

# Participatory Protected Area Management in Barra del Colorado Wildlife Refuge, Costa Rica

A protected area with people

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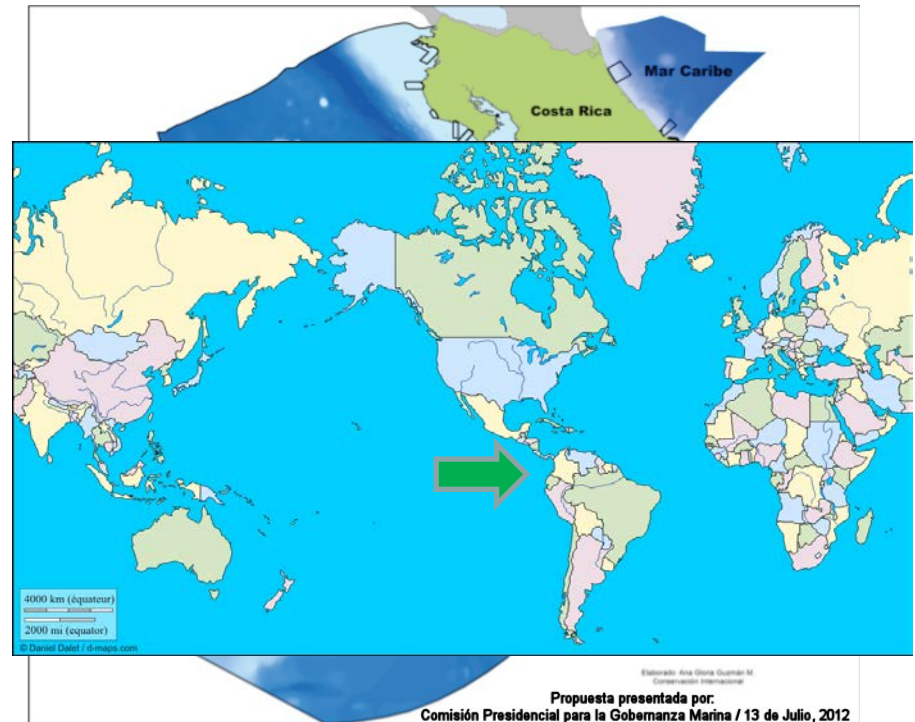
1. Introduction to Costa Rica
2. Protected areas in Costa Rica
3. Barra del Colorado National Wildlife Refuge and its participatory management
4. Lessons learned



# Introduction to Costa Rica

## 1. Location and Territory.

- A) Central America
- B) 51,000km<sup>2</sup> land territory (From 0m to 3,800m altitudinal diversity)
  - 26% protected
- C) 500,000 km<sup>2</sup> of sea territory
  - 3% protected
- D) Population: 4.6 milions aprox. (2011)



