



# Jamaica's fourth Wetland of International Importance

14 June 2012

Jamaica



The Caribbean state of Jamaica has designated its fourth Ramsar site, called Mason River

Protected Area, Bird Sanctuary and Ramsar Site (82 hectares, 18°11'38"N 077°15'46"W). As summarized by Ramsar's Nury Furlan, the new site occupies a flattish area with several surface depressions, ponds, and sinkholes that seasonally store surface water, located in the hilly countryside of central Jamaica. All of its wetland types have an important ecological function in preventing downstream flooding by absorbing precipitation. The site is a representative and rare example of an upland peat bog and scrub savannah. There are approximately 430 plant species found there, with 11% of endemism, some of which are listed as vulnerable in the IUCN Red List, such as *Bactris jamaicana*, *Calyptrothrix nodosa*, *Cordia troyana* and *Hieronima jamaicensis*. The site also contains several species of the moss *Sphagnum* spp. which are essential for the existence of the bog. Likewise, it is also important for the endemic *Mellisuga minima*, the migratory species *Oporornis agilis*, and such carnivorous plants as the native *Drosera capillaries*, *Urticularia* spp., and *Dionaea muscipula*. It currently acts as an educational resource for students within the area and throughout Jamaica. Threats include invasive species, illegal bird shooting, fires, illegal removal of trees, and encroachment. Ramsar Site no. 1990.

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