

The Northern Karst Belt in northwestern Puerto Rico is a unique landscape shaped by the erosion of limestone rock. This process creates a distinctive landscape with towering rock formations, deep canyons, hidden caves, and sinkholes. The region is crisscrossed by rivers, including Puerto Rico's longest, the La Plata River, which carve through the karst and form dramatic features like the Camuy caverns. These rivers also contribute to the formation of wetlands like the Caño Tiburones, adding to the diverse and fascinating ecosystem of this area. ■

== Notable features ==

The Northern Karst Belt in northwestern Puerto Rico is a distinctive landscape carved by the erosion of limestone. This process has created a variety of features, including towering rock formations, deep canyons, caves, and sinkholes. Several of Puerto Rico's major rivers, including the longest one, the La Plata River, flow through this area, forming unique geographical features like the Camuy caverns and contributing to the creation of wetlands such as the Caño Tiburones. ■

=== Mogotes ===

The Northern Karst Belt in northwestern Puerto Rico is a unique landscape sculpted by the erosion of limestone. This process creates a variety of features, including mogotes, towering rock formations, deep canyons, caves, and sinkholes. Mogotes, isolated hills with steep sides, are particularly common in this region. The La Plata River, the longest in Puerto Rico, flows through this area, carving out features like the Camuy caverns and contributing to the formation of wetlands such as the Caño Tiburones. Mogotes are a defining feature of northern Puerto Rico, with notable examples found throughout the region, including Cerro El Sombrero, the highest mogote, in Isabela. They are also a prominent feature of towns like Florida and the Arecibo Telescope site. Several parks and forests, including the San Patricio State Forest and Julio Enrique Monagas Park, showcase these unique rock formations. ■

=== Arecibo Valley ===

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of northern Puerto Rico, with notable examples found throughout the region, including Cerro El Sombrero, the highest mogote, in Isabela. They are also a prominent feature of towns like Florida and the Arecibo Telescope site. Several parks and forests, including the San Patricio State Forest and Julio Enrique Monagas Park, showcase these unique rock formations. ■■The Arecibo Valley, a wide canyon carved by the Arecibo River, is another defining feature of this region. Highway PR-10 runs along the canyon, providing access to Cueva Ventana, a cave located on one of the cliffs. Several rivers, including the Tanamá and Caonillas rivers, flow into the Arecibo Valley. The southern edge of the valley features Dos Bocas Lake and the Río Abajo State Forest. ■

=== Camuy Canyon and Caverns ===

The Northern Karst Belt in northwestern Puerto Rico is a distinctive landscape shaped by the erosion of limestone. This process creates various features, including mogotes, towering rock formations, deep canyons, caves, and sinkholes. Mogotes, isolated hills with steep sides, are a defining feature of the region, with notable examples found throughout the area, including Cerro El Sombrero in Isabela. The La Plata River, the longest in Puerto Rico, flows through this area, carving out features like the Camuy caverns and contributing to the formation of wetlands such as the Caño Tiburones. ■■The Arecibo Valley, a wide canyon carved by the Arecibo River, is another prominent feature. Highway PR-10 runs along the canyon, providing access to Cueva Ventana, a cave located on one of the cliffs. Several rivers, including the Tanamá and Caonillas rivers, flow into the Arecibo Valley. The southern edge of the valley features Dos Bocas Lake and the Río Abajo State Forest. ■■The Camuy Canyon, formed by the Camuy River, further emphasizes the dramatic landscape of the Northern Karst Belt. The canyon serves as a border between the municipalities of Camuy and Hatillo and is home to the Camuy cave system, as well as other notable caves like Cueva Espiral and Cueva Catedral. The Tres Pueblos sinkhole is also located in the area, highlighting the unique geological formations characteristic of this region. ■

=== Guajataca Valley ===

The Northern Karst Belt in northwestern Puerto Rico is a unique landscape shaped by the erosion of limestone. This process creates a variety of features, including mogotes, towering rock formations, deep canyons, caves, and sinkholes. Mogotes, isolated hills with steep sides, are a defining feature of the region, with notable examples found throughout the area, including Cerro El Sombrero in

Isabela. The La Plata River, the longest in Puerto Rico, flows through this area, carving out features like the Camuy caverns and contributing to the formation of wetlands such as the Caño Tiburones. ■■The Arecibo Valley, a wide canyon carved by the Arecibo River, is another prominent feature. Highway PR-10 runs along the canyon, providing access to Cueva Ventana, a cave located on one of the cliffs. Several rivers, including the Tanamá and Caonillas rivers, flow into the Arecibo Valley. The southern edge of the valley features Dos Bocas Lake and the Río Abajo State Forest. ■■The Camuy Canyon, formed by the Camuy River, further emphasizes the dramatic landscape of the Northern Karst Belt. The canyon serves as a border between the municipalities of Camuy and Hatillo and is home to the Camuy cave system, as well as other notable caves like Cueva Espiral and Cueva Catedral. The Tres Pueblos sinkhole is also located in the area, highlighting the unique geological formations characteristic of this region. ■■The Guajataca Valley, carved by the Guajataca River, offers another example of the region's dramatic landscapes. The valley lies between the municipalities of Isabela and Quebradillas, and the Guajataca State Forest sits along its western edge. The Guajataca River flows into the Atlantic Ocean, showcasing the connection between this unique landscape and the surrounding coastal environment. ■