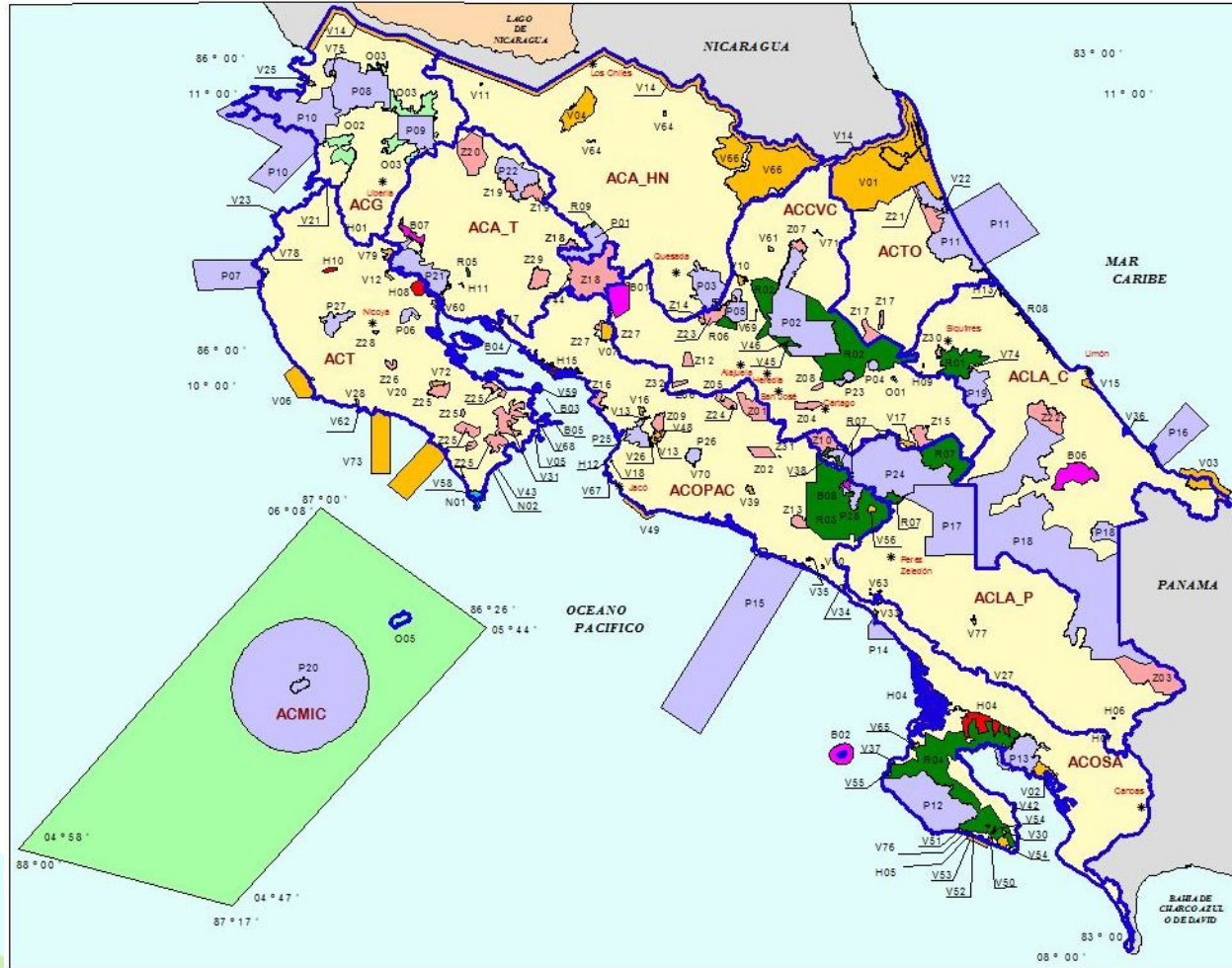
# Protected Areas in Costa Rica

Costa Rican Management Category	IUCN Equivalent Category	Number
Forest Reserves	VI	9
Protected Zones	VI	31
National Parks	II	28
Biological Reserves	I a	8
National Wildlife Refuges	IV	67
Wetlands	IV	12
Natural Monuments	III	1
Marine Reserves	VI	-
Marine Management Areas	VI	1
Others categories	(Ia – II)	3

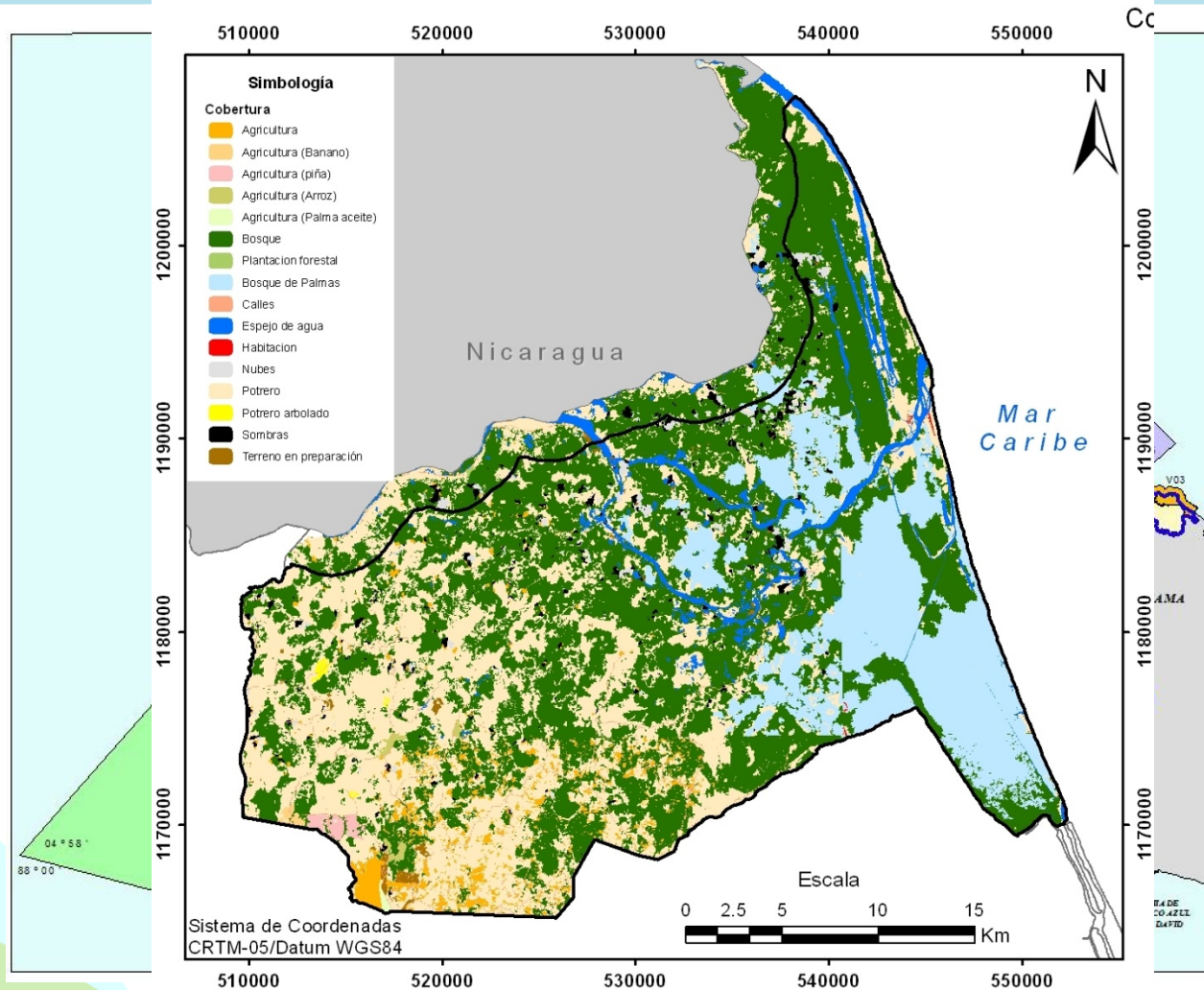
Resource: ASP management office,  
SINAC, 2014



