

## WDPA Data Status Report

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# The World Database on Protected Areas

August 2021

### About this Report and the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA)

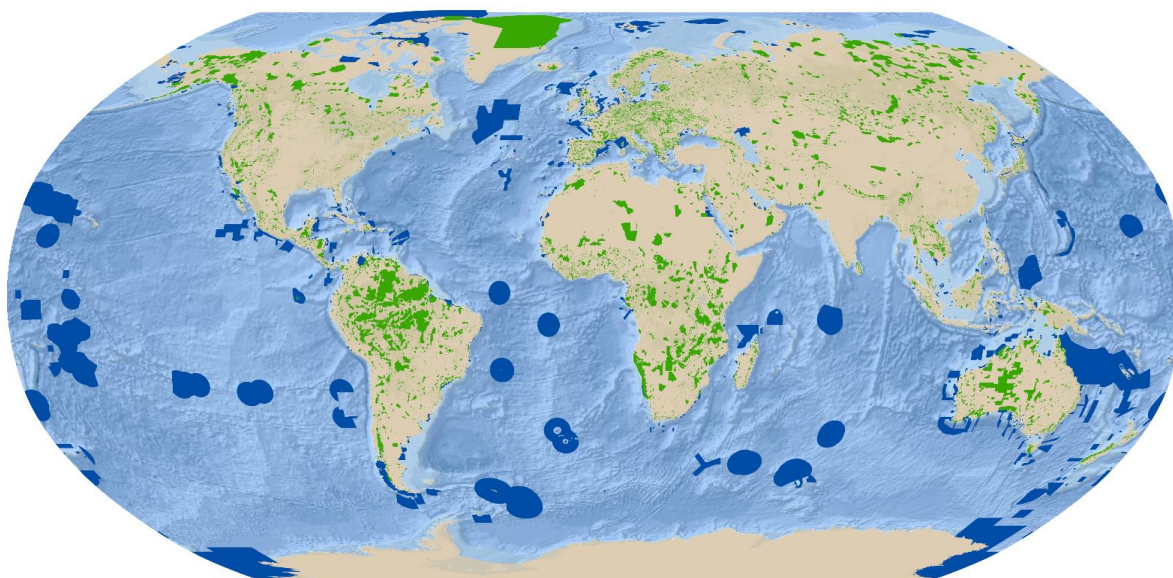
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The WDPA is the most comprehensive global dataset on terrestrial and marine protected areas, incorporating the official UN List of Protected Areas. The WDPA dataset is not necessarily a complete representation of all the protected areas which have been designated in country. The quality of the WDPA depends on the accessibility of accurate, comprehensive, up-to-date protected areas information from data holders.

This report describes the current status of data in the WDPA for all sites included in the August 2021 monthly release.

### Map showing protected areas in the WDPA

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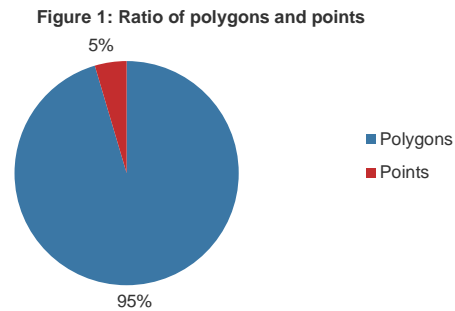


Source: UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2021). Protected Planet: The World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA) [On-line], August 2021. Cambridge, UK: UNEP-WCMC. Available at [www.protectedplanet.net](http://www.protectedplanet.net)

 Terrestrial protected areas  Marine and coastal protected areas

## Protected areas data in the WDPA

There are 265,884 protected area records stored in the WDPA. 229,540 are national-level protected areas with 34,948 designated under international and regional agreements or conventions. 95% of the data have boundaries in polygon format, with the remaining 5% depicted in point format (i.e. a single latitude and longitude point for the protected area). See Figure 1.



