

South Water Caye is in the middle of Belize's largest marine protected area, the South Water Caye Marine Reserve. This location offers excellent opportunities to explore any of the myriad coastal gardens, ten mangrove cayes and two large mangrove ranges within this acre marine reserve.

- Along the northern border of the marine park lies **Man-O-War Caye**, an island covered in tall red mangroves, which is a nesting habitat, as well as one of the seven crown bird sanctuaries in Belize. The island supports up to 350 nesting birds, including one of the ten largest colonies of the Magnificent Frigate Birds and Brown Boobies in the Caribbean.

- About a mile south of South Water Caye lies **Carrie Bow Caye**, the base for the Caribbean Coral Reef Marine Research Station operated by the Smithsonian Institution. The research sites for this station form some of the "most studied" coral reef and mangrove environments in the world.

- The area between Carrie Bow and **Wee Wee Caye** is called the sand bores. These sand bores rise from the sea floor 30 to 40 feet from the sea floor, breaking the surface in many locations. These exposed bores are used by sooty terns as nesting grounds, and the deep areas between the bores are habitats to barracuda and rays. Sink holes and pinnacles, ridges and huge pillars, caves and sand troughs are all represented within a very small area.

- One of the most impressive areas for diving within the South Water Caye Marine Reserve is the **"Drop Off"**. The drop off is a spectacular ridge running the entire length of the park. The longest unbroken stretch of the barrier reef in Belize lies within the park boundaries and the areas among the mangrove cayes are some of the most biologically productive habitats in the country.

The marine reserve fees, collected for your stay on South Water Caye, help to protect and manage Belize's largest marine protected area.