CARIBBEAN

Facts & figures

Geography
Total area (Land & EEZ): 682,237 km²
Total Land area:
- F: 3 ORs & 1 OT: 2,830 km²
- UK: 5 OTs: 1,035 km²
- NL: 3 OCs & 3 OTs: 1,005 km²

Overall estimated protected and managed areas (terrestrial and marine):
- F: 3 ORs & 1 OT: 3,200 km²
- NL: 3 OCs & 3 OTs: 2,905 km²
- UK: 5 OTs: 1,010 km²

Exclusive economic zone (EEZ):
- F: 3 ORs & 1 OT: 143,000 km²
- UK: 5 OTs: 453,080 km²
- NL: 3 OCs & 3 OTs: 81,287 km²

Socio-economic facts
Overseas entities in the Caribbean region:
- 4 French entities: 3 ORs and 1 OT
- 6 Dutch Caribbean entities: 6 OCTs
- 5 UK entities: 5 OTs

Total population:
- F: 3 ORs & 1 OT: 838,000 inhab.
- UK: 5 OTs: 148,300 inhab.
- NL: 3 OCs & 3 OTs: 340,000 inhab.

Population density:
- Density min. in Montserrat: 45 inhab/km²
- Density max. in St. Maarten: 1,095 inhab/km²

Average annual GDP:
- Min. GDP/inhab. (Montserrat): 12,700 €/inhab.
- Max. GDP/inhab. (Cayman Is.): 43,700 €/inhab.

Current situation & main challenges

Legal and political context
The Caribbean region comprises 15 European Outermost Regions (ORs) and Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) politically attached to France, the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the United Kingdom (UK).

French ORs & OCTs (Overseas Territories):
- 3 French ORs: Guadeloupe, Martinique, Saint-Martin
- 1 French OT: Saint-Barthélemy

Dutch Caribbean OCTs:
- 3 independent Overseas Countries (OCs) within the Kingdom of the Netherlands: Aruba, Curaçao, Saba, St Eustatius
- 3 special municipalities within the Netherlands: Bonaire, Saba, St Eustatius

UK OTs:
- 5 UK OTs: Anguilla, British Virgin Islands (BVI), Cayman Islands, Montserrat, Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI)

Network of protected areas
An important network of marine and terrestrial protected areas:
- A total of 11 legally designated protected areas in the Dutch OCTs with about 124 km² of terrestrial Parks and 2,780 km² of Marine Parks. Saba's protected areas include the Saba Bank National Park (2,688 km²).
- The 4 French ORs and OTs gather about 3,200 km² of overall protected and managed areas (National and Regional Parks, Réserves Naturelles Nationales, Biological Reserves). About 43 km² are owned by Conservatoire du Littoral (CELRL) and 18 km² are under Biotope Protection order. National Forest manages about 540 km² of public forests.
- The AGOA Sanctuary for marine mammals encompasses the exclusive economic zones (EEZ) of the Caribbean French islands (143,000 km²).
- A diverse network of terrestrial and marine protected areas (1,010 km²) in the 5 UK OTs. The BVI recently identified 40 areas (about 140 km²) for inclusion in the marine protected area (MPA) network, with designation in progress.

Socio-economic context
Over the last decades, tourism (with associated construction and service industries) has become the primary economic activity in the majority of these Caribbean Islands. Populations of smaller islands fluctuate during the year due to seasonal influx of tourists.

Other main economic activities include: fishing, agriculture, food production, offshore financial services, oil refining.

Healthy ecosystems and ecosystem services are essentials to the economies of those territories.
Current conservation status

Threats and pressures on biodiversity
Numerous factors impact Caribbean islands biodiversity, including the introduction of exotic and invasive species, destruction or fragmentation of habitats, unregulated development, pollution (sewage, terrestrial run-off, oil spills). These anthropogenic factors affect ecosystems resilience.

Natural events (tropical storms, volcanic activities) and climate change effects are likely to exacerbate the degradation of ecosystems.

Threatened ecosystems: coral reefs, seagrass beds, mangroves and wetlands, dry and rain forests.

