

Geographic Names Standardization Policy for Jamaica

United States Board on Geographic Names
Foreign Names Committee



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1. Introduction

This geographic names standardization policy has been prepared as an aid to those geographic names experts who are the working staff for the United States Board on Geographic Names (BGN) in the standardization of the geographic names of Jamaica for United States Government use. The BGN and its staff work to effect consistent treatment of geographic name spellings in U.S. Government databases, publications, maps, and charts. The country policies are intended to satisfy, in part, the statutory requirements levied upon the BGN in Public Law USC 80-242 to develop principles, policies and procedures for geographic names standardization, and to promulgate decisions with respect to the principles of geographic nomenclature and orthography.

2. Languages and Language Policy

a. Demographics

The estimated population of Jamaica as of July 2015 was 2,950,210 people. The largest single ethnic group is of black heritage, comprising approximately 92% of the population. The second largest ethnic group is of mixed descent, comprising approximately 6% of the total population. The remainder of the population is of East Indian (0.8%), other (0.4%), and unspecified descents (0.7%).¹

b. Languages

The official language of Jamaica is English (ISO 639-3 code *eng*) and is used in all official contexts. Jamaican Creole English (ISO 639-3 code *jam*), or Jamaican Patois, is the de facto language, spoken in daily life by the majority of Jamaicans.²

c. Geographic Names Standardization

According to the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN), Jamaica's national authority for geographic names is the Place Names Committee. The group resides within the National Land Agency, Jamaica's mapping authority.³ As a member state of the Commonwealth of Nations, Jamaica participates in the United Kingdom Division of the UNGEGN.⁴

¹ "Jamaica." *CIA World Factbook*. Central Intelligence Agency, Web. <www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/geos/jm.html> (Accessed 9 May 2016).

² "Jamaica." *Ethnologue*, Lewis, M. Paul, Gary F. Simons, and Charles D. Fennig (eds.). 2016. *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, Nineteenth edition. Dallas, Texas: SIL International, Web. <www.ethnologue.com/country/JM/languages> (Accessed 9 May 2016).

³ "Authorities List." *UNGEGN*. United Nations, Web. URL: <www.unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/docs/NNA/Authorities_list_January%202015.pdf> (Accessed 9 May 2016).

⁴ "UNGEGN Divisions." *UNGEGN*. United Nations, Web. URL: <www.unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/divisions.html> (Accessed 9 May 2016).

3. Toponymic Policies

a. Orthography

Geographic names standardization policy will follow English orthographic conventions, using British English spellings; for example, *harbour* instead of *harbor*. Variant place names in other languages may exist, but are rarely found on native sources. The user may encounter place names with mixed English and non-English terms, for example, *Rio Bueno Harbour*, or *The Rio Grande*. Occasionally, the user may find various spellings as a result of rendering indigenous place names in harmony with English orthographic rules.

b. Romanization

Romanization is not required.

c. Diacritics

Diacritics are not used in approved Jamaican geographic names.

d. Generic Terms

A generic is a term used to describe a geographic feature, such as “river,” “hill,” and “lake.” If the generic term does not identify the feature, the term should be considered a false generic and should not be collected in the GNDB as a generic. Generic terms are not collected for populated places. With one exception, approved Jamaican toponyms only contain generic terms in English; the deviation from this rule is the use of *rio*, Spanish for “stream,” a result of the relatively short-lived Spanish colony on the island.^{5,6}

e. Hyphenation, Capitalization, and Spelling

Jamaican geographic names follow English grammar and spelling conventions. Hyphenated place names may be found in Jamaica; when hyphens are encountered on authoritative sources, they should also be included in the feature name.

The definite article *the* is generally capitalized when in initial position as part of the proper feature name; for example, *The Crab Woods*, *The Great Morass*. If the place name contains more than one article, only the initial one should be capitalized, unless it is also capitalized on the native source. If the place name is written in all capital letters on the native source, a non-initial definite article, conjunction or preposition will be in lower case when the standardized name form is derived, unless nearby associated features suggest otherwise.

Conjunctions, such as *and* (eng) and prepositions such as *of* (eng) or *de* (spa) are collected in lower case as in, *Time and Patience*, *Little Juan de Bolas River* and *County of Cornwall*.

⁵ Although Spanish orthography requires a diacritic be used on “*rio*,” Jamaican sources exclude it.

⁶ Allsopp, Jeannette. "Spanish Loanwords in Caribbean English." *Spanish Loanwords in the English Language: A Tendency towards Hegemony Reversal*. Ed. Félix Rodríguez González. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1996. 256-68. Print.

f. Numbers

Names containing cardinal or ordinal numerals should be treated according to the following guidelines:

- Arabic numbers are generally expanded in English
- Roman numerals are retained throughout

These guidelines apply to numerals in both initial and non-initial positions.

g. Long and Short Forms

Short forms are not added to variant names in the GNDB.

