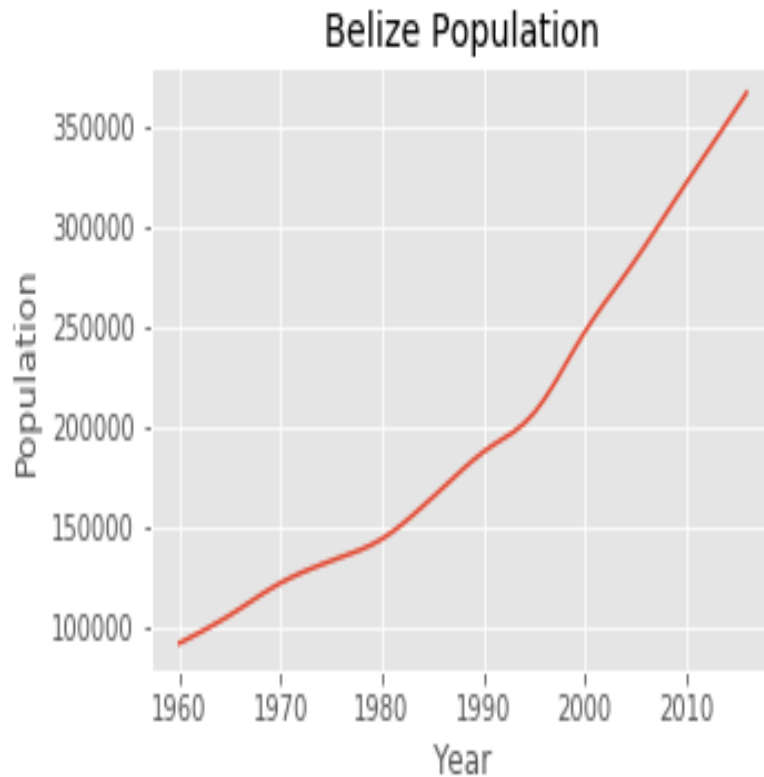


Belize



Belize (/bɪˈlɪz/ (listen)), formerly British Honduras, is an independent Commonwealth realm on the eastern coast of Central America. Belize is bordered on the north by Mexico, on the south and west by Guatemala, and on the east by the Caribbean Sea. Its mainland is about 290 km (180 mi) long and 110 km (68 mi) wide. Belize has an area of 22,800 square kilometres (8,800 sq mi) and a population of 387,879 (2017). It has the lowest population density in Central America. The country's population growth rate of 1.87% per year (2015) is the second highest in the region and one of the highest in the Western Hemisphere. Belize's abundance of terrestrial and marine species and its diversity of ecosystems give it a key place in the globally significant Mesoamerican Biological Corridor. Belize has a diverse society, composed of many cultures and languages that reflect its rich history. English is the official language of Belize, while Belizean Creole is an unofficial native language. Over half the population is multilingual, with Spanish being the second most common spoken language.