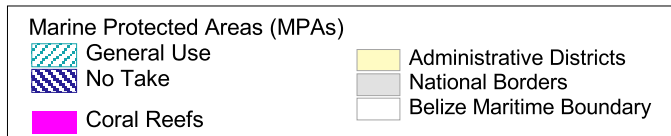
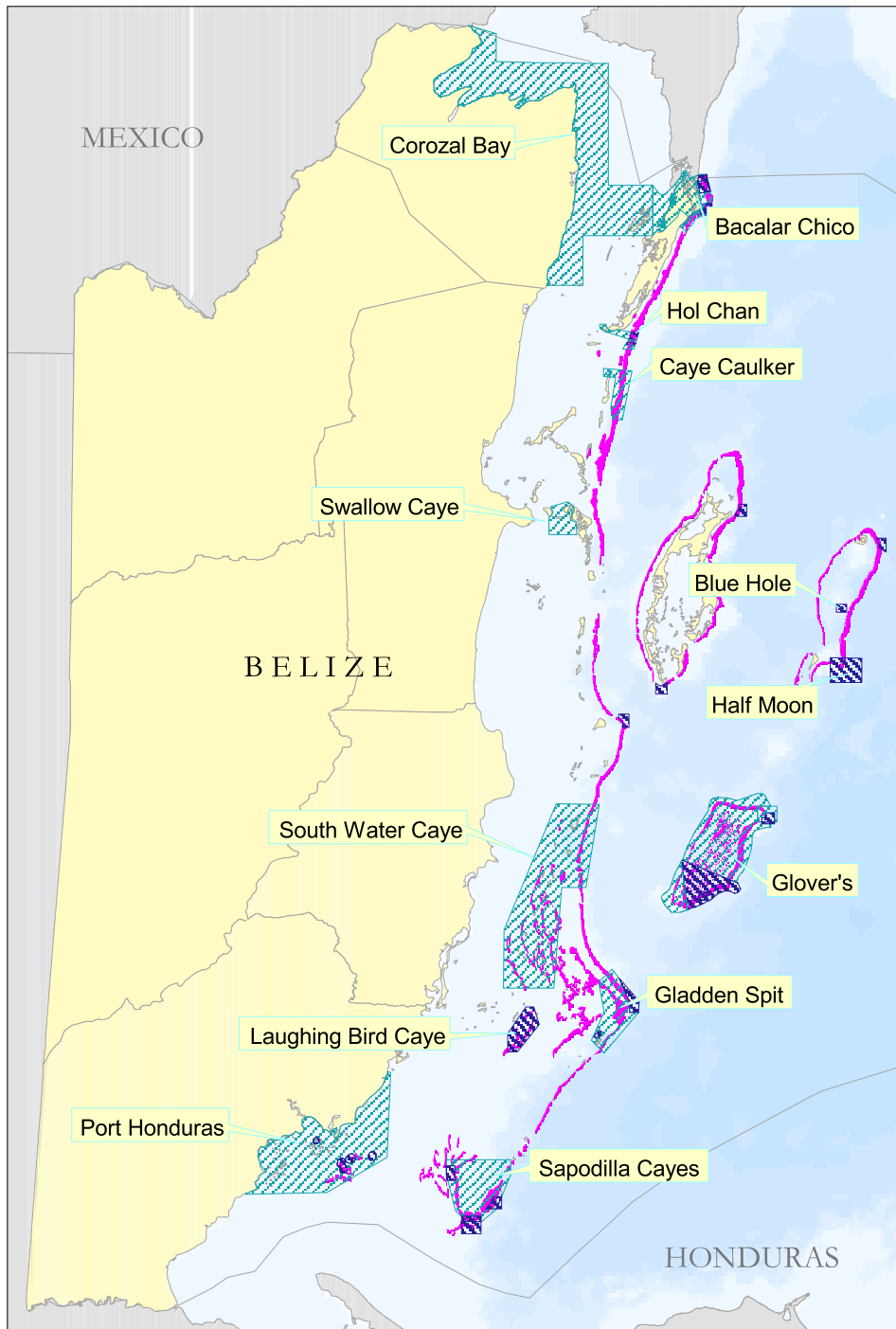


# Marine Protected Areas of Belize

Belize is richly endowed with highly diverse and valuable coastal resources, but many areas are threatened by human activities. Considerable effort has been directed towards coastal management and developing a system of marine protected areas in Belize. The legal and institutional policy framework for managing coral reefs is in place, and MPA management is a mix of both government (either the Fisheries Department or the Forest Department) and NGOs. The Belize Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute (CZMAI) was established in 1998 as a model of integrated coastal management for the region, and the country's system of 13 MPAs is well established, with almost all under active management. In addition, there are 11 Species Aggregation Sites (SPAGS) that have been declared marine reserves, several of which fall partially within existing marine reserves. Seven of these sites have been declared World Heritage sites and all are world renowned for spectacular marine life.

Belize has the legal and institutional policy framework to manage coral reefs, but may lack the long-term funding for enforcement and monitoring of the extensive system of MPAs. There is considerable reliance on international support, with some support originating from the Protected Areas Conservation Trust (PACT) which is funded through a portion of visitor departure taxes. A regional financing mechanism, the Mesoamerican Reef Trust Fund, has been established from the environmental trust funds of Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico, and a major aim of this fund includes sustainable financing of MPAs. Over the last ten years, major support for Belize's MPAs has come from the GEF funded "Coastal Zone Management Projects" for which funding ceased in 2004. Future support (political and financial) for CZMAI is in doubt, which will inhibit effective management of the precious coastal resources of Belize.



Data sources: Marine Protected Areas with no take zones from Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute, 2004.

## Reefs at Risk in Belize

A collaboration between the World Resources Institute, Belize Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute, and many other partner organisations in Belize. Datasets available on the Belize Coastal Data CD (email [datacen@coastalzonebelize.org](mailto:datacen@coastalzonebelize.org) for more information).