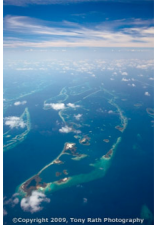


Explore Belize's largest marine protected area located only 10 miles off the coast of Dangriga and Hopkins in southern Belize.



With an area of some 62-sq miles, the reserve is home to sea grass beds, patch reefs, sand bores, mangrove habitat, over a dozen major cayes and many smaller islets. Within the reserve is Man-O-War Caye, a sanctuary for magnificent frigate birds and the brown booby.

Like many reserves, the area is zoned to protect fishing nurseries and unique habitats but provides extensive multi-use areas for snorkeling, fishing, diving and educational activities.

Notable Features

- The reef, marine life and mangrove habitat at Twin Cayes in this area have been extensively studied by the Smithsonian Institution for the past 30 years from their research facility base on Carrie Bow Caye.
- One “no take” zone of the reserve protects the Pelican Cayes a unique location where thousands of years of ideal circumstances created a diverse environment of corals, sponges, and other marine life unparalleled in Belize or the entire Caribbean.
- During mating season in February to April, the all black male of the Magnificent Frigate bird, displays a brilliant red pouch advertising availability to nearby females.
- There are several islands located within the Reserve including Tobacco and South Water Caye which sit right atop the barrier reef for snorkeling right off the beach.
- To the south of South Water Caye, four channels (cuts) break the reef crest and allow oceanic waters from the Caribbean Sea to flow onto the shallow continental shelf. The channels are named with reference to their proximity to neighboring sand cayes, for example, “South Water Cut,” and “Carrie Bow Caye Cut.”
- The underwater cave named “Hell Hole” awaits exploration with a mouth 10 to 15 feet wide. The walls and ledges of the cave display intact stalactites and stalagmites, eagle rays, moray eels, dolphin, rock snappers and smaller fish.

Visitor Experience

Snorkel off the beach on the islands atop the reef, dive off the “drop off” or snorkel among lush

coral patch reefs.

The warden's station is located on the southern end of Twin Cayes. Most hotels and tour operators include the cost of the marine reserve fee in their invoices and purchase tickets from the managing authorities.

Diving, fishing or snorkeling in this area can be arranged with licensed tour operators based in Dangriga, Hopkins, Placencia and with the hotels on island in and around the reserve.

For more information visit [South Water Caye Marine Reserve](#) .

