

National and International Protected Areas

Definitions

The World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA) classifies protected area records by whether they are designated under a national-level instrument, or if they are designated under international conventions or agreements.

National: Protected areas designated or proposed at the national or sub-national level. These are often designated under a national legal instrument, and based on national legislation. It should be noted that there are potentially exceptions to this with regard to community and privately protected areas.

International: Protected areas designated by a country under an international or regional convention, commission or agreement such as, but not limited to, ASEAN Heritage, Barcelona, OSPAR, HELCOM, European Nature Directives (Natura2000), Ramsar, UNESCO World Heritage or Man and Biosphere Programme. These obligations have additional steps, such as requiring countries to propose sites that reach certain criteria and, depending on the obligation, the sites may be accepted immediately or are subject to a review process before they are considered to be acceptable. Of these conventions and agreements, only the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme, and Ramsar Convention are truly international in scope, the remaining conventions and agreements are regionally focussed.

Overlap

National/International: Different countries have different approaches in terms of their protected areas networks with regard to national and international sites. At one end of the spectrum, there are countries where the international protected areas are also designated as national sites so there is a 100% overlap (i.e. every international site is also a national site) while at the other end of the spectrum, the national and international sites are totally separate spatial entities where there is 0% overlap. The majority of countries fall somewhere between these two end points. It is important to note that one geographical space can be designated several times using different legislation.

National/National: While the issue of overlap between national and international designations is important to be aware of, it should also be recognised that national sites can often overlap. Depending on the legal framework and policies used to designate sites, a geographical space can be designated under multiple national protected areas. This often reflects the history of designation in a country.

The important message to take from this is that a single geographical location may be covered by one or more national sites and one or more international sites.

IUCN Management Categories

The IUCN management categories are a system for classifying the different management approaches applied to protected areas. Originally developed in 1978, the current version of the management categories was revised and approved by IUCN in 2008. The categories are recognised by the global community through the United Nations and the Convention on Biological Diversity. IUCN promotes the use of the categories to facilitate protected area planning, to improve information management and to regulate activities within protected areas. While the IUCN categories are a global framework, the application of categories to sites and the understanding of what the different categories mean vary significantly between countries/territories. It is worth noting that countries/territories are not obliged to assign IUCN categories (although it is best practise to do so) and, depending on how they have been assigned, the application of the categories may not have formal legal status in the country. Of the 259 countries and national territories represented in the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA), only 53 have provided IUCN management categories for every national protected area record (representing 31,111 protected areas) and 11 countries/territories have not reported categories for any of their sites (representing 134 protected areas).

The IUCN management categories are not intended to be used as a hierarchical structure (with Ia recognised as the most strongly protected/most “important” and VI the weakest/least “important”) and this is not one of the uses of the categories that is formally supported by IUCN.

Countries where IUCN management categories are reported for all national-level protected area records in the WDPA

Based on the September 2013 monthly release of the WDPA, there are 53 countries/territories, representing 31,111 protected areas, where the IUCN management category for every national-level protected area has been reported (those with >100 national-level protected area records are highlighted in bold):

- Afghanistan
- Albania
- Armenia
- Australia, Christmas Island
- Australia, Cocos (Keeling) Islands
- Australia, Heard and McDonald Islands
- Australia, Norfolk Island
- Bhutan
- Botswana
- Bouvet Island
- Burundi
- Chad
- **Chile**
- Comoros
- Cyprus
- Djibouti
- Dominica
- Dominican Republic
- Eritrea
- French Polynesia
- **Germany**
- Gibraltar
- Greenland
- Guadeloupe
- Guyana
- **Hungary**
- **Iceland**
- Jersey
- Korea, Democratic People's Republic Of
- Kuwait
- **Latvia**
- Lesotho
- Liechtenstein
- **Lithuania**
- Luxembourg
- Macedonia, the Former Yugoslav Republic Of
- Mali
- Moldova, Republic of
- Monaco
- Montenegro
- Nepal
- **Netherlands**
- Niger
- Niue
- Oman
- **Romania**
- **Russian Federation**
- Saint Barthélemy
- South Sudan
- **Switzerland**
- Tajikistan
- **Thailand**
- Wallis and Futuna

Countries where IUCN management categories have not been reported for any national-level protected area records in the WDPA

