

= Hungry Bay Nature Reserve =

Hungry Bay Nature Reserve is a nature reserve on the east coast of Bermuda . It was established in 1986 . It is considered the best example of coastal mangrove swamp on the island . It includes the Hungry Bay area and the largest mangrove coastal swamp in Bermuda . It is protected by a Tree preservation order (T.P.O.) and designated as an official Nature Reserve within the Parks system of Bermuda .

The Hungry Bay Mangrove Swamp Reserve , a wetland site , is one of the seven Ramsar Sites in Bermuda . This designation recognises its international importance as a northerly mangrove swamp , as a habitat for its native crustaceans and as an important destination for migratory birds . Most of the reserve consists of mangrove swamp , while in the southern part there is a small area of saltmarsh . Much damage was done to the site by a storm in 2003 and residents have expressed concern about possible environmental damage resulting from pollution from the village of Seabright .

= = History = =

The reserve was proposed as a National Nature Reserve under the Development and Planning Act of 1974 . It was part of the Development Plan of 1983 . While the mangroves are under the Tree Preservation Order , the reserve in general is decreed as a National Reserve under the Bermuda National Parks Act of 1986 . The Hungry Bay Mangrove Swamp Reserve is one of the seven Ramsar Sites in Bermuda . It was approved as a Ramsar site of international importance on 10 May 1999 , meeting the criteria (1 , 2 , 3 , 4 and 8) for its unique characteristics . Its significance is due to being the largest northerly mangrove swamp in the Atlantic Ocean , the many migratory bird species which visit during winter , and the many native crustacean species , including the endangered terrestrial hermit crab (*Coenobita clypeatus*) and giant land crab (*Cardisoma guanhumi*) .

During Hurricane Fabian in September 2003 , the outer (western) third of the swamp , accounting for 25 @-@ 30 % of the total area of mangroves , suffered total destruction . Global warming has also caused rise in tidal levels resulting in damage to the swamps . More recently , residents have begun to voice concerns over the Seabright sewage outflow , which enters Hungry Bay itself . A resident of the Bay noted the persistent appearance of a " shiny slick " emanating from Seabright extending to the " reef @-@ line a few hundred yards off " .

= = Geography = =

Bermuda ? s largest tidal mangrove swamp is situated in a sea bay on the east coast of Bermuda , in an enclosed coast with a narrow opening from the sea , Hungry Bay . Reported as the most northerly mangrove swamp in the world , it is shallow with a depth of about 1 metre (3 ft 3 in) during high tide . The area is small at 2 @.@ 01 hectares (5 @.@ 0 acres) , of which 99 % is of tidal mangrove forest and the balance 1 % is made up of permanent brackish marshes . The soil conditions comprise clay , mud , peat and sand . It has perennial source of water and is of water quality varying from brackish to mixosaline , saline and euhaline in different zones .

Climatic conditions in the reserve is subtropical with mild temperatures with humidity . Storms and gales are a common feature during winter . The reserve consists of dense forest of red and black mangrove trees . A large number of sea water channels flow through the area which rise and fall with the tides . These tidal channels are an important habitat for small fish . Crabs and other marine creatures are found here . The trees are the habitat for many species of birds . Snails and insects are commonly found in the reserve .

The reserve can be reached by road , though access is limited , or by boat traveling directly through the bay . The reserve operates a small wharf capable of receiving boat traffic .

= = Flora = =

Vegetation in the mangrove swamps consists primarily of black mangrove (*Avicennia germinans*) and red mangrove (*Rhizophora mangle*) . Other species of trees reported around the mangroves are buttonwood (*Conocarpus erectus*) , rush (*Juncus acutus*) , sea purslane (*Sesuvium portulacastrum*) , sea ox eye (*Borrchia arborescens*) , sea lavender (*Limonium carolinianum*) , *Paspalum vaginatum* , *Sporobolus virginicus* , woody glasswort (*Sarcocornia perennis*) and West Indian grass (*Eustachys petraea*) . Tropical mangrove swamp characterizes the northern areas of the reserve while the southern areas primarily represent temperate saltmarsh .

Invasive plants , notably among them casuarina , are adversely affecting the growth of the mangrove swamp , and therefore in addition giant land and hermit crabs , endemic snail species . Habitat restoration measures are underway to retain the mangroves and other native species .

= = Fauna = =

The faunal species reported from the mangrove swamp include several species of crabs : the giant land crab (*Cardisoma guanhumi*) (only two colonies exists in the upper regions of the swamp) , the terrestrial hermit crab (*Coenobita clypeatus*) (54 individuals recorded in 1990) , and the mangrove crab (*Goniopsis cruentatus*) .

= = = Avifauna = = =

Significant avifauna reported in the reserve are the great blue heron (*Ardea herodias*) , yellow crowned night heron (*Nyctanassa violacea*) , snowy egret (*Egretta thula*) , mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) , belted kingfisher , *Megasceryle alcyon* and northern waterthrush (*Parkesia noveboracensis*) , which are all wintering bird species . Feral pigeons , which are displacing tropic birds from their nesting sites in cliff holes and ledges , need to be eliminated from the reserve to preserve the native species of birds , according to efforts made to control their population thus far .