

Title/ Name of Area

Presented by:

Allena Joseph

Fisheries Biologist

Department of Fisheries

Ministry of Agriculture, Food Production, Fisheries and Rural Development.

SAINT LUCIA

Introduction

The information presented here comes from the Saint Lucia Protected Area Systems Plan which was revised in 9th December 2009, but has not been cabinet approved. The plan is still widely used to guide and inform the day-today work of both governmental and non-governmental institutions.

Site assessments were not carried out and therefore the plan had to be developed in the absence of much of the detailed site information and therefore the information was gathered through a GAP analysis which took place during a three day workshop in July.

- East Coast MMA
- West Coast MMA- which includes the already LMPA designated SMMA and CAMMA
- Laborie MMA
- Cold Upwelling MMA

This Plan proposed the establishment of a network of 27 'management areas', comprising both existing designated areas, together with a suite of new ones. The four areas identified for protection would also include areas that are already designated Marine Reserves.

Location

It is proposed that three Marine Management Areas (MMAs) should be established along Saint Lucia's Coastline: i.e. East Coast MMA, Laborie MMA and West Coast MMA. Collectively, these would encompass approximately 70% of this coastline. In addition, it is proposed that a Marine Management Area should be declared over the core of the 'Cold Upwelling' off the west coast, which is understood to be of critical importance to the productivity of the island's west coast fisheries (see Map 1).

The process of developing this Systems Plan has revealed that there are significant gaps in the bathymetric data for the seas around Saint Lucia. Marine specialists have indicated that the seaward boundary of the three coastal MMAs should extend to 75 metres in depth or 300 metres from high water, whichever is the greater. This criterion also applies to the extent of the MMA around offshore

islands. At the present time, there is insufficient bathymetric data to plot this line. Therefore, Map 1 includes a provisional seaward boundary at a standard distance of 500 metres from high water, both from the mainland and around offshore islands. It is believed that in most areas, and especially on the west coast, this will encompass all of the proposed MMA plus a buffer. This line should be treated as the temporary boundary of the MMA until such time as bathymetric data is available which allows the correct 75 metre/300 metre boundary to be plotted.

Feature description of the proposed area

East Coast Marine Management Area

The East Coast MMA extends from Pigeon Island in the north and along the east coast to Mathurin Point near the southern tip of the island. From a point just to the north of Giromon Point in Anse Louvette Bay to the Fond D'Or River in Fond D'Or Bay, this MMA forms a part of the Iyanola National Park.

The east coast of Saint Lucia tends to be quite considerably shallower than the west coast and therefore this MMA is likely to extend a greater distance out sea than in the other two coastal MMAs. The presence of several offshore islands along this east coast (e.g. Dennery Island, Praslin Island, Scorpion Island and the Maria islands) will tend to accentuate this. The MMA is believed to encompass all or a part of 12 Marine Reserves, most of which are of importance for the protection of mangroves and turtle nesting beaches:

- Marquis Mangroves Marine Reserve
- Anse Pointe Sable - Mankoté Marine Reserve
- Maria Islet Reef Marine Reserve
- Savannes Bay Mangrove Marine Reserve
- Esperance Harbour Mangrove Marine Reserve
- Praslin Mangrove Marine Reserve
- Fond d'or Beach and Mangrove Marine Reserve
- Louvette Mangrove Marine Reserve
- Grand Anse Beach and Mangrove Marine Reserve
- Cas-en-bas Mangrove Marine Reserve
- Moule-a-Chique Artificial Reef Marine Reserve
- Caesar - Mathurin Reefs Marine Reserve

West Coast Marine Management Area

The West Coast MMA extends from Marigot Point in the north to near Morne Sion in the south (a point that is coincident with the southern boundary of the Pitons National Park). From the southern edge of Canaries to Morne Sion, the MMA forms part of proposed Pitons National Park. The seabed along this west coast slopes quite steeply and therefore the 75 metre depth contour is likely to be quite close to the shore. Once detailed bathymetric surveys have been completed, it is likely that a significant part of the MMA boundary will be pulled back to 300 metres from high water. The MMA is believed to encompass all or a part of 8 Marine Reserves, all of which are of importance for the protection of natural or artificial reef ecosystems:

- Anse Cochon Artificial Reef Marine Reserve
- Anse Galet Reefs Marine Reserve
- Rachette Reefs Marine Reserve
- Anse Chastenet Reefs Marine Reserve
- Rachette Reefs Marine Reserve
- Petit Piton Reefs Marine Reserve
- Gros Piton Reefs Marine Reserve
- Anse la Verdure Artificial Reef Marine Reserve

The MMA also encompasses two Local Fisheries Management Areas (LFMAs): the Soufriere LFMA and the Anse la Raye/Canaries LFMA.

Laborie Marine Management Area

The Laborie MMA includes the section of the south coast between Laborie and Choiseul. There is relatively little information about marine ecosystems along this coast but is believed that there are extensive areas of significant conservation interest. Survey work is required to confirm the nature and extent of the area of interest.

This MMA does not include any existing Marine Reserves but one area from Laborie Bay to the mouth of the River Dorée has been flagged up as a potentially important reef which warrants further research and could potentially be worthy of protection and designation as a Marine Reserve.

Cold Upwelling Marine Management Area

This MMA covers an extensive area to the west of Saint Lucia which is understood to be of significant importance for the fishing industry as an upwelling of mineral rich waters.

It is also worth noting that fishing banks in the north and south of the island are exploited for snapper, grouper and other bank species. There is no available information on the status of these habitats.

Feature condition and future outlook of the proposed area

It is very difficult to determine the threat categories for marine and coastal species and habitats in St. Lucia since few relevant studies have been carried out and very little monitoring of the existing and proposed marine/coastal areas takes place.

The following identifies the possible threats to the proposed areas;

- Habitat degradation due to poor water quality, overfishing, natural disasters.
- Poor agricultural practices continue to degrade nearshore marine systems. Increase siltation as a result of deforestation of slopes and poor soil and water conservation measures.
- Uncontrolled exploitation of marine and coastal resources, illegal exploitation such as unapproved foreign fishing, fishing in marine reserves and illegal fishing methods.

Assessment of area against CBD EBSA Criteria

The lack of site assessments would allow for significant information gaps. Therefore assessing the areas based on the EBSA Criteria would be gathered through the information provided based on the technical advice from the relevant agencies during the GAP analysis that was conducted in developing the Saint Lucia Protected Area Systems Plan.

East Coast MMA

Uniqueness or rarity- Don't Know

Special importance for life history stages of species-

Importance for threatened, endangered or declining species and/or habitats- low

Vulnerability, fragility, sensitivity or slow recovery-some

Biological productivity- don't know

Biological diversity- don't know

Naturalness

West Coast MMA- which includes the already LMPA designated SMMA and CAMMA

Uniqueness or rarity- Don't Know

Special importance for life history stages of species- Some

Importance for threatened, endangered or declining species and/or habitats- Some

Vulnerability, fragility, sensitivity or slow recovery- Some

Biological productivity – Some

Biological diversity - Some

Naturalness

Laborie MMA

Uniqueness or rarity- Don't Know

Special importance for life history stages of species-

Importance for threatened, endangered or declining species and/or habitats- Some

Vulnerability, fragility, sensitivity or slow recovery- Some

Biological productivity- Don't Know

Biological diversity – Don't know

Naturalness- Don't know

Cold Upwelling MMA

Uniqueness or rarity- Don't know

Special importance for life history stages of species- don't know

Importance for threatened, endangered or declining species and/or habitats- don't know