There are 11 countries/territories, representing 134 protected areas, where the IUCN management category has not been reported for any national-level site:

- Andorra
- Anguilla
- Aruba
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Cape Verde
- French Southern Territories
- Liberia
- Maldives
- Morocco
- Syrian Arab Republic
- Western Sahara
- Yemen

Table showing proportion of national-level protected areas (excluding those listed as proposed) recorded in the WDPA (September 2013 release) for each country/territory for which IUCN management categories have been reported:

Country/Territory	Total national-level sites (excl. proposed)	Sites with IUCN categories reported		Sites with IUCN categories not reported	
		Total	%	Total	%
Afghanistan	5	5	100%	0	0%
Aland Islands	26	1	4%	25	96%
Albania	48	48	100%	0	0%
Algeria	25	17	68%	8	32%
American Samoa	17	7	41%	10	59%
Andorra	2	0	0%	2	100%
Angola	15	13	87%	2	13%
Anguilla	7	0	0%	7	100%
Antarctica	57	26	46%	31	54%
Antigua and Barbuda	14	11	79%	3	21%
Argentina	306	287	94%	19	6%
Armenia	35	35	100%	0	0%
Aruba	1	0	0%	1	100%
Australia	10013	9882	99%	131	1%
Australia, Christmas Island	1	1	100%	0	0%
Australia, Cocos (Keeling) Islands	1	1	100%	0	0%
Australia, Heard and McDonald Islands	1	1	100%	0	0%
Australia, Norfolk Island	1	1	100%	0	0%
Austria	749	748	100%	1	0%
Azerbaijan	54	52	96%	2	4%
Bahamas	43	26	60%	17	40%
Bahrain	4	3	75%	1	25%
Bangladesh	27	21	78%	6	22%
Barbados	8	4	50%	4	50%
Belarus	440	439	100%	1	0%
Belgium	1483	914	62%	569	38%
Belize	103	97	94%	6	6%
Benin	51	5	10%	46	90%
Bermuda	132	100	76%	32	24%
Bhutan	9	9	100%	0	0%
Bolivia, Plurinational State Of	52	42	81%	10	19%
Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba (to Netherlands)	6	5	83%	1	17%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	33	0	0%	33	100%
Botswana	20	20	100%	0	0%
Bouvet Island	1	1	100%	0	0%
Brazil	1549	1002	65%	547	35%
British Indian Ocean Territory	7	5	71%	2	29%

Country/Territory	Total national-level sites (excl. proposed)	Sites with IUCN categories reported		Sites with IUCN categories not reported	
		Total	%	Total	%
Brunei Darussalam	47	36	77%	11	23%
Bulgaria	1003	963	96%	40	4%
Burkina Faso	72	12	17%	60	83%
Burundi	15	15	100%	0	0%
Cambodia	40	29	73%	11	28%
Cameroon	79	26	33%	53	67%
Canada	3673	3656	100%	17	0%
Cape Verde	3	0	0%	3	100%
Cayman Islands	48	46	96%	2	4%
Central African Republic	30	14	47%	16	53%
Chad	9	9	100%	0	0%
Chile	156	156	100%	0	0%
China	2066	1887	91%	179	9%
Colombia	620	56	9%	564	91%
Comoros	1	1	100%	0	0%
Congo	10	6	60%	4	40%
Congo, The Democratic Republic Of The	38	22	58%	16	42%
Cook Islands	16	12	75%	4	25%
Costa Rica	164	109	66%	55	34%
Côte d'Ivoire	242	14	6%	228	94%
Croatia	470	302	64%	168	36%
Cuba	54	53	98%	1	2%
Curaçao (to Netherlands)	9	1	11%	8	89%
Cyprus	21	21	100%	0	0%
Czech Republic	4018	3953	98%	65	2%
Denmark	4055	1835	45%	2220	55%
Djibouti	2	2	100%	0	0%
Dominica	7	7	100%	0	0%
Dominican Republic	84	84	100%	0	0%
Ecuador	106	26	25%	80	75%
Egypt	30	23	77%	7	23%
El Salvador	63	1	2%	62	98%
Equatorial Guinea	13	9	69%	4	31%
Eritrea	3	3	100%	0	0%
Estonia	12172	3222	26%	8950	74%
Ethiopia	44	41	93%	3	7%
Falkland Islands (Malvinas)	33	32	97%	1	3%
Fiji	138	35	25%	103	75%
Finland	9885	183	2%	9702	98%
France	1694	1579	93%	115	7%
French Guiana	41	30	73%	11	27%

