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ECOSYSTEMS IN ANTIGUA & BARBUDA



What are Ecosystems?

An ecosystem is complex relationship between the living resources, habitats and residents of an area. It includes animals, plants and animals.



What kind of Ecosystems can be found in Antigua and Barbuda?

In Antigua and Barbuda there are coastal and marine ecosystems, off-shore islands, ponds, a rainforest ecosystem, hills, mountains and valleys, grasslands and wetlands.



Coastal and Marine Ecosystems

Mangroves

What are Mangroves?

Mangroves (generally) are trees and shrubs that grow in saline (brackish) coastal habitats in the tropics and subtropics. Antigua and Barbuda has four species of mangroves: Red, Black, White and Button Mangroves.

Besides providing support and hiding places for a wide variety of marine animals, the mangroves function as nursery, breeding ground, and habitat for both marine and terrestrial wildlife. They are also the nesting grounds for the Cattle Egret.

Mangroves can be found all around Antigua's inlets, however some mangrove woodlands can be found in Parham Harbour, Fitches Creek and Guiana Island. Barbuda's most significant mangrove can be found surrounding the Codrington Lagoon.

Coral Reefs

What are Coral Reefs?

Coral reefs are bustling underwater communities inhabited by thousands of species of animals and plants. Often mistaken for rocks or plants, coral is actually the limestone skeleton of a tiny spineless animal called a coral polyp.

Some Coral reefs in Antigua are the Horse Shoe Reef, Cades Bay Reef and Bird Island Reef.

Lagoon

What are Lagoons?

A lagoon is a body of water cut off from a larger body by a reef of sand or coral. A lagoon that can be found in Barbuda is the Codrington Lagoon.

Beach

What is a Beach?

The zone above the water line at a shore of a body of water, marked by an accumulation of sand, stone, or gravel that has been deposited by the tide or waves.

Antigua and Barbuda has 365 beaches... choose any one as your example!

Other examples of Coastal and Marine Ecosystems are:

- Rocky, sandy or stony shores, and
- Sea grass beds

Off Shore Islands

Some islands off the shores of Antigua are Bird Island, Guinea Island, Maiden Island and Redonda. These islands are teeming with flora and fauna.

Ponds

What is a Pond?

A Pond is a body of water smaller than a lake. Some ponds in Antigua are McKinnons Pond, Body Pond and Country Pond.

Rainforest Ecosystem

What is a Rainforest?

Rainforests are one of the most important areas on Earth. These special ecosystems are home to thousands of species of animals and plants. Antigua's rainforest is the Wallings Rainforest.

Hills, Mountains and Valleys

A **hill** is a landform that extends above the surrounding terrain, in a limited area. The southern side of Antigua is particularly hilly. A **mountain** is a large landform that stretches above the surrounding land in a limited area usually in the form of a peak and is steeper than a hill. Antigua's mountain is called Boggy Peak or Mount Obama. A valley is an elongated lowland between ranges of mountains, hills, or other uplands, often having a river or stream running along the bottom.

Grasslands

A grassland is an area, such as a prairie or meadow, of grass or grasslike vegetation. Such grasslands exist in Piccadilly.

Wetlands

A lowland area, such as a marsh or swamp, that is saturated with moisture, especially when regarded as the natural habitat of wildlife. Wetlands can be found in Bendals.