



© Dominique Rene, Ile aux Aigrettes Nature Reserve, Mauritius

8.12 Mauritius

Protected and conserved areas in Mauritius⁶⁷

Mauritius has 44 protected areas covering 97 km² of the land and 50 km² of the ocean (UNEP-WCMC & IUCN, 2019m).

While the coverage of terrestrial protected areas remains unchanged since 2010, there has been a focus on the restoration of native forests, and a large system of marine protected areas comprising fishing reserves, marine parks and marine reserves has been established in the waters around Mauritius and Rodrigues. Mauritius has also established a new paradigm for protected areas, fostering private sector involvement in ownership and management of protected areas.

Transboundary protected and conserved areas

Mauritius includes part of the Western Indian Ocean Transfrontier Marine Park.

Policy context

A comprehensive report on legislation and policy related to protected area management, governance, and equity was undertaken by the BIOPAMA programme. It identified 41 relevant laws and policies in Mauritius (Tessema, 2019).

Key species⁶⁸

Mauritius and Rodrigues are home to high levels of endemism amongst plants, reptiles, invertebrates and birds, although there have been several extinctions due to invasive species. There are 691 native flowering plants species, of which 273 are endemic (150 endemic to the Mascarene Archipelago) in Mauritius and 150 native flowering plants species, of which 47 are endemic (72 endemic to the Mascarene Archipelago) in Rodrigues. The only native mammals are bats (fruit bats and tomb bats) and to-date nine endemic species of land bird and eleven endemic reptile species exist on the island. Two species of fruit bat currently occur in the Republic of Mauritius: *Pteropus niger* in Mauritius and *Pteropus rodricensis* in Rodrigues. Of the 17 reptile species that used to be found in Mauritius, only 12 remain of which 11 endemic species, and 7 of these are restricted to offshore islets where they escaped extinction from rats. Moreover, five of these species are restricted to Round Island.

Pressures and threats⁶⁹

Habitat clearance and invasive alien species have been the most significant threat to the biodiversity of Mauritius to date. Climate change and pollution have also caused pressure on the island's ecosystems. Indirect drivers of biodiversity loss include demographic change, and socio-political factors, particularly funding and capacity for biodiversity conservation.

⁶⁷ The section draws on information contained in Mauritius' Fifth National Report to the CBD and its Second NBSAP (Republic of Mauritius, 2015; 2017).

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

Figure 8.23 Mauritius Summary



Total Population (millions)
1.27



Population growth (annual %)
0.10



Surface area (km²) (thousands)
2.00



GDP (current US\$) (billions)
14.22



GDP growth (annual %)
3.80

Source: The World Bank Group, 2018.

Area Protected:

44 protected areas



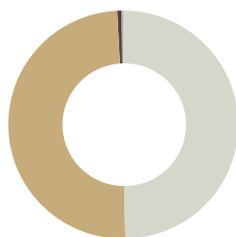
covering **97 km²** of land



covering **50 km²** of ocean

Source: UNEP-WCMC & IUCN, 2019m

Protected and conserved areas in Mauritius in IUCN Management Categories



- Not Assigned (No. 1)
- Not Reported (No. 10)
- IV. Habitat / Species Management (No. 21)
- II. National Park (No. 10)
- Ia. Strict Nature Reserve (No. 1)

Source: UNEP-WCMC & IUCN (2019m).



691 native flowering plants species



only native mammals are bats



12 reptile species

Coverage of protected areas in Mauritius

| Type of protected area | Area protected or conserved* | Area protected or conserved** |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Terrestrial and inland water | 4.73% | 4.00% |
| Coastal and marine | 0.00% | 0.01% |

* WDPA dataset

** From National Report on Biodiversity

Source: Republic of Mauritius (2017); UNEP-WCMC & IUCN (2019m).

Protected and conserved areas designated as global sites of importance in Mauritius

| Global designation | No. of sites |
|---|--------------|
| UNESCO Man and Biosphere Reserves | 1 |
| Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites) | 3 |

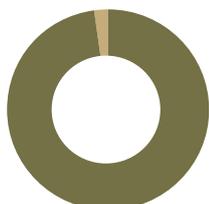
Source: Ramsar (2019); UNESCO (2019a, 2019b)

National designations of protected and conserved areas in Mauritius

| National designation | No. | Area (km ²) |
|----------------------|-----|-------------------------|
| National Park | 2 | 61 |
| Marine Park | 2 | 6 |
| Nature Reserve | 18 | 9 |
| Turtle Reserve | 2 | 0 |
| Fishing Reserve | 6 | 68 |
| Islet National Park | 8 | 2 |
| Endemic Garden | 1 | 3 |
| Ancient Monument | 1 | 0 |

Source: UNEP-WCMC & IUCN (2019m)

Protected and conserved areas in Mauritius in IUCN Governance Types



- C. Private Governance (No. 2)
- A. Governance by Government (No. 42)

Source: UNEP-WCMC & IUCN (2019m)

Priority areas for conservation



2 sites
Alliance for Zero Extinction sites



16 sites
Important Bird & Biodiversity Areas



18 sites
Key Biodiversity Areas

Source: AZE Secretariat (2019); BirdLife International (2019b, 2019c).

Figure 8.24 Mauritius protected areas



© Nik Cole, Radiata Tortoise on Round Island, Mauritius