Country/Territory	Total national-level sites (excl. proposed)	Sites with IUCN categories reported		Sites with IUCN categories not reported	
		Total	%	Total	%
French Polynesia	8	8	100%	0	0%
French Southern Territories	3	0	0%	3	100%
Gabon	22	3	14%	19	86%
Gambia	9	3	33%	6	67%
Georgia	61	60	98%	1	2%
Germany	17307	17307	100%	0	0%
Ghana	302	16	5%	286	95%
Gibraltar	1	1	100%	0	0%
Greece	830	773	93%	57	7%
Greenland	12	12	100%	0	0%
Grenada	2	1	50%	1	50%
Guadeloupe	70	70	100%	0	0%
Guam	17	16	94%	1	6%
Guatemala	249	188	76%	61	24%
Guinea	102	2	2%	100	98%
Guinea-Bissau	9	2	22%	7	78%
Guyana	3	3	100%	0	0%
Haiti	8	7	88%	1	13%
Honduras	79	62	78%	17	22%
Hong Kong	104	38	37%	66	63%
Hungary	133	133	100%	0	0%
Iceland	120	120	100%	0	0%
India	559	538	96%	21	4%
Indonesia	526	318	60%	208	40%
Iran, Islamic Republic Of	145	126	87%	19	13%
Ireland	240	238	99%	2	1%
Israel	271	113	42%	158	58%
Italy	874	869	99%	5	1%
Jamaica	135	126	93%	9	7%
Japan	278	242	87%	36	13%
Jersey	4	4	100%	0	0%
Jordan	9	7	78%	2	22%
Kazakhstan	78	73	94%	5	6%
Kenya	346	53	15%	293	85%
Kiribati	15	13	87%	2	13%
Korea, Democratic People's Republic Of	31	31	100%	0	0%
Korea, Republic of	288	285	99%	3	1%
Kuwait	11	11	100%	0	0%
Kyrgyzstan	29	28	97%	1	3%
Lao People's Democratic Republic	25	21	84%	4	16%

Country/Territory	Total national-level sites (excl. proposed)	Sites with IUCN categories reported		Sites with IUCN categories not reported	
		Total	%	Total	%
Latvia	713	713	100%	0	0%
Lebanon	11	1	9%	10	91%
Lesotho	1	1	100%	0	0%
Liberia	2	0	0%	2	100%
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	8	3	38%	5	63%
Liechtenstein	40	40	100%	0	0%
Lithuania	346	346	100%	0	0%
Luxembourg	25	25	100%	0	0%
Macedonia, the Former Yugoslav Republic Of	61	61	100%	0	0%
Madagascar	89	54	61%	35	39%
Malawi	96	9	9%	87	91%
Malaysia	690	245	36%	445	64%
Maldives	25	0	0%	25	100%
Mali	31	31	100%	0	0%
Malta	178	150	84%	28	16%
Marshall Islands	3	2	67%	1	33%
Martinique	55	47	85%	8	15%
Mauritania	3	2	67%	1	33%
Mauritius	25	7	28%	18	72%
Mayotte	19	16	84%	3	16%
Mexico	821	131	16%	690	84%
Micronesia, Federated States Of	22	11	50%	11	50%
Moldova, Republic of	63	63	100%	0	0%
Monaco	3	3	100%	0	0%
Mongolia	51	50	98%	1	2%
Montenegro	7	7	100%	0	0%
Montserrat	18	12	67%	6	33%
Morocco	42	0	0%	42	100%
Mozambique	47	18	38%	29	62%
Myanmar	44	30	68%	14	32%
Namibia	167	16	10%	151	90%
Nepal	19	19	100%	0	0%
Netherlands	305	305	100%	0	0%
New Caledonia	71	49	69%	22	31%
New Zealand	3927	3525	90%	402	10%
Nicaragua	83	52	63%	31	37%
Niger	7	7	100%	0	0%
Nigeria	972	27	3%	945	97%
Niue	5	5	100%	0	0%
Northern Mariana Islands	11	9	82%	2	18%
Norway	2800	2533	90%	267	10%