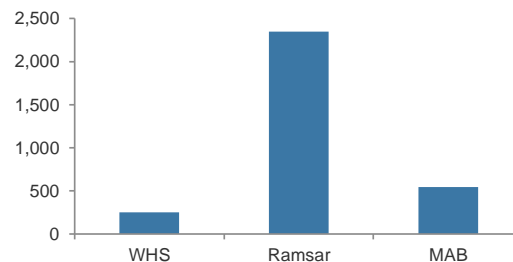
Of the 265,884 protected areas, 17,817 (7%) include a marine or coastal component. These protected areas may be either partially or completely within the marine environment.

### Data for protected areas designated under international conventions and agreements

There are 3,145 protected areas in the WDPA designated under international conventions or agreements.

250 are World Heritage sites (WHS), 2,350 are Ramsar Wetlands of International Importance, 545 are UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Reserves (MAB). See Figure 2.

**Figure 2: Sites designated under international conventions and agreements**



### Data for protected areas designated under regional conventions and agreements

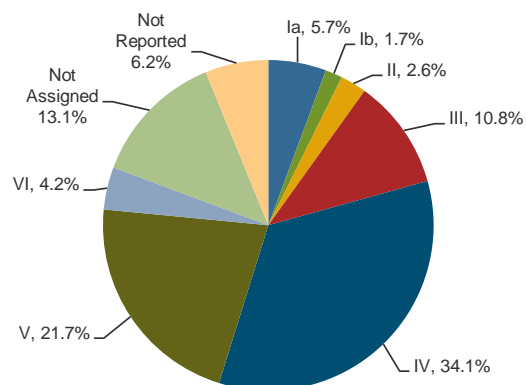
There are 30,603 protected areas in the WDPA designated under regional conventions or agreements. 29,854 are Natura2000 sites and 749 sites are designated under regional seas conventions.

### Data for national-level protected areas

There are 229,540 national-level protected area records in the WDPA. IUCN Management Categories have been reported for 185,202 of these records. The remaining 44,338 are recorded as Not Reported and Not Assigned.

Figure 3 shows the allocation of IUCN Management Categories across national-level protected area records in the WDPA (numbers of sites in each category are shown in Table 2 at the end of this report).

**Figure 3: National-level protected areas by IUCN Management Category**



### Data for areas protected by local communities, indigenous people and private entities, through non-legal means

There are 1396 records in the WDPA that are established through non-legal means.

## Completeness of WDPA Data Attributes

The WDPA requires that a minimum set of information is provided with each protected area record. These data attributes are defined by the WDPA Data Standard.

Table 1 shows the extent to which key attributes have been reported by data providers for all protected area records in the WDPA.

Table 1: Completeness of selected attributes

Attribute	Completeness
IUCN Category	81%
Status (designated or proposed)	99.5%
Status Year	88%
Governance Type	93%
Management Authority	50%
Link to Management Plan	96%

The WDPA User Manual 1.6 can be viewed at [http://wcmc.io/WDPA\\_Manual](http://wcmc.io/WDPA_Manual).

## Data sources in the WDPA

Data for protected area records in the WDPA have been obtained or validated from over 400 sources.

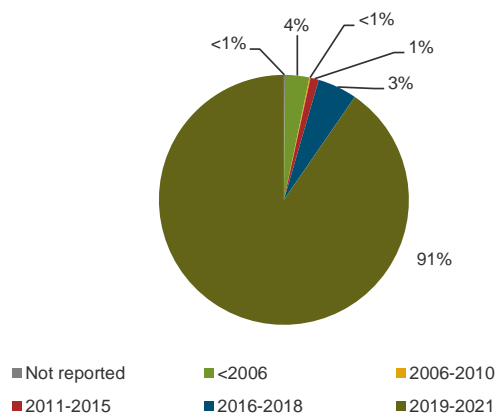
Figure 4 shows the breakdown of when protected area records in the WDPA were last updated or validated.

Data for protected areas designated under international agreements and conventions have been sourced from the relevant convention secretariat. This includes: UNESCO World Heritage Centre, Ramsar Convention Secretariat and UNESCO Man and The Biosphere Programme.

Data for national-level protected areas in the WDPA have been sourced from national authorities wherever possible. Information may also be supplemented by data from other agencies or organisations working in each country. As part of the update process for national data, national authorities are given the opportunity to review, validate and, where necessary, edit all existing WDPA records for their country. All updates to the WDPA by national authorities take priority over other sources and are considered to be the authoritative version.

