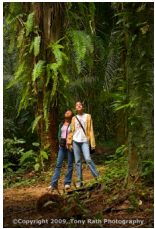


Resting in the shadows of the Maya Mountains, the Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary embraces 100,000 acres of tropical, moist forest that rises from 300 ft. above sea level to approximately 3,675 ft. at the summit of Victoria Peak.



Originally established in 1984 to protect a large jaguar population as well as other resident wildlife, the sanctuary is the world's first "Jaguar Reserve".

Notable Features

- Jaguar (*Panthera onca*) are the largest felid species in the Western Hemisphere and the only member of the genus *Panthera*, the roaring cats. They are the third largest cat species, being outsized only by lions (*P. leo*) and tigers (*P. tigris*). Although not the largest felid, jaguar have the strongest jaw in relation to head size of any of the cats.
- As deforestation increases for agricultural development, breaks are created in forest habitat isolating the wildlife that exist within, weakening the links in the food chain and making the wildlife more vulnerable to human activity.
- Before their protection, jaguar were hunted for their magnificent skins and as predators who fed on the livestock and domestic animals of nearby farms and communities.
- All five of Belize's wildcats reside in the Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary – jaguar, puma, margay, ocelot and jaguarondi.
- Victoria Peak, the second highest point in Belize, is located on the northern edge of Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary

Visitor Experience

The visitors' entrance to the Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary is located at Maya Centre, Mile 15 on the Southern Highway in the Stann Creek District. Visitors sign in at the Women's Craft Cooperative in the village before heading up to the sanctuary headquarters 6 1/2 miles west.

There is an extensive trail system with unique features on each including a kaway swamp with the extensive buttressed roots of the ceiba tree; Ben's Bluff Waterfall, Waree Loop and Victoria Peak trail.

Facilities include overnight accommodation and cooking facilities as well as a campground and an extensive trail system. Overnight and camping reservations and guides can be arranged through the Belize Audubon Society and there are several guides at Maya Center.

