PARK MANAGEMENT UNIT

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Park management unit – responsible for the day to day management of Black River Gorges National Park and Bras d’Eau National Park and any protected areas entrusted to this unit such as Rivulet Terre Rouge Estuary Bird Sanctuary.

The National Parks and Conservation Service (NPCS) is responsible for the management of our native terrestrial biodiversity and its ecosystem. The two National Parks of Mauritius namely Black River Gorges National Park and Bras d’Eau National Park which fall under the responsibility of NPCS are very popular sites amongst both local and foreign visitors.

BLACK RIVER GORGES NATIONAL PARK
History

The Black River Gorges National Park Project was proclaimed on the 15th of June 1994 by the President of the Republic of Mauritius. It is found in the South West of the island, and covers an area of 6,574 hectares of forests including the highest point at Piton de la Rivière Noire (828 m). The Park is managed mainly for the conservation of endemic flora and fauna, dissemination of and creation of public awareness, education and the provision of leisure to both local and foreign visitors.

There are different microclimates in the park. Hiking from the eastern side of the park to the west, you will be moving from a damp rainy upland forest to a drier lowland forest. The annual rainfall varying from 1000 mm in drier areas to 4000 mm on the uplands, determines the type of vegetation in different regions. The mean temperature varies from 21 °C (upland) to 27 °C (lowland) during summer months and from 17 °C (upland) to 21 °C (lowland) during the winter period.

Facilities at Black River Gorges National Park
Visitor's facilities at Petrin

Information Centre

Picnic Area

Native Garden

Kiosk

Parking
Visitor's facilities at Alexandra Falls
Hiking Trails in Black River Gorges National Park

Trails lead to all parts of the park, from the shady path up the Black River Gorges, to the often cloud-shrouded ridge walk to the Black River Peak. Some 60 km of trails are there for you to enjoy the panorama and to be closer to the plants and animals of the park. The routes listed below and marked on the map are some of the more popular ones:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRAIL</th>
<th>PATHWAY</th>
<th>LENGTH</th>
<th>TRAIL TYPE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MACHABEE FOREST LOOP</td>
<td>Pétrin–Machabée–Pétrin</td>
<td>14 km Return</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MACHABEE TRAIL</td>
<td>Pétrin–Black River Lower Gorges</td>
<td>10 km</td>
<td>Strenuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARE LONGUE LOOP</td>
<td>Pétrin–Mare Longue–Pétrin</td>
<td>12km Return</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARAKEET TRAIL</td>
<td>Plaine Champagne–Black River Lower Gorges</td>
<td>8 km</td>
<td>Strenuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLACK RIVER PEAK TRAIL</td>
<td>Gorette–Black River Peak–Gorette</td>
<td>9 km Return</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAILLE en QUEUE TRAIL</td>
<td>Alexandra – Plaine Champagne</td>
<td>3 km</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAVANNE TRAIL</td>
<td>Plaine Paul – Piton Savanne – Plaine Paul</td>
<td>6 km Return</td>
<td>Easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASCADE des GALLETS TRAIL</td>
<td>Alexandra Falls – Cascade des Galleys – Alexandra Falls</td>
<td>3 km Return</td>
<td>Strenuous</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 1: Walking activity at Black River Gorges
Petrin Range

It comprises of Mare Longue, Macchabée, Les Mares and Plaine Champagne regions

Altitude : 580 - 770 m above mean sea level
Annual Rainfall : 3500 - 4000 mm
Vegetation types : Ranging from the heath and Pandanus marshes of Mare Longue plateau and Petrin to the cloud forest of Mt. Cocotte through the climax upland forest of Macchabée and Brise Fer.

Samples of these vegetation types are being managed in the various Conservation Management Areas found within the range.

Several facilities and hiking trails have been set up for visitors to explore and enjoy the area.

- Macchabée Trail
- Parakeet Trail
- Mare Longue Trail
- Macchabée Forest Trail

- Picnic areas & Kiosk
- Information centre
- Native garden
- Parking facilities
Black River Range

This Range comprises of the Lower Gorges and its surrounding cliffs together with the forested area around the northern part of the Chamarel Village.