The 3 European Countries are signatories to International Treaties and Conventions, among these:
- Convention on Biological Diversity
- RAMSAR Convention
- The Cartagena Convention with SPAW Protocol
- The Bonn Convention
- CITES

International recognition of natural habitats and wildlife:
- 16 RAMSAR sites: 3 sites in French ORs and OTs, 10 sites in Dutch OCTs, 3 sites in UK OTs
- 8 sites under SPAW label: Parc National de la Guadeloupe, St. Martin ponds, Réserve Naturelle Nationale de St.Martin et des iles de Petite-Terre, AGOA Sanctuary, Saba Bank National Park, Man of War Shoal Marine Park in St.Maarten, Quill/Boven National Terrestrial Park in St. Eustatius
- Man and Biosphere Reserve (UNESCO): Parc National de la Guadeloupe
- Bonaire National Marine Park designed as UNEP Demonstration Site for sustainable Protected Areas management
- One Particularly Sensitive Sea Area on the Saba Bank (International Maritime Organisation)

Some notable on-going projects:
- Evaluation of sites for the implementation under RAMSAR or SPAW labels (ORs and OCTs of NL, UK, F)
- Sites in the French ORs and Dutch OCTs are under examination to be nominated as UNESCO World Heritage Sites
- Designation of a marine mammal and sharks sanctuary in the Caribbean waters of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
- New areas to be included in the BVI MPA network
- New terrestrial and marine protected areas are under study in Martinique

BEST Caribbean projects granted in 2011
- Project CARIPES - Quantification of ecosystem services provided by the marine protected areas in the Caribbean with a view to their payment UAG CRPLC (Université des Antilles et de la Guyane - Centre de recherche sur les pouvoirs locaux de la Caraïbe)
- Project EcoServPlantain - Quantification of Ecosystem Services in Agroecosystems, case of Plantain banana in Martinique CIRAD (Centre de Coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement)

BEST Caribbean projects granted in 2012
- Project Conserving Species and Sites of International Importance by the Eradication of Invasive Alien Species in the Caribbean UK Overseas Territories The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- Project Mang - Giving impetus to a collective movement in favour of the preservation of coastal wetlands in EU overseas territories Atelier Technique des Espaces Naturels (ATEN)

Biodiversity
These islands form part of the Caribbean Biodiversity Hotspot and are home to an important terrestrial, aquatic and marine biodiversity with especially high levels of species endemism due to insularity.

Environmental scene:

Dutch OCTs:
- These 6 Islands include the greatest biodiversity of the Kingdom of the Netherlands with over 170 endemic species and about 75 species globally endangered or vulnerable (IUCN Red List)
- 23 identified Important Birds Areas (45,030 ha): Aruba (4), Bonaire (6), Curaçao (5), Saba (1), St.Eustatius (2), St.Maarten (5)

UK OTs:
- The UK has 14 OTs (5 of which in the Caribbean region) that hold 94% of known endemic British species and 303 globally threatened species (IUCN)
- The 5 Caribbean UK OTs harbor high levels of terrestrial and marine biodiversity and have at least 230 known endemic species
- 41 identified Important Birds Areas (266,123 ha): Anguilla (16), BVI (3), Cayman Islands (10), Montserrat (3), TCI (9)

French ORs and OTs:
- These 4 islands gather an important biodiversity, including at least 78 endemic plant species and 30 endemic terrestrial vertebrates (IUCN)
- Guadeloupe and Martinique have respectively 114 and 143 plant species and 56 and 32 animal species globally endangered or vulnerable (IUCN and Local Red Lists, Conservatoire Botanique)
- 25 identified Important Birds Areas (107,041 ha): Guadeloupe (9), Martinique (10), Saint-Barthélemy (3), Saint-Martin (3)

Ecological connectivity:
These European ORs and OCTs support important wildlife corridors for migratory populations, such as birds or marine mammals.
About 90 IBAs are identified among these territories providing essential habitats for bird populations (including breeding, wintering and/or migrating bird species).

Key Biodiversity Areas identified in the Caribbean Islands Hotspot (CEPF 2010)*
- 35 sites in the UK OTs: Anguilla (6), Cayman Islands (8), Montserrat (3), TCI (11), BVI (7)
- 8 sites in the Dutch OCTs: Aruba (1), St Eustatius (2), Bonaire (4), Saba (1)
- 21 sites in the French ORs and OTs: Guadeloupe (8), Martinique (8), St Barth (4), St Martin (1)
* This list of KBAs will be updated for the European Overseas entities.

Useful links
http://www.car-spaw-rac.org/
http://reservenaturelle-saint-martin.com/
http://www.dcnanature.org/
http://www.dcbd.nl/
http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/
http://www.ukotcf.org/
http://campam.qcif.org/
Anguilla Bush, Rondeléria anguillensis (C. André Samuel-Department of Environment, Anguilla©)

Bottlenose Dolphin, Tursiops truncatus (Dany Moussa, OMMAG©)

Yellow-shouldered Amazon, Amazona barbadensis (Sam Williams, Echo©)

White-tailed Deer, Odocoileus virginianus curassavicus (Henkjan Kievit, Shape Photography©)

**References**

**France**

**United Kingdom**

**Kingdom of the Netherlands**