Bacalar Chico on northern Ambergris Caye covers 130 km2 of the Belize Barrier Reef as well as Rocky and Robles Points - the only points where the barrier reef touches mainland Belize.

With a combined area including a 15,000-acre marine reserve and 12,000 acres of terrestrial reserve this UNESCO World Heritage site is only accessible by boat. The park was established in August 23, 1996 as a result of community advocacy and lobbying by the fishermen of nearby Sarteneja Village.

Notable Features

- The east side of the island is covered with extensive mangrove lagoons - breeding grounds for marine and coastal birds and a crucial nursery for many reef fish while the beach serves as a major nesting ground for Loggerhead and Green Turtles.
- Much of Bacalar Chico's wildlife resembles Yucatan endemics. At least 187 species of bird, forty mammal (including all five of Belize's cats), fifty-eight reptiles, and twenty-two amphibian species inhabit the area.
- To the Maya, Bacalar Chico was an important trading port and it is believed that some fifteen hundred years ago they dug a narrow channel separating Ambergris Caye from Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula. The Bacalar Chico channel functions as the park's northern boundary and narrowly separates Belize from Mexico. Today visitors may see the remnants of the once vibrant Maya community and Maya ancestral burying ground of Chac Balam

Visitor Experience

A visitor center and ranger station are located at the reserve and provide visitors with valuable information on fishing and marine activities. There is also an eighteen kilometer nature trail that provides visitors with the opportunity to get up close to the flora and fauna of the reserve.