

INTERNAL ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS OF BRITISH GUIANA

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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For administrative purposes the Colony of British Guiana is comprised of nine districts, listed below with their capitals and the dates on which their current boundaries became officially effective:

<u>District</u>	<u>Capital</u>	<u>Effective as of:</u>
East Berbice	New Amsterdam	23 March 1953
West Berbice	Fort Wellington	23 March 1953
East Demerara	Enmore	23 March 1953
West Demerara	Vreed-en-hoop	1 August 1947
Essequibo Islands	Enterprise	1 August 1947
Essequibo	Suddie	1 February 1955
North West	Mabaruma	1 February 1955
Mazaruni-Potaro	Bartica	1 August 1947
Rupununi	Lethem	1 January 1937

The proclamations establishing the nine districts were recorded in issues of the Official Gazette of British Guiana published on or about the effective dates noted above. The proclamations include detailed descriptions of the district boundaries as follows:

East Berbice District is bounded on the North by the Atlantic Ocean; on the East by the boundary between this Colony and Dutch Guiana from the Atlantic Ocean up to the 4th parallel of North Latitude; on the South by the fourth parallel of North Latitude from the boundary between this Colony and Dutch Guiana to the watershed between the Essequibo and Berbice Rivers; and on the West by the left bank of the Berbice River from the Atlantic Ocean to the south boundary of Plantation Ithaca, the south boundary of Plantation Ithaca and its continuation to the Berbice-Abary watershed, the Berbice-Abary watershed to its junction with the Berbice-Demerara watershed and the Berbice-Essequibo watershed to the fourth parallel of North Latitude. (Official Gazette, 21 March 1953, p. 943.)

West Berbice District is bounded on the North by the Atlantic Ocean; on the East and South by the left bank of the Berbice River from the Atlantic Ocean to the south boundary of Plantation Ithaca, the south boundary of Plantation Ithaca and its continuation westward to the Berbice-Abary watershed and the Berbice-Abary watershed to its junction with the Berbice-Demerara watershed; on the West by the Abary-Mahaicony watershed from its junction with the Berbice-Demerara watershed northward to the Jugdeo Canal, the Jugdeo Canal eastward to the Left Bank Abary River and the Left Bank Abary River to the Atlantic Ocean. (Official Gazette, 21 March 1953, p. 943.)

East Demerara District is bounded on the North by the Atlantic Ocean; on the East by the Abary-Mahaicony watershed from its junction with the Berbice-Demerara watershed northward to the Jugdeo Canal, the Jugdeo Canal eastward to the Left Bank Abary River and the Left bank Abary River to the Atlantic Ocean; on the West and South by the right bank, Demerara River, from its mouth to the north-western extremity of the area leased to the Government of the United States of America, thence along the northern boundary of the said area to its north eastern extremity, thence by a line due east to the watershed between the Demerara and Mahaica Rivers, thence southward along the aforesaid watershed to the source of the Mahaicony-Watuka River. (Official Gazette, 21 March 1953, p. 943.)

West Demerara District is bounded on the North by a line starting from a point on the right bank, Demerara River, at its mouth and extending thence westward to a point on the left bank of the Demerara River, thence in a north-westerly and westerly direction along the coastline to the mouth of the Boeraserie River, thence along the right bank, Essequibo River, to the mouth of the Bonasika River; on the East by the right bank, Demerara River, from its mouth to the north-western extremity of the area leased to the Government of the United States of America, thence along the northern boundary of the said area to its north-eastern extremity, thence by a line due east to the watershed between the Demerara and the Mahaica Rivers thence southward along the aforesaid watershed and the watershed between the Demerara and Berbice Rivers to the fifth

parallel of North Latitude; on the South by the fifth parallel of North Latitude from the watershed between the Berbice and Demerara Rivers to the watershed between the Demerara and Essequibo Rivers; on the West by the watershed between the Essequibo and Demerara Rivers from the fifth parallel of North Latitude northward to the source of the Bonasika River, thence along the left bank of the Bonasika River to its mouth. (Official Gazette, 1 August 1947.)

Essequibo Islands District is bounded as follows: Commencing at a point on the left bank, Boeraserie River, at its mouth and extending in a general northerly direction around the eastern extremity of Dauntless Island to the northern extremity of the said Island, thence to the north-western extremity of Wakenaam Island, thence in a south-westerly direction to the right bank, Supenaam River at its mouth, thence along the right bank, Supenaam River, to its source, thence in a south-eastern direction along the watershed between the Cuyuni and Essequibo Rivers to the source of Tiger River, thence downwards along the right bank of Tiger River to its mouth, thence in a south-easterly direction across the Essequibo River to the Mouth of Makouria River, thence up the left bank, Makouria River, to its source, thence to the watershed between the Essequibo and Demerara Rivers, thence northward along the aforesaid watershed to the source of the Bonasika River, thence along the left bank, Bonasika River, to its mouth, thence along the right bank, Essequibo River, to the starting point on the left bank of the Boeraserie River. (Official Gazette, 1 August 1947.)