== Ecology ==

The Northern Karst Belt in northwestern Puerto Rico is a unique landscape shaped by the erosion of limestone. This process creates a variety of features, including mogotes, towering rock formations, deep canyons, caves, and sinkholes. Mogotes, isolated hills with steep sides, are a defining feature of the region, with notable examples found throughout the area, including Cerro El Sombrero in Isabela. The La Plata River, the longest in Puerto Rico, flows through this area, carving out features like the Camuy caverns and contributing to the formation of wetlands such as the Caño Tiburones. ■■The Arecibo Valley, a wide canyon carved by the Arecibo River, is another prominent feature. Highway PR-10 runs along the canyon, providing access to Cueva Ventana, a cave located on one of the cliffs. Several rivers, including the Tanamá and Caonillas rivers, flow into the Arecibo Valley. The southern edge of the valley features Dos Bocas Lake and the Río Abajo State Forest. ■■The Camuy Canyon, formed by the Camuy River, further emphasizes the dramatic landscape of the Northern Karst Belt. The canyon serves as a border between the municipalities of Camuy and Hatillo and is home to the Camuy cave system, as well as other notable caves like Cueva

Espiral and Cueva Catedral. The Tres Pueblos sinkhole is also located in the area, highlighting the unique geological formations characteristic of this region. ■■The Guajataca Valley, carved by the Guajataca River, offers another example of the region's dramatic landscapes. The valley lies between the municipalities of Isabela and Quebradillas, and the Guajataca State Forest sits along its western edge. The Guajataca River flows into the Atlantic Ocean, showcasing the connection between this unique landscape and the surrounding coastal environment. ■■The Northern Karst Belt's rugged terrain has led to the region boasting the most extensive forest canopy cover in Puerto Rico. This, along with the area's high biodiversity, has made the Northern Karst a vital habitat for a wide array of species, including the endangered Puerto Rican parrot. This region is considered a crucial area for the recovery of endangered species and boasts an impressive 1,300 species of plants and animals, including 30 federally listed threatened and endangered species. ■

=== Protected natural areas in the Northern karst ===

The Northern Karst Belt in northwestern Puerto Rico is a unique landscape shaped by the erosion of limestone, creating a distinctive topography with mogotes, canyons, caves, and sinkholes. The region boasts some of Puerto Rico's most iconic features, like the Camuy caverns, formed by the island's longest river, the La Plata River. These rivers also contribute to wetlands like the Caño Tiburones. ■■Mogotes, isolated hills with steep sides, are a defining characteristic of northern Puerto Rico. The Northern Karst Belt is home to the highest mogote, Cerro El Sombrero, in Isabela, as well as prominent mogote areas like the town of Florida and the Arecibo Telescope site. The Arecibo Valley, carved by the Arecibo River, features Cueva Ventana, a cave accessible by Highway PR-10, and is home to Dos Bocas Lake and the Río Abajo State Forest. ■■The Camuy Canyon, carved by the Camuy River, features the Camuy cave system, as well as other caves like Cueva Espiral and Cueva Catedral, along with the Tres Pueblos sinkhole. The Guajataca Valley, carved by the Guajataca River, is another impressive canyon, with the Guajataca State Forest on its western edge. ■■The Northern Karst Belt's rugged terrain and unique features have created a haven for biodiversity, making it the area with the most extensive forest canopy cover in Puerto Rico. It is considered a vital habitat for endangered species, including the Puerto Rican parrot, and boasts 1,300 species of plants and animals, including 30 federally listed threatened and endangered species. This region is home to several protected areas, including Cambalache State Forest,

Guajataca State Forest, Río Abajo State Forest, San Patricio State and Urban Forest, Vega State Forest, Camuy River Caves Park, Julio Enrique Monagas Park, Manatí Research Area, and Mata de Plátano Field Station and Nature Reserve, highlighting its significance for conservation and research. ■