Country/Territory	Total national-level sites (excl. proposed)	Sites with IUCN categories reported		Sites with IUCN categories not reported	
		Total	%	Total	%
Oman	6	6	100%	0	0%
Pakistan	153	76	50%	77	50%
Palau	26	17	65%	9	35%
Panama	83	22	27%	61	73%
Papua New Guinea	65	5	8%	60	92%
Paraguay	33	28	85%	5	15%
Peru	174	81	47%	93	53%
Philippines	523	359	69%	164	31%
Poland	1863	1630	87%	233	13%
Portugal	216	213	99%	3	1%
Puerto Rico	57	18	32%	39	68%
Qatar	4	1	25%	3	75%
Réunion	37	31	84%	6	16%
Romania	917	917	100%	0	0%
Russian Federation	658	658	100%	0	0%
Rwanda	6	5	83%	1	17%
Saint Barthélemy	4	4	100%	0	0%
Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan Da Cunha	20	19	95%	1	5%
Saint Kitts And Nevis	2	1	50%	1	50%
Saint Lucia	52	34	65%	18	35%
Saint Martin	16	15	94%	1	6%
Saint Pierre And Miquelon	7	1	14%	6	86%
Saint Vincent And The Grenedines	30	6	20%	24	80%
Samoa	79	11	14%	68	86%
Saudi Arabia	31	27	87%	4	13%
Senegal	113	13	12%	100	88%
Serbia	95	66	69%	29	31%
Seychelles	20	19	95%	1	5%
Sierra Leone	42	7	17%	35	83%
Singapore	7	6	86%	1	14%
Slovakia	1120	1081	97%	39	3%
Slovenia	1957	1274	65%	683	35%
Solomon Islands	94	5	5%	89	95%
Somalia	7	4	57%	3	43%
South Africa	942	247	26%	695	74%
South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands	6	5	83%	1	17%
South Sudan	14	14	100%	0	0%
Spain	486	316	65%	170	35%
Sri Lanka	234	76	32%	158	68%
Sudan	9	7	78%	2	22%

Country/Territory	Total national-level sites (excl. proposed)	Sites with IUCN categories reported		Sites with IUCN categories not reported	
		Total	%	Total	%
Suriname	15	14	93%	1	7%
Svalbard And Jan Mayen	36	35	97%	1	3%
Swaziland	7	4	57%	3	43%
Sweden	12932	4036	31%	8896	69%
Switzerland	4698	4698	100%	0	0%
Syrian Arab Republic	12	0	0%	12	100%
Taiwan, Province Of China	44	27	61%	17	39%
Tajikistan	15	15	100%	0	0%
Tanzania, United Republic of	595	114	19%	481	81%
Thailand	190	190	100%	0	0%
Timor-Leste	10	1	10%	9	90%
Togo	90	9	10%	81	90%
Tokelau	3	1	33%	2	67%
Tonga	21	13	62%	8	38%
Trinidad and Tobago	65	15	23%	50	77%
Tunisia	38	7	18%	31	82%
Turkey	286	78	27%	208	73%
Turkmenistan	18	16	89%	2	11%
Turks and Caicos Islands	33	9	27%	24	73%
Tuvalu	5	1	20%	4	80%
Uganda	696	35	5%	661	95%
Ukraine	5197	5166	99%	31	1%
United Arab Emirates	18	1	6%	17	94%
United Kingdom	9187	9014	98%	173	2%
United States	22012	21438	97%	574	3%
United States Minor Outlying Islands	6	3	50%	3	50%
Uruguay	15	8	53%	7	47%
Uzbekistan	15	13	87%	2	13%
Vanuatu	34	5	15%	29	85%
Venezuela, Bolivarian Republic of	231	187	81%	44	19%
Viet Nam	116	87	75%	29	25%
Virgin Islands, British	32	5	16%	27	84%
Virgin Islands, U.S.	19	6	32%	13	68%
Wallis and Futuna	1	1	100%	0	0%
Western Sahara	1	0	0%	1	100%
Yemen	3	0	0%	3	100%
Zambia	625	72	12%	553	88%
Zimbabwe	240	66	28%	174	73%