# Protected Areas in Costa Rica

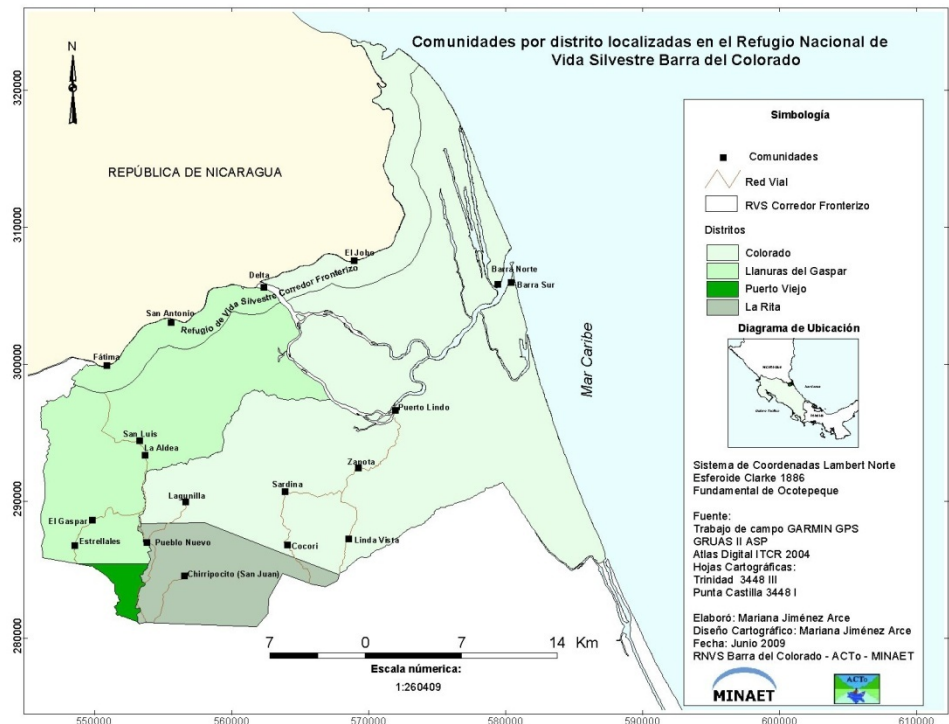


# Barra del Colorado National Wildlife Refuge



# Barra del Colorado National Wildlife Refuge

1. 81,177 ha.
2. Established in 1985
3. 14 communities identified with 3000 inhabitants aprox.
4. Mixed land tenure: Private and Public.



# Barra del Colorado National Wildlife Refuge

Technical justifications for the establishment of the refuge:

- Important wetland for birds species.
- Presence of endangered species such as: manatee (*Trichechus manatus*), Jaguar (*Panthera onca*), Green macaw (*Ara Ambigua*) etc.
- Soil Potential: Not suitable for agriculture but for tourism



# Barra del Colorado National Wildlife Refuge

## Historical Background of management (1/2)

- Establishment without detailed study or participation of local stakeholders.
- Opposition from the local people and the communities.
- Management as an Annex of Tortuguero NP, not as a “Wildlife Refuge with local communities”.



