

# The Yawri Bay

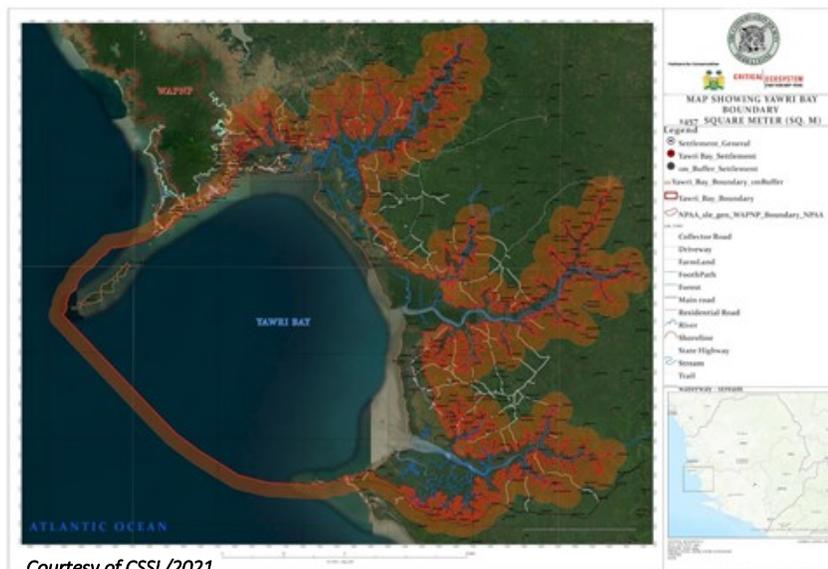
## SITE OVERVIEW

Yawri Bay is one of nine IBA/KBAs in Sierra Leone recognized in the Guinea Forest Ecosystem Profile and part of the Northern Upper Guinea Ecoregion which is classified as continentally outstanding. It is one of four areas in Sierra Leone identified in the Profile (Table 12.2) as a “Priority Site” for CEPF investment. Yawri Bay is a marine protected area situated in the West Coast of Sierra Leone within 8° 11.305'N to 13° 4.945'W and 7° 56.769'N E to 12° 58.328'W. The Bay opens to the South-west of the country and is located about 25km south of Freetown.

## LAND AREA

The total area of Yawri Bay is estimated at **1457.300km<sup>2</sup> (1457300 ha)**

## ARIAL MAP



## PEOPLE AND ECONOMY

- The current population of the area forming the Proposed Yawri Bay Conservation Area is estimated at 82,000 (Socio-economic Study by CSSL, Sept. 2021). This increase in population is significant because every person living within the Proposed Conservation Area depends on its available resources for food, water, building materials and many other ecosystem services.
- While the Mende and Themne are the majority ethnic groups, the area is also known to have several cosmopolitan settlements.
- The age profile of residents in the three chiefdoms (Bumpeh, Ribbi and Kargboro) in Moyamba district, and also a small part of Port Loko district (Koya chiefdom) is heavily skewed to younger people. Over 35% of the entire population is under the age of 10.
- The ratio of men to women is skewed with more women living within the project area than men.
- Twice as many women live in polygamous households compared with monogamous family groups. This has an impact on the birth rate, but also results in more children being brought up in homes where the influence of the father may be less obvious. Around 55% of adults are married or living with partners, 5-8% are separated, divorced or widowed and between 30-40% are single.
- 86% of all individuals who are economically active make their livelihood from fishing, agriculture or craft related activities. However, in practice there is a constant flux between farming, fishing and trading for many people according to seasonal requirements.
- A very high proportion of children leave school either before or immediately after attending primary school (69-73%). A further 17% leave after Junior Secondary School and only 7-8% progress to Senior Secondary School.
- There are approximately 30,000 men who are engaged in active fishing while 200,000 men and women are directly engaged in some aspect of the artisanal fishing effort.



The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund is a joint initiative of l'Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International, the European Union, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan and the World Bank. A fundamental goal is to ensure civil society is engaged in biodiversity conservation.



## ECOLOGICAL & ECOTOURISM IMPORTANCE

- Yawri Bay is home to several ecosystem types. It accounts for 14.3% of the total mangrove swamp in Sierra Leone.
- The Ribbi, Bumpeh and Kargboro rivers, each with its own estuary, flow into Yawri Bay. Its topography and location shelters it from the force of river and strong marine currents. It is therefore, a suitable spawning and nursery ground for fish, which is one of the country's most important marine resources.
- Yawri Bay is one of the most important stop-over and wintering grounds for birds in West Africa.
- The region is also host to various endangered animal species including many invertebrates in mangroves, Red Weaver Ants, African Bees, and Kraus Grasshopper. Also, Forty-six species of Palearctic migrant birds are known to occur in the bay. Four of these species – Avocet, Lesser-crested Tern, Water Dikkop and the near-threatened Damara Tern – were first recorded for Sierra Leone at this site. These and many others all contribute to Yawri Bay's biodiversity.

CSSL works to protect the following species and many more.



West African Manatee



Green Turtle



Red Mangrove



African Skimmer

## CURRENT THREATS

The mangroves in this area are under serious threat particularly for timber and charcoal exploitation, and for oil and gas exploration. Uncontrolled expansion of the fishing and salt production industries in the area are driving increased demand for mangrove wood and charcoal to supply energy needs for processing. Between 2000 to 2014 in the southern half of the project area, mangrove cover declined by 19% (Paul Britten, unpub. data). However, there have been a marginal increase in mangroves due to reforestation efforts. Land use for agriculture is one of the main reasons for degradation.



## PAST & CURRENT MANAGEMENT INTERVENTIONS

- ◇ The Ministry of Land, Country Planning and the Environment (MLCPE) promoted a major national initiative for environmental protection in 2004/2005 which included Yawri Bay as one of the prime targets for detailed scientific research (past).
- ◇ Conserving the Yawri Bay Ecosystem in Sierra Leone's Coastal Corridor by the Conservation Society of Sierra Leone (ongoing).
- ◇ Effective Law Enforcement for the Protection of the Mangroves Ecosystem Services (ongoing)
- ◇ Restoration of Mangroves (past).

## CSSL PLANNED ACTIVITIES

- ◇ Document the importance of Yawri Bay (biodiversity and ecosystem services).
- ◇ Support the National Protected Areas Authority to initiate the process of designating Yawri Bay as a Protected Area.
- ◇ Complete a state-of-the-art Yawri Bay Management Plan.
- ◇ Facilitate the development and signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Conservation Agreement documents between local industries and communities to protect the Bay and integrate biodiversity conservation and wildlife management into their business plans.

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**CRITICAL ECOSYSTEM**  
PARTNERSHIP FUND

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