

## Special Fishery Conservation Areas (SFCA)

Special Fishery Conservation Areas are no-fishing zones reserved for the reproduction of fish populations. Their nature reserve statuses are declared by the Agriculture Minister under Orders privileged through Section 18 of the Fishing Industry Act of 1975. It is, therefore, illegal and punishable by law to engage in any unauthorized fishing activities in the demarcated zones.

Bogue Island Lagoon, Montego Bay and Bowen Inner Harbour, St Thomas, were the first two SFCA to be declared. Now there are twelve (12) declared marine protected areas.

<b>Declared Special Fishery Conservation Areas</b>	<b>Management Organisation</b>	<b>Funding</b>
Bogue Island Lagoon, St. James	Mobay Marine Park Trust (MBMPT)	Government
Bowden, St. Thomas	Fisheries Division	Government
Three Bays, St. Catherine	C-CAM Foundation	Government
Salt Harbour, Clarendon	C-CAM Foundation	Government
Galleon Harbour, St. Elizabeth	The Breds Foundation	Government
Montego Bay Marine Park, St. James	Mobay Marine Park Trust	Government
Bluefields Bay, Westmoreland	Bluefields Bay Fishermen's Friendly Society	Government
Oracabessa Bay, St. Mary	Oracabessa Foundation	Government
Discovery Bay, St. Ann	Alloa Fisherman's Association	Government
Orange Bay, St Mary	NEPT	Government
Sandals Boscobel, St. Mary	Sandals Foundation	<b>Private Sector</b>
<b>Proposed SFCA's</b>		
Fish Bay, St. Catherine	Undecided	Government
Rocky Point, St. Thomas	Local NGO/ Rocky Point Fisherfolk Association	Government
Bird Cay, Pedro Banks	The Nature Conservancy (TNC-Jamaica)	<b>Private Sector</b>

### Benefits of the Special Fishery Conservation Areas

The special fishery conservation areas are anticipated to gradually increase fish populations affected by overfishing, habitat degradation and land-based nonpoint-source pollution, among other stressors. SFCA establishment has been scientifically proven to improve fish stocks by 3 to 21 times its original biomass. Furthermore, due to the 'spill over' effect, adjacent marine areas benefit as excess fish from the reserves will migrate into these areas where fishing is allowed.

The SFCA's will also maintain genetic diversity of marine species within Jamaica's water – reducing the probability of extinction. The habitats provide the marine species the opportunity to reach full sexual maturity therefore increasing their egg producing/spawning potential and survival of the species overall.

SFCA's also offer socio-economic benefits, in terms of:

1. Improving economic opportunities for fishers as the catch per unit effort for fishermen should increase within the areas surrounding the reserves
2. Increased opportunities for eco-tourism, allowing visitors and citizens to view our tropical fish species in their natural environment
3. Providing environments for further research and development initiatives

SUCCESS STORY: [Orabessa Bay Fish Sanctuary](#)

### **Special Fishery Conservation Areas Establishment**

Our SFCA were selected based on the following criteria:

1. Ecological characteristics: presence of seagrass beds, a reef system, and/or shallow waters abutting mangrove stands. These areas are known to be important nursery grounds for many and perhaps most juvenile reef fish species. The inclusion of reefs allow for the protection of a critical growth and feeding habitat for the species being protected by the sanctuaries.
2. General agreement of the primary stakeholders (fishers, investors, hotel and tourism businesses) for these areas to be declared as sanctuaries. It is only through such consensus that the stakeholders will protect and ensure the success of the SFCA.
3. The existence of an organized entity with the commitment and capacity to partner with the Fisheries Division in the management of the SFCA.
4. These characteristics were considered bearing in mind the potential impacts that point source pollutants may have on these sites.

### **Management Arrangement**

SFCA's are managed through a cooperative arrangement between the government and community organisations (non-government organisations). Each partnership is formalized by a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) between the Ministry and the collaborating organization, which outlines the responsibilities of the synergic entities. Under the MoA agreement, Government will provide financial resources for the partner NGOs to undertake the day-to-day operations of the SFCA.

In December 2008, Cabinet approved funding for the monitoring and surveillance through a partnership arrangement with selected NGOs. The sum of \$36.92 Million was allocated in 2008, and for each successive year of the life of these SFCA's, the sum of \$34.92 Million is to be paid. The Board of the Fishery Management and Development Fund approved the sum of \$3.3 Million to conduct the baseline studies within these sanctuaries and \$23 Million to the NGOs to support their activities.

If no partner NGO is readily identified, the Fisheries Division will assume management of the SFCA.

The main managerial responsibilities of the government include the provision of training, budgetary support, research and development, instituting policy and enabling legislation, and monitoring control and surveillance of the marine parks. Surveillance by the Marine Police and Coast Guard is supplemented by the Partner NGOs who engage in patrolling the SFCA's and enforcing the laws. Additionally, partner NGO's may engage in research activities related to and conducted in the SFCA's.