Altitude : 100–828 m above mean sea level  
Annual Rainfall : 1500—1800mm  
Vegetation types : Dry lowland to wet upland forest

Several facilities and hiking trails have been set up for visitors to explore and enjoy the area:

- Mare aux Joncs Trail  
- Plateau Remousse Loop  
- Black River Peak Trail

- Picnic areas  
- Kiosk  
- Parking facilities  
- Visitor’s Centre
You cannot miss this renown viewpoint along the Plaine Champagne-Chamarel road. Enjoy the breathtaking view of the Gorges. The highest point of the island, the Black River peak (828 m), stands majestically on your left. Watch out for tropic birds, Mauritian fruit bat and kestrel.
Bel-ombre Range

It comprises of the Combo, Piton Savanne, Pigeon Wood and Bel-ombre forest.

Altitude : 200 - 700 m above mean sea level
Annual Rainfall : 2500 - 4000 mm
Vegetation types : Wet climax forest

Trails have been designed in the area for you to enjoy the panorama and to be closer to the plants and animals.

Cascade des Galets trail
Piton Savanne trail
Bel-ombre trail
Visit to this viewpoint is a must. It offers a magnificent panorama of the south coast and the cloud forest of Mt. Cocotte.
Bras d’Eau National Park was proclaimed as the second terrestrial National Park of Mauritius on the 25th October 2011 under Section 11(1) of the Wildlife and National Parks Act 1993. It is located in the North East of the island and comprises part of State Land Bras d’Eau, part of Pas Geométriques Bras d’Eau and part of reserves of Poste Lafayette Pas Geométriques. It covers a total area of 497.2 ha and is mainly under Mahogany, Araucaria, Tecoma and Eucalyptus plantations. The name Bras d’Eau originated from the outline of the mass of water protruding in the land in the shape of an arm between Pointe Radeau and Belcourt Bay.

The eastern region is known for being a very hot and humid (avg. 80%). The mean temperature in summer varies from 22 °C to 28 °C while in winter it varies from 17 °C to 23 °C.
HISTORY

Mauritius emerged from the ocean floor some eight million years ago. Following the arrival of human some 400 years ago, the island was colonised and later the sugarcane industry became the major source of income for the inhabitants. During that period, Bras D’eau was chosen by some French owners for the construction of a sugar mill. During the years that followed, people had settled around the mill, and an entire village was created. After the sugar mill closed, people left the place as well. However they left behind them remains of an impressive architecture and infrastructure that bears testimony to the vibrant life that existed in the area years before.

Bras d’Eau National Park harbours patches of native vegetation as well as our endemic birds. Some of them are illustrated below.

Figure 2: The very rare orchid Oenellia Aphrodite

Figure 3: Two spp of ebony (Diospyros melanida and D.egrettarum)
Mare Sarcelle forms part of the Bras d’Eau National Park and covers an area of 89.37 ha. It consists of an important thriving population of mangroves, native plant species and also supports a few species of migratory birds. This site is ideal for recreational activities such as hiking and bird watching.
TRAIL DESCRIPTION

Presently, there exist only two trails in the park:

- **Coq des Bois Trail** which takes you through the forest and ends at the Mares Chevrettes
- **Coq de Bois Loop** which is an extension of the existing Coq de Bois Trail.

The **Coq des Bois Trail** (5 km Return from Bras D’eau Visitor’s Centre) is a fairly easy one. Though only 2.5 km long, visitors may easily enjoy the different aspects of a forest since there are dwarf trees as well as tall trees along the track.
# Do’s and Don’ts in the Parks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dos</th>
<th>Don’ts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>![Camera]</td>
<td>![Bananas]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You may take photos</td>
<td>Don’t pick fruits and flowers except from guava, raspberries and prunes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Chairs]</td>
<td>![Bananas]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picnic spots</td>
<td>Don’t throw your litter in the forests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Trashcan]</td>
<td>![Bananas]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Either use the bin to throw your litter or kindly take it back with you</td>
<td>Don’t bring pets &amp; Don’t interfere with animals and their nests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Campfire]</td>
<td>![Bananas]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day time recreation</td>
<td>Don’t Light fire and/or cigarettes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Hikers]</td>
<td>![Bananas]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep along the track</td>
<td>Don’t put loud music or shout</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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