# CONSERVATION

of the
North-east Tobago UNESCO
Man and the Biosphere Reserve
Management Plan

## SUMMARY SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Currently, only the Main Ridge Forest Reserve, Little Tobago (Wildlife Sanctuary), and St Giles (Prohibited Area) are legally protected areas. The THA submitted applications to the National Trust to list the reefs and islets of NE Tobago as Natural National Heritage Sites, while the, cabinet approved, National Protected Areas Systems Plan proposes 14 additional protected areas and a large Marine Protected Area for legal protection. The ecosystems in the Biosphere Reserve provide significant services to all of Tobago e.g., in the form of water, clean air, food, recreation, and protection from natural disasters. With over 1,700 species, NE Tobago harbours species of globally valuable biodiversity in terms of 'at-risk' species, endemic species, migratory species, iconic species and commercial species. These include critically endangered species such as marine turtles, very rare sharks and corals, as well as birds and frogs that only exist in Tobago. Major threats to ecosystems and biodiversity are over-harvesting and poaching, infrastructural development, pollution, climate change and neglect. There are some quite good laws to protect the environment, but they are often not enforced; unfortunately, marine species do not enjoy any legal protection (with the exception of sea turtles).

## HIGH LEVEL GOAL

**Conservation activities in the North-East Tobago UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Reserve are implemented and socially accepted by a broad section of stakeholders, regenerate biodiversity, ecosystem services and health while supporting livelihoods in our communities.**

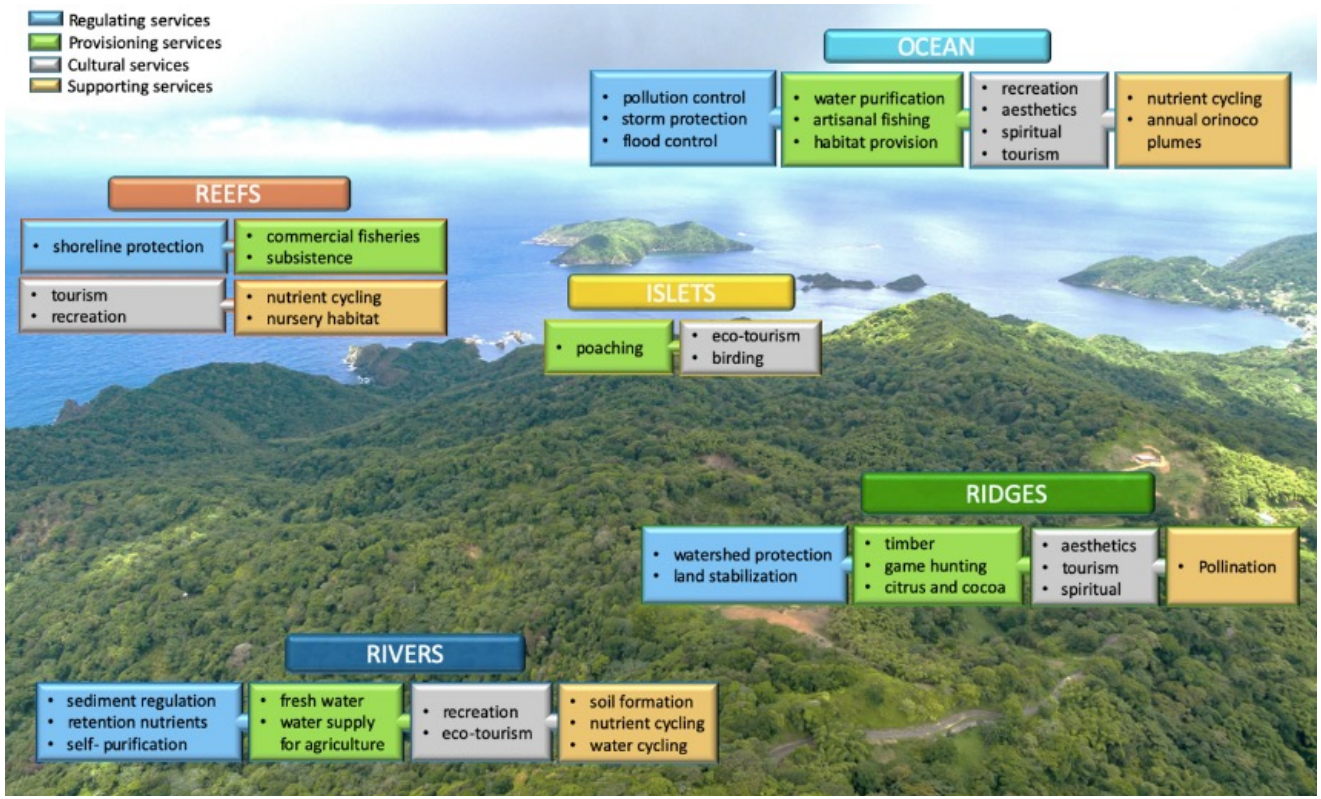



Figure: Ecosystem Services within the NE Tobago Biosphere Reserve

## PRIORITY NEEDS

- All stakeholders are aware of the economic, social, and cultural benefits of improved ecosystem services and the consequences of continued degradation;
- the level of protection for threatened species, ecosystems, and habitats is sufficient to maintain or, ideally increase biodiversity and ecosystem health;
- existing conservation threats are reduced and anticipated threats avoided; and
- knowledge about the conservation value of the NETMABR is created, exchanged, and intelligibly communicated

## STRATEGIES

- Implementation of an ongoing conservation communication and education campaign tailored to the preferred communication channels of various stakeholders;
- strengthening of legislation in the medium-term and improvement of law enforcement in the short-term;
- implementing replicable activities for threat reduction, mitigation, and avoidance as well as application of the precautionary principle; and
- establishing an ongoing research and ecosystem health monitoring programme in collaboration with resident, national, and international stakeholders that focuses on applicable results that improve conservation and ideally contribute to livelihoods.

## KEY PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

Facilitate:

- the design and implementation of a medium-term, KAP-analysis based, conservation communication plan;
- ongoing capacity building of stakeholders regarding environmental management and threat reduction;
- enacting of the National Protected Areas Systems Plan and Sustainable Shark and Ray Management Plan as well as designating of additional National Heritage Sites;
- continuing the training of all law enforcement officers regarding environmental legislation;
- appointing of litter wardens, game wardens, and honorary game wardens, both terrestrial and marine;
- applying the polluter pays principle for environmental violations;
- cross-sectoral collaboration regarding liquid and solid waste reduction;
- restoring disturbed areas and threatened ecosystems;
- designing and implementing specific conservation programmes for threatened species
- establishing a collaborative research agenda;
- engaging community members, especially resource users, in monitoring of environmental; and
- using networks to exchange experiences with similar sites on best practices to reduce pressures.

Table: IUCN at-risk, endemic, EDGE, CMS, CITES, SPAWRAC species occurring in the planned NETMABR

| Category | | Number | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **IUCN RED LIST species** | Critically Endangered | 16 | **114** |
| | Endangered | 27 | |
| | Vulnerable | 46 | |
| | Near Threatened | 25 | |
| **ENDEMIC species** | | | **40** |
| **EDGE species** | | | **19** |
| **CMS species** | | | **57** |
| **CITES species** | | | **140** |
| **SPAWRAC species** | | | **115** |