

# JAMAICA



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## General

Jamaica is an island country situated in the Caribbean Sea. It is located about 145 km south of Cuba, and 191 km west of Hispaniola (the island containing Haiti and the Dominican Republic). It is the third-largest island of the Greater Antilles and the fourth-largest island country in the Caribbean. Jamaica has an area of 1.1 Mha (million hectares) with in 2020 a population of 3.0 million, or 2.73 persons per ha (Wikipedia and United Nations, 2019).

## Climate and geography

The climate in Jamaica is tropical, with hot and humid weather. Some regions on the south coast, such as the Liguanea Plain and the Pedro Plains, are relatively dry rain-shadow areas. Jamaica is located in the hurricane belt of the Atlantic Ocean. Because of this, the island sometimes suffers significant storm damage. Among the variety of terrestrial ecosystems are dry and wet limestone forests, rainforest, riparian woodland, lowlands, caves and rivers.

## Existing polders

The Group Polder Development (1982) has identified three polder areas. These concern:

- *Meylersfield Polders* that have been constructed in the Meylersfield Swamp. The West-Polder (172 ha) and the East-Polder (560 ha). The polders are used for rice cultivation. Drainage pumping stations drain the excess water (Figure 1) (Baarveld, 1980);

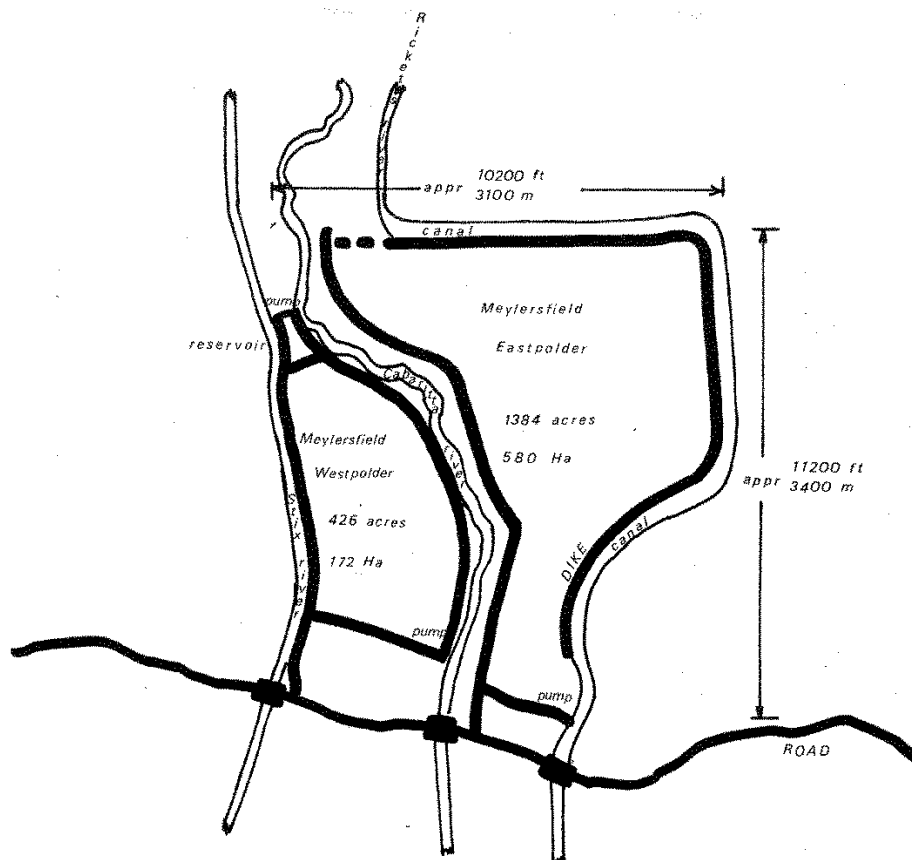


Figure 1. Meylersfield West and East polders

- *Hague Polders*. The Group Polder Development (1982) describes that similar designs as used for the Meylersfield polders were made for the reclamation of the Hague Swamp. The Hague North-Polder with an area of 76 ha, and the Hague South Polder of 164 ha. The main crop would be rice, but also coco-nut palms would be grown. Part of the area was intended for fishponds. A report by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) (2018) showed that these polders indeed have been reclaimed in 1978;
- *Black River Marshes*. The Group Polder Development (1982) stated that in the Black River Marshes an area of about 8500 ha can be reclaimed. A polder of 5000 ha has been planned in the Lower Morasses, while for the Upper Morasses a detailed drainage system for 1600 ha has been designed. In a later publication by FAO (2018) it is stated that in the Upper Morass 4600 ha are under the Black River Upper Morass Development Company (BRUMDEC) project and that BRUMDEC is now managing 3000 ha, the drainage and land preparation of which were completed in July 1982. About half of these 3000 ha is peat soil. As far as can be traced no reclamation has taken place in the Lower Morass.

General characteristics of the polders in Jamaica are shown in Table I.

### **Proposed polders**

In addition to the Lower Morass no other proposed polders could be identified.

### **References**

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Table I. General characteristics of existing polders in Jamaica

| Name                                | Reclamation | Area in ha | Type *) | Latitudes | Longitudes | Elevation in m+MSL | Land use    |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|------------|---------|-----------|------------|--------------------|-------------|
| <i>Existing polders</i>             |             |            |         |           |            |                    |             |
| Meylersfield West Polder            | 1977-1981   | 172        | RLL     | 18° 16' N | 78° 10' W  | 5                  | Rice        |
| Meylersfield East Polder            | 1977-       | 560        | RLL     | 18° 16' N | 78° 10' W  | 5                  | Rice        |
| Hague North Polder                  | 1978        | 76         | RLL     | 18° 29' N | 77° 39' W  | 0                  | Agriculture |
| Hague South Polder                  | 1978        | 164        | RLL     | 18° 29' N | 77° 39' W  | 0                  | Agriculture |
| Black River Marshes, Upper Morasses | 1982        | 4600       | RLL     | 18° 02' N | 77° 47' W  | 0                  | Agriculture |
| Sub-total                           |             | 5572       |         |           |            |                    |             |
| <i>Proposed polders</i>             |             |            |         |           |            |                    |             |
| Black River Marshes, Lower Morasses |             |            | RLL     |           |            |                    |             |
| Total                               |             | 5572       |         |           |            |                    |             |

\*) RLL = reclaimed low-lying land; LGS = land gained on the sea; DL = drained lake