Identification

Country Saint Lucia

Marine ecoregion Eastern Caribbean

Boundaries The Pitons are already within the borders of Qualibou National Park, the prime tourist attraction of St. Lucia, and are greatly respected for their distinctive character and as symbols of national identity.

Total area 29.09 ha
Land area 20.34 ha
Marine area 8.75 ha

Site national category Environmental Protection Area and a World Heritage Site.
Site international designation World Heritage status.
IUCN category VI

Biophysical Features

Biophysical Features (continued)

Terrestrial habitats
The Pitons on the SW coast of St. Lucia are two steep forested cone-shaped mountains which rise side by side from the sea with spectacular abruptness. Gros Piton is 3km wide at the base, Petit Piton is 1km wide and is linked to it by the high Piton Miton ridge. The geology illustrates the history of an andesitic composite volcano over a crustal subduction zone. The peaks are the degraded dacitic cores of two lava-dome volcanoes probably formed on the side of a collapsed andesitic strato-volcano. They rise on the edge of the geologically complex caldera-like gravity-slide formation known as the Soufriere Volcanic Centre, and also as the Qualibou Depression, which surrounds the whole area, including the town of Soufriere. Terrestrial flora and fauna species: The dominant vegetation is tropical moist forest grading to subtropical wet forest with small areas of dry forest near the coast and on steep slopes, and small areas of wet elfin woodland on the summits. On the Pitons especially, small undisturbed natural forests remain, preserved by the steepness of the land. At least 148 species of plants have been recorded on Gros Piton, and 97 on Petit Piton and the ridge. Many St.Lucia species are found only or mainly there. Many mosses, lichens, orchids and bromeliads thrive in the rainforest conditions. There is a relatively high level of endemic or rare species: the endemic shrubs Acalypha elizabethae, and Bernardia laurentii, found only on the summit of Petit Piton, also, on the slopes, the rare

Marine habitats
The coral reefs are healthy and diverse, comprised of fringing and patch reefs, covering almost 60% of the Marine Management Area

Marine invertebrates and fishes
A short survey to a depth of 20 meters revealed 168 species of finfish, 0 species of cnidaria, including corals, 8 molluscs, 14 sponges, 11 echinoderms, 15.
Biophysical Features (continued)
arthropods and 8 annelid worms. Hawksbill turtles *Eretmochelys imbricata* (CR) are seen inshore; whale sharks *Rhincodon typus* (VU) and short-finned pilot whales *Globicephala macrorhynchus*, are seen offshore. A comprehensive survey would almost certainly reveal greater diversity

Marine mammals, birds and reptiles
Whale sharks *Rhincodon typus* (VU) and short-finned pilot whales *Globicephala macrorhynchus*, are seen offshore.

Endangered species
Hawksbill turtles *Eretmochelys imbricata* (CR) are seen inshore;

Management

Primary management institution
Forestry Department, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

Other institutions that participate in management
Soufriere Marine Management Area (SSMA).

Personnel
Manager, office assistant and secretary

Management objectives
Species protection, ecosystem protection, fisheries management, user conflict resolution, and recreational tourism use

Other management objectives
Creating formal linkages among management and planning agencies and other interest groups, so as to ensure that the integrity of the site in terms of its natural, historical and cultural significance is not compromised. To afford special protection to the flora and fauna of such areas and to protect and preserve the multiple use zone of the management area. However, real estate development is threatening the area.

Legal

Designation
Legally designated

Year established
Established under the Physical Planning and Development Act, 2001.

Primary responsible institution
Forestry Department, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

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General information
Outstanding natural beauty, spectacular geological features and highly productive biological ecosystems. The land component presents generally mountainous topography with lushly forested terrain (sub-tropical wet and tropical moist forest, with areas of tropical dry forest near the coast), while the marine coastal belt is one of steep submarine shelf, supporting areas of well-developed fringing reef. Marine reserve zone (part of SMMA) comprises reefs at Petit Piton and Gros Piton. PMA is an Environmental Protection Area and a World Heritage Site.