There are 761 records in the WDPA with no reported source.

Figure 4: Percentage of records updated or validated by year



**Table 2: WDPA Data (as of August 2021)**

	Polygons	Points	Total
<b>Realm</b>			
Terrestrial	236,297	11,770	<b>248,067</b>
Coastal*	11,475	0	<b>11,475</b>
Marine	5,927	415	<b>6,342</b>
<i>* under validation by data providers</i>			
<b>Status</b>			
Designated	251,067	11,962	<b>263,029</b>
Proposed	1,211	199	<b>1,410</b>
Established	1,387	13	<b>1,400</b>
Status not reported	34	11	<b>45</b>
<b>Areas designated under international conventions and agreements</b>	<b>2,356</b>	<b>789</b>	<b>3,145</b>
UNESCO World Heritage sites (natural or mixed)	250	0	<b>250</b>
Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites)	1,859	491	<b>2,350</b>
UNESCO Man and Biosphere Reserves	247	298	<b>545</b>
<b>Areas designated under regional conventions and agreements</b>	<b>30,603</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>30,603</b>
ASEAN Heritage Park	9	0	<b>9</b>
Baltic Sea Protected Area (HELCOM)	177	0	<b>177</b>
Marine Protected Area (CCAMLR)	6	0	<b>6</b>
Marine Protected Area (OSPAR)	494	0	<b>494</b>
Site of Community Importance (Habitats Directive)	24,185	0	<b>24,185</b>
Special Protection Area (Birds Directive)	5,669	0	<b>5,669</b>
Specially Protected Area (Cartagena Convention)	29	0	<b>29</b>
Specially Protected Area of Mediterranean Importance (Barcelona Conv.)	34	0	<b>34</b>
<b>National-level protected areas: IUCN Management Category</b>	<b>218,157</b>	<b>11,383</b>	<b>229,540</b>
Ia: Strict Nature Reserve	12,932	67	<b>12,999</b>
Ib: Wilderness Area	3,837	5	<b>3,842</b>
II: National Park	5,748	119	<b>5,867</b>
III: Natural Monument or Feature	17,931	6,842	<b>24,773</b>
IV: Habitat / Species Management Area	76,682	1,675	<b>78,357</b>
V: Protected Landscape / Seascape	49,647	176	<b>49,823</b>
VI: Protected area with sustainable use of natural resources	9,420	121	<b>9,541</b>
Not Assigned	28,947	1,216	<b>30,163</b>
Not Reported	13,013	1,162	<b>14,175</b>
<b>Areas protected by local communities, indigenous people and private entities, through non-legal means</b>	<b>1,383</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1,396</b>
Established	1,383	13	<b>1,396</b>
<b>Total number of records in the WDPA</b>	<b>253,699</b>	<b>12,185</b>	<b>265,884</b>

## WDPA Quality Indicators

### **The percentage of records with boundaries in polygon format**

The WDPA stores all records with spatial (location) data. These data can be polygons which represent the boundaries of the protected area, or a single latitude/longitude point which shows the general location of the protected area. This indicator shows the percentage of records with boundaries - the preferred spatial data.



### **The percentage of data attributes which have been reported by the data provider**

Each record in the WDPA has 25 fields for which data attributes are requested. This indicator shows the weighted percentage of data fields which have been reported, based on the minimum and complete attributes.



### **The percentage of records updated or validated by the data provider in the last 5 years**

UNEP-WCMC sets a target to update each record in the WDPA at least every five years. This indicator shows the percentage of records updated in the last 5 years (August 2016 to August 2021).



### **The percentage of records where the area of the polygon is within 5% of the area reported**

The area (km<sup>2</sup>) reported for a protected area may sometimes differ from the area of the boundary polygon provided, possibly indicating a discrepancy within the information submitted. This indicator shows the percentage of records where the area of the polygon is within a threshold of 5% of the area reported. The threshold allows for differences due to projections and software used for calculating the GIS area.



0% 100%  
The range of scores for individual countries in the WDPA, with the lowest and highest percentages.  
Overall score for the WDPA