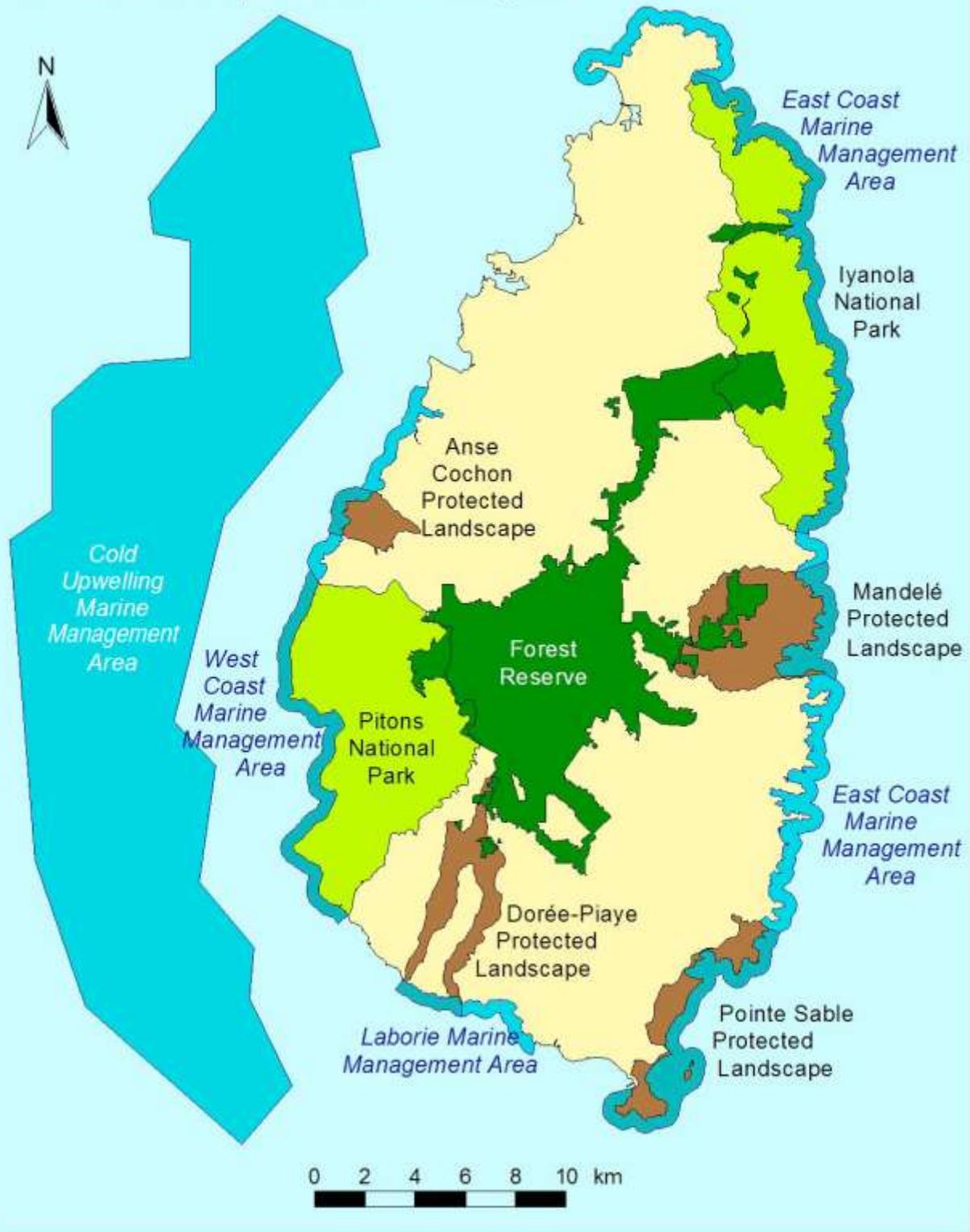
Vulnerability, fragility, sensitivity or slow recovery- don't know

Biological productivity- don't know

Biological diversity – don't know

Naturalness

Map 1: The Forest Reserve and Proposed National Parks, Protected Landscapes and Marine Management Areas



Map 2 : Existing/Proposed Marine Reserves and Proposed Nature Reserves