Administrative division names are accorded long and short forms. Example: *Parish of Clarendon* [long form]; *Clarendon* [short form].

Long and short forms of names of populated places are approved when supported by official evidence.

Railroad station names that appear on official sources with the generic term *Station* are given long and short forms as supported by the evidence. Example: *Williamsfield Station* [long form]; *Williamsfield* [short form].

h. Unique Linguistic Situations

Alternate Names

Feature names in Jamaican sources may appear with alternate names in parentheses. In these cases, the first name will be chosen as the approved name, while the name in parentheses will be rendered as the variant name, unless overwhelming evidence suggests otherwise.

4. Political Geography Policy

a. Country Name and Capital

Country Name

Approved name: Jamaica

Capital (PPLC)

Approved name: Kingston

b. First-order Administrative Divisions

Jamaica has 14 first-order administrative divisions, known as parishes. The parishes are contained within three counties which bear no present-day administrative significance: Surrey in the east, containing the parishes of Kingston, Portland, Saint Andrew, and Saint Thomas; Middlesex in the center of the island, containing the parishes of Clarendon, Manchester, Saint Ann, Saint Catherine,

and Saint Mary; and Cornwall in the west, containing the parishes of Hanover, Saint Elizabeth, Saint James, Trelawny, and Westmoreland.^{7,8}

Please see Appendix A for a map depicting first-order administrative divisions in Jamaica.

Name	GEC	GENC	Seat
Clarendon	JM01	JM-13	May Pen
Hanover	JM02	JM-09	Lucea
Kingston	JM17	JM-01	Kingston
Manchester	JM04	JM-12	Mandeville
Portland	JM07	JM-04	Port Antonio
Saint Andrew	JM08	JM-02	Half Way Tree
Saint Ann	JM09	JM-06	Saint Ann's Bay
Saint Catherine	JM10	JM-14	Spanish Town
Saint Elizabeth	JM11	JM-11	Black River
Saint James	JM12	JM-08	Montego Bay
Saint Mary	JM13	JM-05	Port Maria
Saint Thomas	JM14	JM-03	Morant Bay
Trelawny	JM15	JM-07	Falmouth
Westmoreland	JM16	JM-10	Savanna-la-Mar

c. Disputed Territories

The only known territorial dispute involving Jamaica concerns Bajo Nuevo (Petrel Islands), a small, uninhabited reef approximately 150 miles southwest from the southern coast of Jamaica in the Caribbean Sea⁹. The reef is currently claimed by Jamaica, as well as by Colombia, Nicaragua and the United States. A feature record for Bajo Nuevo should not be added to the GNDB as it already exists in the USGS' Geographic Names Information System (GNIS).

For the latest country-specific boundary dispute information, consult the US Department of State.

5. Source Material

The preferred authority for Jamaica map and chart sources is the Surveys and Mapping Division, formerly the Survey Department, which resides within the National Land Agency of Jamaica. Other preferred sources include those produced by other Jamaican government agencies and those

⁷ "Parishes of Jamaica." *Statoids*. Statoids, Web. <www.statoids.com/ujm.html> (Accessed 9 May 2016).

⁸ "Parish Profiles." Jamaica Information Service, Web. <jis.gov.jm/information/parishprofiles> (Accessed 9 May 2016).

⁹ Shah, Dayna K. and Mary W. Reich. *U.S. Insular Areas: Application of the U.S. Constitution*. United States General Accounting Office Report to the Chairman, Committee on Resources, House of Representatives. Washington, D.C., November 1997, p. 39.

produced by the U.K. Ordnance Survey International for the Jamaican government. Sources produced by Jamaican academic institutions, UN and US government agencies, and international organizations like the Organization of American States (OAS) may be used; however, these sources are not authoritative unless they contain a caveat that the information contained was produced for the Jamaican government.

a. Preferred Sources

The following is a list of preferred sources for geographic name selection.

1. Topographic maps, various scales from 1:2000 to 1:250,000, National Land Agency, Surveys and Mapping Division, Kingston, Jamaica URL:
www.elandjamaica.gov.jm/eland/jsp/mappingAd.jsp
2. Online interactive map (iMap), National Land Agency, Kingston, Jamaica URL:
www.nla.gov.jm/map.asp
3. 1:12,500-scale map series, Jamaica, Ordnance Survey International, 1992-1993.
4. 1:250,000-scale map, Jamaica, Survey Department, Jamaica Government, 1977.

Appendix A. First-order Administrative Divisions of Jamaica

