GEOGRAPHY OF SURINAME

In Suriname four major geographical zones can be distinguished based on geology, geomorphology and the resulting soils (Fig. 2): the Young Coastal Plain, Old Coastal Plain, Savanna Belt and Interior (or Precambrian Shield).

![Fig. 2 Geomorphological division of Suriname.](image)

The Young Coastal Plain consists of Holocene deposits, mainly of clays originating from the Amazon River and parallel sand and shell ridges. The coastal development was described by Brinkman & Pons (1968) and Augustinus (1978), and was summarized by Noordam (1993). The resulting landscape is a mangrove forest on clayish soils on the sea coast and estuaries, with brackish to freshwater swamps and lagoons behind it (Fig. 3). In undisturbed circumstances swamps may develop into swamp forests. Parallel to the coast sand and shell ridges are present with a higher, relatively poor ridge forest. In a few locations on the coast, sand beaches are present (Fig. 4). These are usually not stable and shift to the west due to the Guyana Current.

The Old Coastal Plain was deposited during two interglacial transgressions in the Pleistocene, but strongly eroded during regressive phases (Noordam, 1993). Soils consist of older marine clays and sand ridges. Due to the erosion the landscape is
Fig. 3 Coastal swamp. © Jan Mol.

Fig. 4 Beach at Galibi, with nesting Green Turtle.