

Jamaica Wildlife

The Jamaican wildlife (fauna) is rich in some groups and poor in others. The bat and the coney are the chief representatives of indigenous mammals.

Examples of the imported wildlife creatures are the mongoose and the rats. The European black and brown rats and mice probably reached Jamaica by the earliest ships. The predatory mongoose was introduced from India in 1872 to reduce the rats which caused great damage in the cane fields. Instead of reducing the rats, the mongoose rapidly became a pest, destroying the natural wildlife and poultry. Wild Hogs are descendants of domestic hogs which were turned loose by the Spaniards. There are little or none of them can be found today. They are usually found in deep rural parts of the country, parts of Hellshire, the Cockpit Country, and in the Parish of Portland. Wild Cattle were of the Indian stock, which escaped early in the 1900's and are known to exist in the Portland Ridge area of Clarendon. The Sea-cow or manatee is occasionally found on the seacoast is protected by the Jamaican law. There also existed the Pedro seal or West Indian Seal, once widespread and could be extinct by now. The so-called Jamaican Alligator is really a crocodile with the scientific name *Crocodylus Acutus* (American Crocodile). Crocodiles can be found in the mangrove swamps, lagoons and estuaries of the southern coast. Sea-turtle including the Green Turtle, Hawksbill and Logger-head are found in waters around Jamaica. The terrapin, locally called "Pond Turtle" is native common in the lowlands. Snakes are rarely seen in Jamaica. They are not hiding, but have become almost extinct due to presence of the mongoose. The snakes in Jamaica are not poisonous, and the most popular is the Black Snake. The Yellow Snake which is a constrictor is very rare and may only be found in the more isolated sections of the island. The little Grass Snake is about 2ft. (0.6m) when fully grown. Jamaica also has several species of small, sluggish boa constrictors. They are seldom seen except by wood cutters. There is also the burrowing snake known as the "Two-Headed Snake" which is sometimes seen when cultivating land. This snake is so small; it might easily be taken for a large earth worm. The Bullfrog in Jamaica is really a type of toad. It was introduced to Jamaica in 1844 and is a native of northern South America. The Bullfrog was also intended to destroy young rats in the cane fields. Bullfrogs can be seen in all parts of the island up to elevations of 2500ft (762m). Thirteen species of Whistling Frogs can be found in Jamaica. They are especially interesting as unlike most frogs, their eggs are laid under stones and there is no tadpole stage. Different species of toads also live and breed in the wild pines or bromeliads. The Jamaican Hutia (Coney) is a nocturnal rodent and is endemic to Jamaica. The Coney is hunted for food and found in wood forest of the Cockpit Country, the Blue and John Crow Mountains. Overall, today some of the Jamaican wildlife creatures have become somewhat extinct. Much of the wildlife are preserved at the zoos and habitats such as the Blue Mountain. Source: time in jamaica