

Geography

Location: Middle America, bordering the Caribbean Sea, between Guatemala and Mexico

Map references: Central America and the Caribbean

Area:

total area: 22,960 sq km

land area: 22,800 sq km

comparative area: slightly larger than Massachusetts

Land boundaries: total 516 km, Guatemala 266 km, Mexico 250 km

Coastline: 386 km

Maritime claims:

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

territorial sea: 12 nm in the north, 3 nm in the south; note - from the mouth of the Sarstoon River to Ranguana Cay, Belize's territorial sea is 3 miles; according to Belize's Maritime Areas Act, 1992, the purpose of this limitation is to provide a framework for the negotiation of a definitive agreement on territorial differences with Guatemala

International disputes: border with Guatemala in dispute; talks to resolve the dispute are stalled

Climate: tropical; very hot and humid; rainy season (May to February)

Terrain: flat, swampy coastal plain; low mountains in south

Natural resources: arable land potential, timber, fish

Land use:

arable land: 2%

permanent crops: 0%

meadows and pastures: 2%

forest and woodland: 44%

other: 52%

Irrigated land: 20 sq km (1989 est.)

Environment:

current issues: deforestation; water pollution from sewage, industrial effluents, agricultural runoff

natural hazards: frequent, devastating hurricanes (September to December) and coastal flooding (especially in south)

international agreements: party to - Biodiversity, Climate Change, Endangered Species, Law of the Sea, Marine Dumping

Note: national capital moved 80 km inland from Belize City to Belmopan because of hurricanes; only country in Central America without a coastline on the North Pacific Ocean

