The Government of Belize has added its second wetland site to the Ramsar List, as of 19 October 2005: Sarstoon Temash National Park (16,955 hectares, 15°58'N 089°00'W) is a complex of several different terrestrial ecosystem types located in Toledo district on the southern frontier with Guatemala, bisected by two large rivers, one of which forms the international border across which lies Sarstun, hopefully a future Ramsar site. Seasonally and permanently flooded forests predominate, with some 1,100 hectares of lowland sphagnum moss bog unique to the region, a saline/brackish inland lagoon, and 9,600 ha of saline swamps, with the country’s most undisturbed and largest stand of red mangrove (*Rhizophora mangle*) and its only stands of Comfra Palm (*Manicaria saccifera*). Several threatened and vulnerable species are supported, such as Black Howler Monkey, the Hickatee Turtle, the tapir *Tapirus bairdii*, the West Indian Manatee, and Morelett’s Crocodile. The buffer zone of the park is home to the indigenous Kekchi Maya and Garifuna people, both of which attach high cultural importance to parts of the site. Stands of mahogany, cedar, and rosewood are targets for illegal crossborder logging efforts. The Sarstoon Temash Institute for Indigenous Management (SATIIM) is active in research and management planning for the site and has a co-management agreement with the government.

Belize now has two Ramsar sites totaling 23,592 hectares. [27/10/05]

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