

# **Reunion**

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## **Location and area**

Réunion is an overseas department and administrative region of France, and forms the largest of the Mascarene island group in the Indian Ocean, southeast of Madagascar. The island has an area of 2,512 km<sup>2</sup>. (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

## **Topography**

The island is volcanic in origin and is mountainous. The highest peak, Piton des Neiges, rises 3,069 m above sea level. (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

## **Climate**

The climate is tropical, with a rainy season lasting from November to April; the island is subject to destructive tropical storms. (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

## **Land use**

The island's economy is dominated by the cultivation of sugar cane (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

## **Wetlands**

Rivals (1952, cited in Straka 1960a) reported the occurrence of wetlands dominated by Gramineae and Cyperaceae above the tree line (2000-2500 m a.s.l.), but except for "Trockentorf" (dry "peat" from brownmosses) Straka (1960a) could not find any peat there.

## **Peatlands**

Small peatlands are reported from the Plaines des Salazes near the Coteau Kervéguen and in the so-called Foc-Foc near the Ramond volcanic crater (Straka 1960a). Straka (1960a) cored 3.55 m of peat in the Mare à Joncs (1200 m a.s.l.).

Also Markov et al. (1988) reports the presence of peatlands on Reunion in an altitude of 1400 – 2500 m above sea level. The peat thickness was reported to be in one case 3,55 m.

According to the interpreted World Soil Map (Van Engelen & Huting 2002) no histosols and no gley soils exist in Reunion.