Jamaica has extended the area of the Black River Lower Morass Wetland of International Importance from 5,700 hectares to 85,664 ha. This “Ramsar Site” (no. 919 on the List of Wetlands of International Importance) on the south-western coast is one of the largest freshwater wetland ecosystems in the country. It now includes a much greater area of herbaceous wetland, riparian forest, swamp forest, limestone islands, coastal flood plain, freshwater areas and dunes.

The Lower Morass and its diverse ecosystems are essential for the maintenance of the overall biodiversity of the area. The Site provides habitat for 207 species of plants and over 300 species of birds. It also provides refuge and habitat for species of international importance included in the IUCN Red List, such as the hawksbill turtle (Eretmochelys imbricata) which is classified as critically endangered. It is also a refuge for vulnerable species such as the American crocodile (Crocodylus acutus), the Jamaican slider (Trachemys terrapen), and the West Indian whistling duck (Dendrocygna arborea).

The Site, which is protected under national law, is a source of income for local communities that use it for cane farming, fisheries, timber harvesting, charcoal production, and pastureland during the dry season. However, it has been impacted by urban development, burning, and drainage of some areas for agricultural purposes.