People have been living there before the establishment of the protected area. Some in a sustainable manner, others not.

# Barra del Colorado National Wildlife Refuge

## Historical Background of management (2/2)

- The “management” consisted in “repressive patrol and control”
- More conflict between governmental authority and the local communities.



Patrol and control are necessary activities but not enough.

# Barra del Colorado National Wildlife Refuge

Turning point in 2006 !!

Assignment of the first administrator as a “independent” wildlife refuge!!



Proposal of a project to build a capacity of wildlife refuge management with local stakeholders



The first and actual administrator



# Barra del Colorado National Wildlife Refuge

## First Project with JICA

Participatory Management  
of Barra del Colorado  
National Wildlife Refuge

2008-2011



Six new staffs with  
bachelor's degree for BC  
NWR as a national efforts



Staffs of Barra del Colorado National Wildlife Refuge, March 2008



# Participatory Management of Barra del Colorado National Wildlife Refuge

Basic capacities for participatory management with local stakeholders such as:

- Environmental education
- Promotion of eco friendly agriculture



A hand puppet workshop in a local high school as an environmental education activity



# Participatory Management of Barra del Colorado National Wildlife Refuge

Basic capacities for participatory management with local stakeholders such as:

- Organization of activities with local stakeholders
- Local Council
- Environmental events
- Participatory biodiversity monitoring



Celebrating World Wetland Day

# Barra del Colorado National Wildlife Refuge

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## Actual Project with JICA

Promotion of Participatory  
Biodiversity Conservation  
(MAPCOBIO)

2013-2018



*Conserving with people*



# Barra del Colorado National Wildlife Refuge

## MAPCOBIO

Follow up to the prior project  
in BC NWR

To Strengthen:

- ◉ Environmental education
- ◉ Putting land tenure in order
- ◉ Local council
- ◉ Review of the management plan



Sharing our experience and knowledge is the objective of the project MAPCOBIO. A regional seminar on participatory protected area en RNVS BC, Costa Rica

# Barra del Colorado National Wildlife Refuge

## MAPCOBIO

Follow up to the prior project in  
BC NWR

To strengthen :

- Development of marketing of environmental friendly agriculture

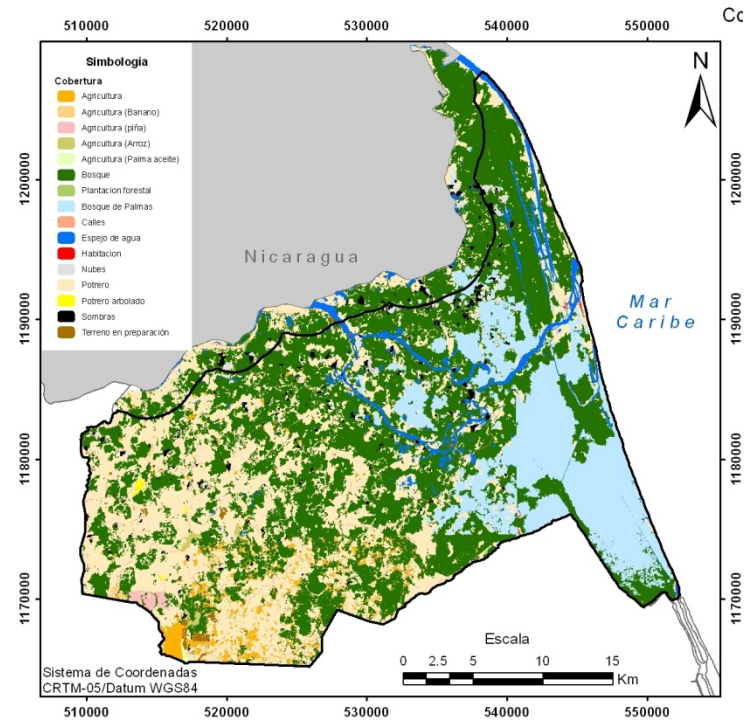


Development of markets and a additional value to the local nature friendly products are a challenge.

# Barra del Colorado National Wildlife Refuge

## Lessons learned

1. Landscape level management is required.
2. Importance of the governance of a territory (not just an ecosystem management)



Governance of a territory composed by a mosaic of natural and agricultural ecosystems is a reality for this protected area administration.

# Barra del Colorado National Wildlife Refuge

## Lessons learned

3. Inter-institutional efforts is needed (Min. of Agriculture and Livestock, Social support Institution etc.)
4. Improving Local production is a good point to enter the local communities.



Agricultural training course for local people organized by protected area administration. Cooperation with Ministry of Agriculture and livestock is indispensable.

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*Thank you very much  
for your attention.*



**Conserving with people**