Essequibo District is bounded on the North by the Atlantic Ocean from the mouth of the Pomeroon River to the northern boundary of Better Hope; on the East by the Atlantic Ocean and the left bank of the Essequibo River from the northern boundary of Plantation Better Hope to the mouth of the Supenaam River and including Tiger Island; on the South by the right bank of the Supenaam River from its mouth to its source; on the West by the left bank Pomeroon River to the mouth of the Wakapau River, thence by the left bank Wakapau River to the mouth of the Hanabasaigia River, thence by a line in the south-easterly direction to the watershed between the Wakapau and Akawini Rivers, thence along this watershed to the watershed between the Akawini

and Manawarin Rivers, thence along this watershed to the watershed between the Pomeroun and Waini Rivers, thence along this watershed to the source of the Pomeroun River, thence along the watershed between the Cuyuni and Pomeroun Rivers to the source of the Supenaam River. (Official Gazette, 7 February 1955.)

North West District is bounded on the North by the Atlantic Ocean from Putna Punta Playa to the mouth of the Pomeroun River; on the East by the left bank Pomeroun River to the mouth of the Wakapau River, thence by the left bank Wakapau River to the mouth of Hanabasaigia River, thence by a line in a south-easterly direction to the watershed between the Wakapau and Akawini Rivers, thence along this watershed to the watershed between the Akawini and Manawarin Rivers thence along this watershed to the watershed between the Pomeroun and Waini Rivers, thence along this watershed to the source of the Pomeroun River; on the South by the watershed between the Cuyuni and the Waini and Barama Rivers from the source of the Pomeroun River to the source of the Akarabisi River; on the West by the boundary between the Colony and Venezuela from the source of the Akarabisi River to the Atlantic Ocean. (Official Gazette, 7 February 1955.)

Mazaruni-Potaro District is bounded on the North by a line commencing at the source of the Supenaam River, and extending westward along the watershed between the Cuyuni and Waini and Barama Rivers to the source of the Akarabisi River; on the East by a line commencing at the source of the Supenaam River and extending in a south-easterly direction along the watershed between the Cuyuni and Essequibo Rivers to the source of Tiger River, thence downwards along the right bank of Tiger River to its mouth, thence in a south-easterly direction across the Essequibo River to the mouth of the Makouria River, thence up the left bank, Makouria River, to its source, thence to the watershed between the Essequibo and Demerara Rivers thence southward along the aforesaid watershed to the fifth parallel of North Latitude; on the South by the boundary between the Colony and Brazil from the trinational mark on Mount Roraima to the fifth parallel of North Latitude, thence eastward along the fifth parallel of North Latitude to the watershed between Essequibo and Demerara Rivers; on the West by the boundary between the Colony and Venezuela from the source of the Akarabisi River to the Trinational mark on Mount Roraima. (Official Gazette, 1 August 1947)

Rupununi District is bounded on the North by the fourth parallel of North Latitude from the boundary between this Colony and Dutch Guiana to the watershed between the Essequibo and Berbice rivers; by the watershed between the Essequibo and Berbice rivers, northwards from the fourth (4th) parallel of North Latitude to the watershed between the Demerara and Berbice rivers; by the watershed between the Demerara and Berbice rivers northwards to the fifth (5th) parallel of North Latitude; by the fifth (5th) parallel of North Latitude from the watershed between the Demerara and Berbice rivers to the boundary between this Colony and Brazil; on the East by the boundary between this Colony and Dutch Guiana southwards from the fourth parallel of North Latitude; on the south by the boundary between this Colony and Brazil; on the west by the boundary between this Colony and Brazil southwards from the fifth (5th) parallel of North Latitude. (Official Gazette, 14 November 1936, p. 1158.)

The six coastal districts -- East Berbice, West Berbice, East Demerara, West Demerara, Essequibo Islands and Essequibo -- are administered by local district commissioners under the Department of Local Government in Georgetown. The interior districts -- North West, Mazaruni-Potari, and Rupununi -- have district commissioners who are responsible to the Department of the Interior. The principal duties of the district commissioners are to coordinate the various government departments within their districts, and to provide assistance in the management of village affairs.

Many maps of the Colony of British Guiana show three "counties" -- Essequibo, Demerara, and Berbice -- extending from the coast inland, roughly encompassing the river basins having those names. These three divisions have no administrative status whatever and have no legally defined boundaries. They reflect historical divisions made prior to 1814 when the area was ceded to Great Britain. The appearance of the three "counties" on current maps of British Guiana is somewhat puzzling and has led to much confusion about the internal civil divisions of the colony.

A new CIA map, British Guiana, shows current district boundaries at 1:4,000,000. They are shown in greater detail at 1:1,000,000 on a reference copy of a British Guianese Map of British Guiana that has recent manuscript additions bringing the boundary delineations up to date.*

*The CIA Map Library (extension 2596) has both maps. Distribution copies of British Guiana, 1:4,000,000, 1958, CIA Map 26554, are obtainable on request. The Map of British Guiana, 1:1,000,000, Department of Lands and Mines, Georgetown, British Guiana, 1947 (reprinted by the Directorate of Colonial Surveys, 1955), with manuscript additions as of 1958, is available.