== Gallery ==

The Northern Karst Belt in northwestern Puerto Rico is a unique landscape shaped by the erosion of limestone, creating a distinctive topography with towering rock formations, deep canyons, caves, and sinkholes. Mogotes, isolated hills with steep sides, are a common feature, with the highest one, Cerro El Sombrero, located in Isabela. The La Plata River, the island's longest river, flows through the area, carving out features like the Camuy caverns and contributing to the formation of wetlands. ■■The region is home to several dramatic canyons, including the Arecibo Valley, carved by the Arecibo River, and the Guajataca Valley, carved by the Guajataca River. The Arecibo Valley is home to Cueva Ventana, a cave accessible by Highway PR-10, as well as Dos Bocas Lake and the Río Abajo State Forest. The Guajataca Valley is home to the Guajataca State Forest. ■■The Camuy Canyon, formed by the Camuy River, is another impressive feature, featuring the Camuy cave system, as well as other caves like Cueva Espiral and Cueva Catedral, along with the Tres Pueblos sinkhole. ■■The Northern Karst Belt's rugged terrain has led to the region boasting the most extensive forest canopy cover in Puerto Rico. This, along with the area's high biodiversity, has made the Northern Karst a vital habitat for a wide array of species, including the endangered Puerto Rican parrot. This region is considered a crucial area for the recovery of endangered species and boasts an impressive 1,300 species of plants and animals, including 30 federally listed threatened and endangered species. This rich ecosystem is protected by several state forests and parks, including Cambalache State Forest, Guajataca State Forest, Río Abajo State Forest, San Patricio State and Urban Forest, Vega State Forest, Camuy River Caves Park, Julio Enrique Monagas Park, Manatí Research Area, and Mata de Plátano Field Station and Nature Reserve, emphasizing its importance for conservation and research. ■■■

== See also ==

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Plata River, the island's longest river. The region's rivers also contribute to the formation of wetlands, like the Caño Tiburones. ■■The Northern Karst Belt is characterized by mogotes, isolated hills with steep sides, with the highest one being Cerro El Sombrero in Isabela. Other notable mogote areas include the town of Florida and the Arecibo Telescope site. The region is also home to several dramatic canyons, including the Arecibo Valley, carved by the Arecibo River, and the Guajataca Valley, carved by the Guajataca River. The Arecibo Valley is home to Cueva Ventana, a cave accessible by Highway PR-10, as well as Dos Bocas Lake and the Río Abajo State Forest. The Guajataca Valley is home to the Guajataca State Forest. ■■The Camuy Canyon, formed by the Camuy River, is another impressive feature, featuring the Camuy cave system, as well as other caves like Cueva Espiral and Cueva Catedral, along with the Tres Pueblos sinkhole. ■■The Northern Karst Belt's rugged terrain has led to the region boasting the most extensive forest canopy cover in Puerto Rico. This, along with the area's high biodiversity, has made the Northern Karst a vital habitat for a wide array of species, including the endangered Puerto Rican parrot. This region is considered a crucial area for the recovery of endangered species and boasts an impressive 1,300 species of plants and animals, including 30 federally listed threatened and endangered species. This rich ecosystem is protected by several state forests and parks, including Cambalache State Forest, Guajataca State Forest, Río Abajo State Forest, San Patricio State and Urban Forest, Vega State Forest, Camuy River Caves Park, Julio Enrique Monagas Park, Manatí Research Area, and Mata de Plátano Field Station and Nature Reserve, emphasizing its importance for conservation and research. ■

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The Northern Karst Belt in northwestern Puerto Rico is a unique and diverse landscape shaped by the erosion of limestone. This process has created a series of striking features, including mogotes (isolated, steep-sided hills), canyons, caves, and sinkholes. The region's rivers, including the La Plata River, the longest in Puerto Rico, have carved out iconic landmarks like the Camuy caverns and have also played a crucial role in shaping the many wetlands found in this area, such as the Caño Tiburones. ■■The Northern Karst Belt is renowned for its mogotes, which are visible along the north coast from Aguadilla and Rincón in the west to Canóvanas in the east. The highest mogote, Cerro El Sombrero, is located in Isabela. The region is also home to several notable canyons, including the Arecibo Valley, carved by the Arecibo River, and the Guajataca

Valley, carved by the Guajataca River. ■■The Northern Karst Belt is a vital habitat for a wide array of species, including the endangered Puerto Rican parrot. Its rugged topography has resulted in the most extensive forest canopy cover on the island, and this region is considered crucial for the recovery of endangered species. This biodiversity hotspot is home to 1,300 species of plants and animals, including 30 federally listed threatened and endangered species. To protect this valuable ecosystem, several state forests and parks are in place, including Cambalache State Forest, Guajataca State Forest, Río Abajo State Forest, San Patricio State and Urban Forest, Vega State Forest, Camuy River Caves Park, Julio Enrique Monagas Park, Manatí Research Area, and Mata de Plátano Field Station and Nature Reserve, emphasizing the importance of conservation and research in this area. ■

== External links ==