



Factsheet

# The Protocol on Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife in the Wider Caribbean (SPAW):

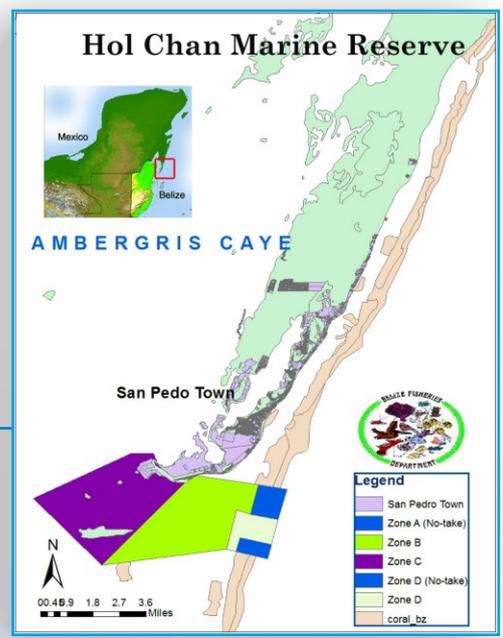
## Hol Chan Marine Reserve

- A SPAW listed site -

### Identification

**Country:** Belize  
**Name of the area:** Hol Chan Marine Reserve  
**Administrative region:** Belize District  
**Date of establishment:** 7/1/1987  
**Geographic location:**  
 Longitude X: -88.020058  
 Latitude Y: 17.875184  
**Date of listing under SPAW:** 23 October 2012

**Contacts:**  
 Caribena Street - San Pedro Town - Belize  
 Website: [www.holchanmarinereserve.org](http://www.holchanmarinereserve.org)  
 Email address: [hcmr@btl.net](mailto:hcmr@btl.net)



### Introduction

The Hol Chan Marine Reserve (HCMR) was established in 1987 to conserve a small but representative portion of Belize's coastal ecosystem. The process of establishing the marine protected area involved a complex set of consultations and compromises between tour guides, fishermen, conservationists and government. ultimately the Marine Reserve was created through a collective initiative. The HCMR was created under the Fisheries Act as a multi-use protected area. A zoning scheme was developed in order to ensure sustainable use and guarantee its conservation.

The marine reserve has become an important snorkel and dive site due to its diversity, size and number of fish found in the area. management have capitalized on tourism by levying a fee on foreign tourist. Revenues from the visitor's fee are reinvested into management activities of the protected area. This has allowed the marine reserve to finance most of its operations. Currently, there is a permanent staff of 16 individual working in enforcement, environmental education and monitoring and research. The marine reserve operates offices and visitors' center from San Pedro town and Caye Caulker.

Hol Chan is divided into four zones. Zone A includes the coral reef and is the no-take zone where only recreational activities are allowed. Zone B protects the sea grass beds. Fishing is allowed but only to traditional users. Spear fishing and netting are prohibited. Zone C provides protection to the mangrove wetlands. sport fishing is a common practice in this area. Zone D is a special management area that was annexed to Hol Chan in 1999. Traditional users are allowed to continue their fishing practice except in the "Exclusive Recreational Area' of Shark Ray Ally.

The HCMR falls under the Fisheries Department and management is conducted through the Hol Chan Marine Reserve Board of Trustees. This is a legal entity created by the Government of Belize to manage the affairs of the marine protected area. The Board of Trustees is made up of private and public sector entities and meet quarterly to deal with issues of the marine reserve.

#### SPAW criteria met

- Ecological criteria**
- Representativeness
  - Conservation value
  - Rarity
  - Naturalness
  - Critical habitats
  - Diversity
  - Connectivity/coherence
  - Resilience

- Cultural and socio-economic criteria**
- Productivity
  - Cultural and traditional use
  - Socio-economic benefits

## Site description

### General features of the site

**Size:** 55 sq. km

**Terrestrial surface under sovereignty, excluding wetlands:**

0 sq. km

**Wetland surface:** 900 ha

**Marine surface:** 42 sq. Km

**National status of your protected area:** National Park

**Marine ecoregion:** 68. Western Caribbean

### Management structure, authority

The HCMR was established under the Fisheries act and management is through a statutory body legally created by the government of Belize to manage the affairs of the Marine Reserve.

Stakeholders are included as members of the HCMR Board of Trustees. Local community representatives include a representative of the local tourism sector, a representative of a local NGO, a representative of the local business community, a representative of the fishermen's cooperative and the Mayor of San Pedro Town.

Participants in other committees or bodies such as a scientific committee, advisory board or a body of representatives from the local stakeholders, the public, the professional and non-governmental sectors.

### Management plan

The HCMR has a management plan that is currently under revision.

### Main fauna populations and/or those of particular importance present (resident or migratory) in the area:

The main fauna population in the marine reserve marine including fish, Cnidarians and other invertebrates. Commercially valuable species include various species of fin fish, spiny lobster and queen conch. Also found at the marine reserve are the endangered manatee and marine turtle including the hawksbill, logger head and green turtles.

### Inhabitants inside the area or in the zone of potential direct impact on the protected area:

Inside the area:

Permanent: Not given

Seasonal: Not given

In the zone of direct impact:

Permanent: 22500

Seasonal: Not given

Comments about the previous table:

There are no human settlements within the protected area but there are two neighboring communities. HCMR is in the southern tip of Ambergris Caye and San Pedro Town is the only settlement on the island.

### International status and Date of designation

Biosphere reserve: No

Ramsar site: No

Significant bird area: No

World heritage site (UNESCO): No

Others: IUCN category II: Yes 1/1/87

SPAW Site : 2012



## Links

PA LISTING : [www.spaw-palisting.org](http://www.spaw-palisting.org)

CaMPAM : <http://campam.gcfi.org/campam.php>

UNEP-CEP : [www.cep.unep.org/](http://www.cep.unep.org/)

SPAW-RAC : [www.car-spaw-rac.org](http://www.car-spaw-rac.org)