

NOAA Hazardous Waste Site Report

Clear Ambient Service (II-109)

Catano, Puerto Rico

April 13, 1984

Location and Nature of Site:

Clear Ambient Service is an operating waste oil reclamation facility controlled by regulations and permits under the Resource and Environmental Conservation Recovery Act (RCRA). The facility is located in Catano, Puerto Rico (Figure 1). Oil discovered in the marshland behind Clear Ambient Service prompted a site investigation by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Dark ground stains and oil were found around the facility. Nearby mangroves had been damaged by an oil fire.

Aerial photographs were taken and interpreted in April 1982 by the EPA. Interpretation of the photographs of areas of primary concern at this site revealed scarred ground with several liquid-filled depressions, an open storage area with ground stains and two possible drainage paths into the nearby canal, a vertical tank with liquid, and an area of vegetation damage in the marsh.

Proximity of Chemical Hazard to Marine Resources:

Clear Ambient Service is located approximately 500 feet from a canal which drains through the center of a large marshland area called Clenaga de las Cucharillas. The canal empties into the Bay of San Juan, approximately 1.3 miles away. A wetland area northwest of the site was found by EPA Region II officials to contain an oily liquid. Two potential surface drainage paths to the canal were identified through study of aerial photographs.

Marine Resources at Risk:

The fishery resources of Puerto Rico are composed mainly of reef-dwelling fish, shellfish, and pelagic fish. They generally spawn in the same habitat in which they reside. There are some species whose larval forms are found in the freshwater rivers and canals, but they are not important commercial or recreational species. The commercial and recreational fisheries of Puerto Rico are important to the local economy and support many subsistence fishermen (4).

San Juan Bay is an important recreational area for the San Juan community, and has seagrass beds, patch coral reefs, and mangrove forests in many areas. No anadromous fish spawn in this area, but many other marine organisms can be found here year-round as adults or larvae (Table 1).

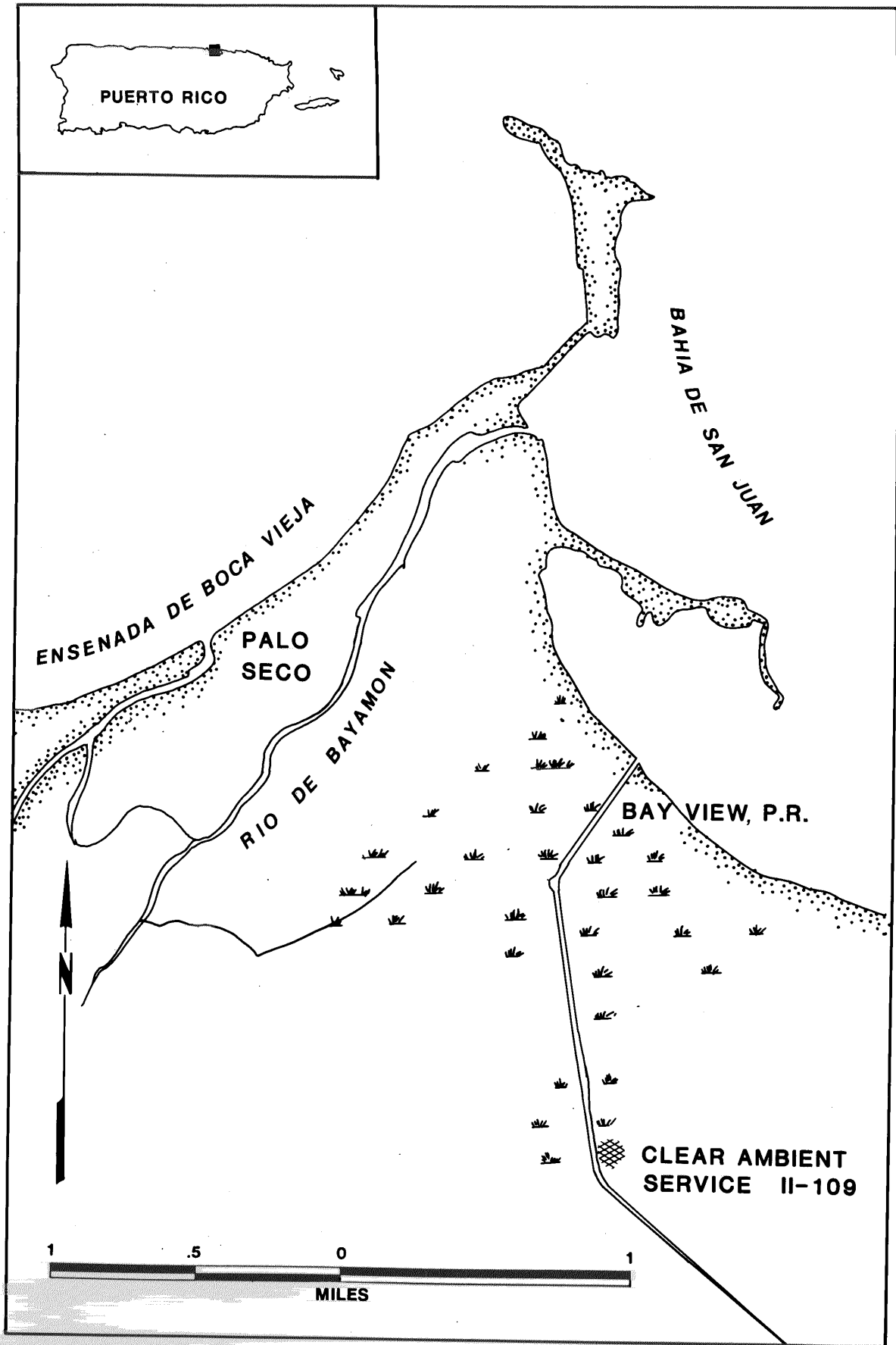


FIGURE 1. Site location.

Table 1. Fishery Resources of San Juan Bay (1,2,4)

Finfish Species	Adult Habitat	Spawning Area	Nursery Area	Comm. Fish.	Rec. Fish.	Migr. Route
<u>Non-anadromous</u>						
Grunt	x	x	x		x	
Snapper	x	x	x		x	
Jack	x	x	x		x	
Barracuda	x	x	x		x	
Mullet	x	x	x		x	
Goatfish	x	x	x		x	
<u>Shellfish</u>						
Spiny lobster	x		x		x	
<u>Other</u>						
Octopus	x	x	x		x	

Many wading birds, shorebirds, and seabirds can be found here all year, especially near the Constitution Bridge Mudflat. This area supports many species of birds that are found nowhere else on the island (1)

San Juan Bay also supports some small populations of manatee.

Summary of Site-Related Actions:

This facility is under investigation by the EPA. Dikes have been built around the storage tanks and some sampling has been performed. No cleanup of the site has been performed.

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References:

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