Honduras designates Laguna de Alvarado as its 11th Wetland of International Importance

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Honduras

Honduras has designated a new Wetland of International Importance: Sistema de Humedal Laguna de Alvarado (no. 2418 on the List of Wetlands of International Importance), a lagoon-estuary system located in the urban area of the city of Puerto Cortés on the north coast. Covering an area of 13,846 hectares, it is part of the Mesoamerican Reef system that extends from Mexico to Honduras and is considered one of the seven underwater wonders of the world.

The site plays a fundamental role in the connectivity of species and in maintaining the hydrological cycle between the 13 watersheds and micro-basins that produce water in the country. It provides shelter and habitat for various threatened fish species such as the critically endangered Nassau grouper (Epinephelus striatus), and the vulnerable glass goby (Coryphopterus hyalinus) and Atlantic Goliath grouper (Epinephelus itajara).

Laguna de Alvarado is also an essential source of food for the subsistence of local communities as it is a spawning and breeding site for fish such as common snook (Centropomus undecimalis) and streaked prochilod (Prochilodus lineatus). In addition, it has some of the highest living coral coverage rates in the Caribbean, with the presence of critically endangered species such as the staghorn coral (Acropora cervicornis).

Threats to the ecological value of the site include the expansion of African oil palm (Elaeis guineensis) farming, as well as uncontrolled fishing.