role

- Process facilitation
- Stakeholder engagement
- Science/technical expertise
- Marxan

TNC worked with CEBSE (Centro para la Conservacion y el Eco-desarrollo de la Bahía de Samaná Bay), a local conservation group, to plan and facilitate stakeholder workshops and to develop recommendations for the Dominican government. TNC also compiled geospatial data on ecosystems and led the Marxan analysis to develop draft zoning plans.

Project Partners

Lead Institution: Various

Other Partners: CEBSE, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, Dominican Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture, USAID (funder), David and Lucille Packard Foundation (Funder)

Status

The zoning design was completed in 2014 but has not been implemented.

Fact Sheets and Project Links

[Romero, T.D., Yew, E.D., Schill, S.R. 2012. Ecosystem-based zoning in Samaná Bay, Dominican Republic. Proceedings of the 65th Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute. Santa Marta, Columbia. \[Translated from Spanish version\]](#)

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