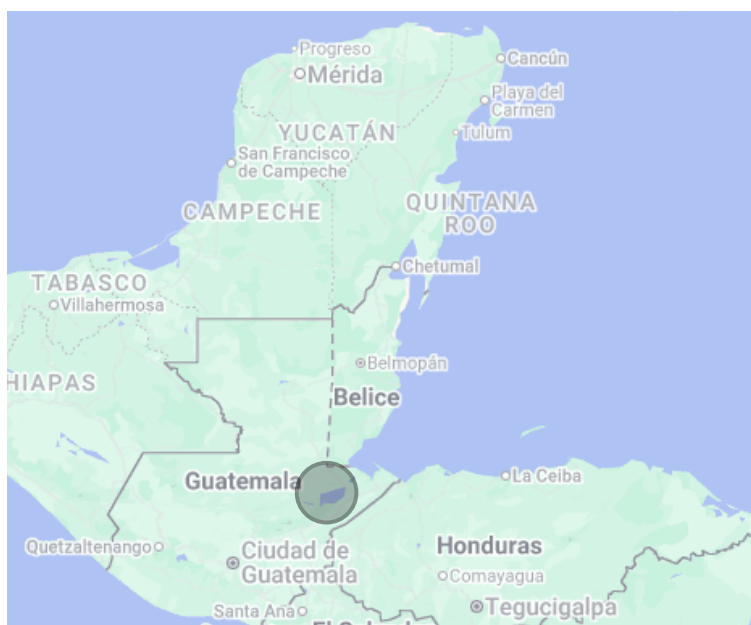
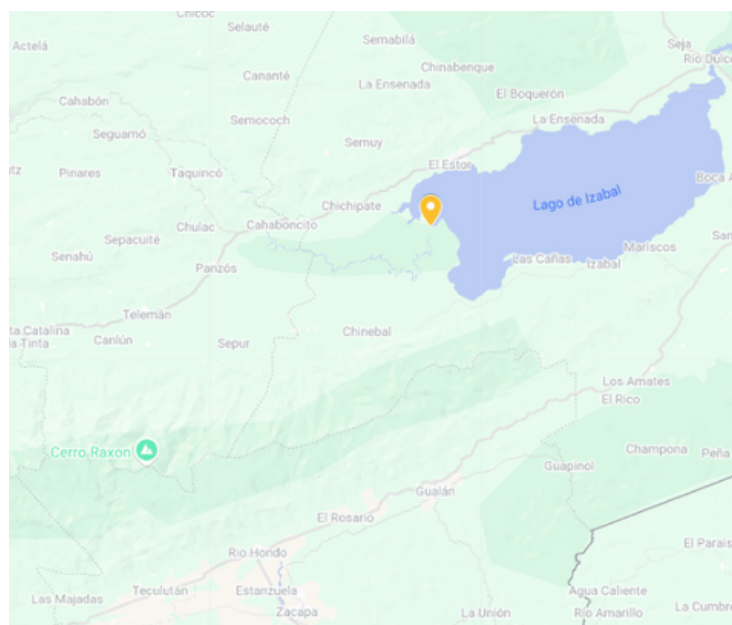


## Towards effective governance and sustainable and participatory management of wetlands in the Bocas del Polochic Wildlife Refuge



Location of the Bocas del Polochic Wildlife Refuge, Izabal.



Bocas del Polochic Wildlife Refuge

Map Data © 2025 Google

|                                             |                                              |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| <b>COUNTRY</b>                              | Guatemala                                    |
| <b>COASTAL MARINE PROTECTED AREA (CMPA)</b> | Bocas del Polochic Wildlife Refuge (RVSBP)*  |
| <b>CO MANAGER</b>                           | Fundación Defensores de la Naturaleza (FDN)* |
| <b>DURATION</b>                             | June 2024 – June 2027                        |

\* Acronyms refer to the names of the organizations in Spanish

### PROJECT SUMMARY:

The project aims to ensure that management decisions in the Bocas del Polochic Wildlife Refuge are based on up-to-date information and tools, strengthening the environmental and social management of the protected area.

Standardized methodologies for biological monitoring of birds, fish, water quality, and manatees will be developed, and governance will be improved through collaborative surveillance strategies.



Photo: Rocío Paz / FDN

A forest restoration plan will be designed that includes biological connectivity zones and a plan for sustainable use of firewood, developed in conjunction with government entities and local stakeholders.

In addition, activities will be carried out to strengthen community adaptation to climate change and promote the sustainable use of resources. Spaces for exchange and coordination among stakeholders will be reactivated to improve the management of natural resources and protected areas.

## REACH

Protected area  
**20,760 hectares**



Number of  
beneficiaries  
**2500**



Photo: Rocío Paz / FDN

## KEY TOPICS AND ACTIVITIES

### CONSERVATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

- Develop and update monitoring methodologies for fish, birds, manatees, and water quality adapted to the RVSBP.
- Design a Freshwater Finfish Management Plan for the RVSBP and Izabal Lake, developed through a participatory process and shared with key stakeholders.
- Assess the management effectiveness of the RVSBP.
- Develop and implement a three-year control and surveillance strategy for the RVSBP to reduce local-level illegal activities.
- Strengthen the technical capacities and equipment of the CMPA for biological and water quality monitoring, applied through pilot tests.
- Develop a Forest Restoration Plan, considering areas with the highest biological connectivity within the protected area.

### SUSTAINABLE USE WITH LOCAL PARTICIPATION

- Develop and implement a sustainable firewood use plan for the RVSBP and its areas of influence.
- Strengthen a youth network for the provision of tourism services with an emphasis on birdwatching (aviturismo), incorporating a gender perspective.
- Strengthen and improve the fish value chain in the area of influence of the RVSBP, with a gender perspective, supporting fisher associations to enhance cooperation and coordination among local fishers.

### STRENGTHENING AMONG KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND GOVERNANCE

- Update the Conservation Agenda for the Izabal Lake and Río Dulce Watershed through a participatory process involving all key sectors.
- Reactivate the Environmental Technical Working Group for the “Izabal Lake Micro-watershed” as support for the evaluation of the water quality monitoring methodology.
- Support the Co-management Committee and other governance and experience-sharing platforms.



The project “Protection of Maritime Resources in Central America III (Phase III)” represents a joint and ongoing effort to strengthen the effective management of marine and coastal protected areas of the Mesoamerican Reef System. With the financial support of the German Cooperation through KfW, and the active participation of local managers and implementers, this regional effort strengthens the protection of key ecosystems and the benefits they provide to communities. Learn more: