

## WDPA Data Status Report

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# The World Database on Protected Areas

December 2023

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

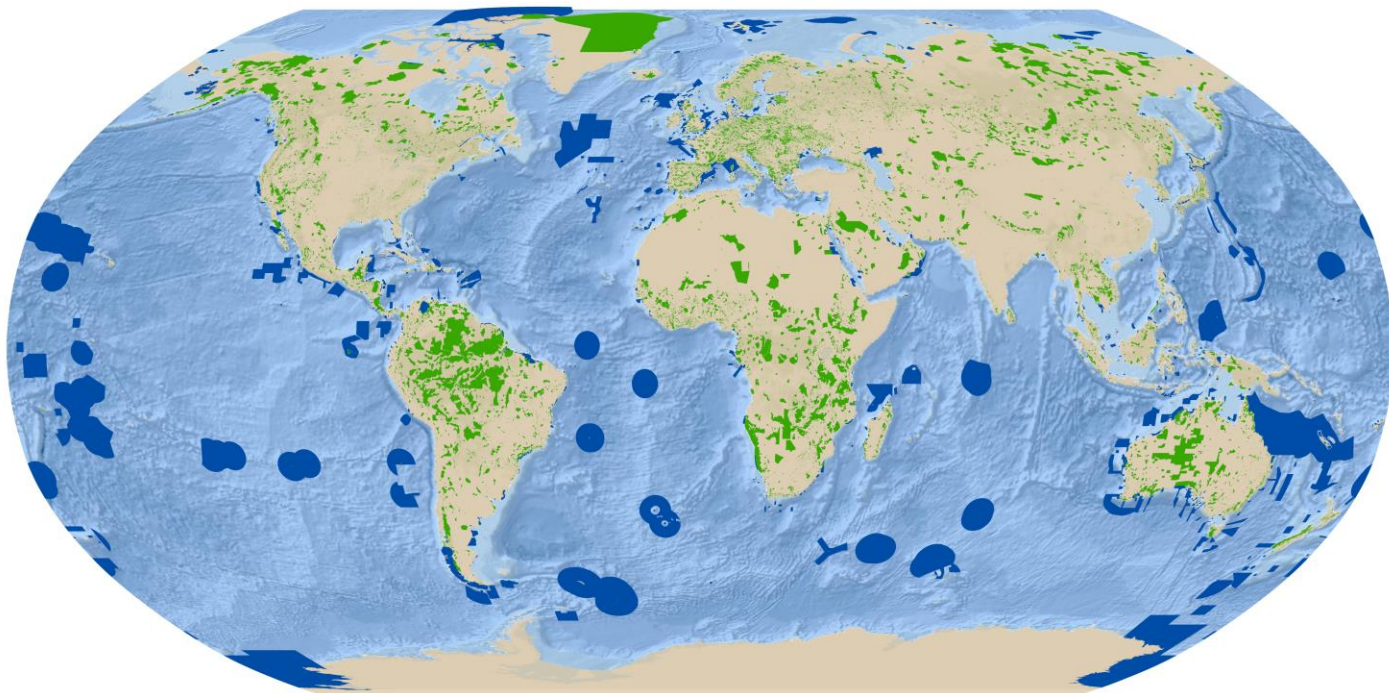
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The WDPA is the most comprehensive global dataset on terrestrial and marine protected areas, incorporating the official UN List of Protected Areas. The WDPA dataset is not necessarily a complete representation of all the protected areas which have 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 December 2023 monthly release.

### Map showing protected areas in the WDPA

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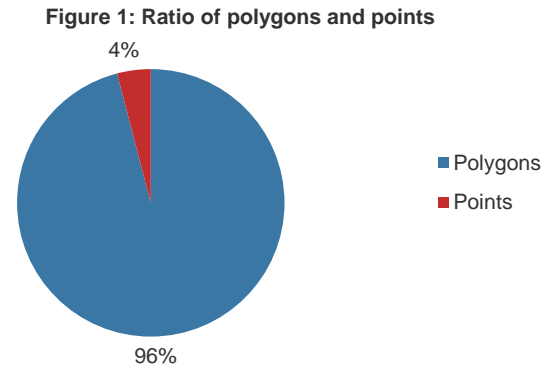


Source: UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2023). Protected Planet: The World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA) [On-line], December 2023, Cambridge, UK: UNEP-WCMC. Available at [www.protectedplanet.net](http://www.protectedplanet.net)

■ Terrestrial protected areas ■ Marine and coastal protected areas

## Protected areas data in the WDPa

There are 295,511 protected area records stored in the WDPa. 261,211 are national-level protected areas with 34,047 designated under international and regional agreements or conventions. 96% of the data have boundaries in polygon format, with the remaining 4% depicted in point format (i.e. a single latitude and longitude point for the protected area). See Figure 1.



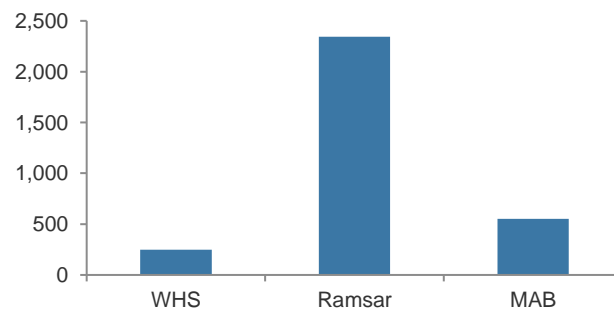
Of the 295,511 protected areas, 18,709 (6%) include a marine or coastal component. These protected areas may be either partially or completely within the marine environment.

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

There are 3,148 protected areas in the WDPa designated under international conventions or agreements.

250 are World Heritage sites (WHS), 2,345 are Ramsar Wetlands of International Importance, 553 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

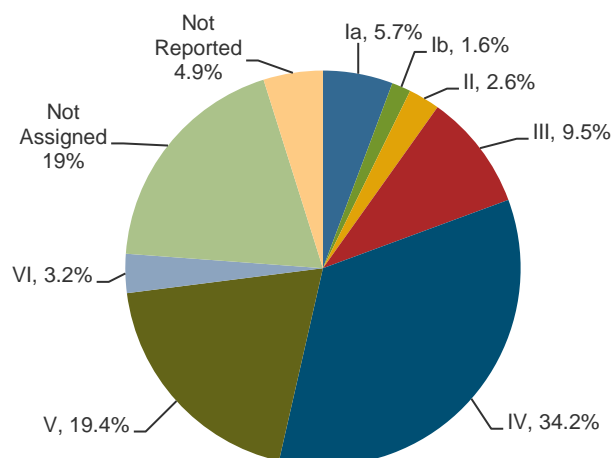
There are 30,899 protected areas in the WDPa designated under regional conventions or agreements. 28,947 are Natura2000 sites, 752 sites are designated under regional seas conventions and 1,200 are Areas of Special Conservation Interest (Emerald Network).

### Data for national-level protected areas

There are 261,211 national-level protected area records in the WDPa. IUCN Management Categories have been reported for 198,972 of these records. The remaining 62,239 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 253 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	76%
Status (designated or proposed)	99.0%
Status Year	88%
Governance Type	94%
Management Authority	49%
Link to Management Plan	10%

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 approximately 400 sources.

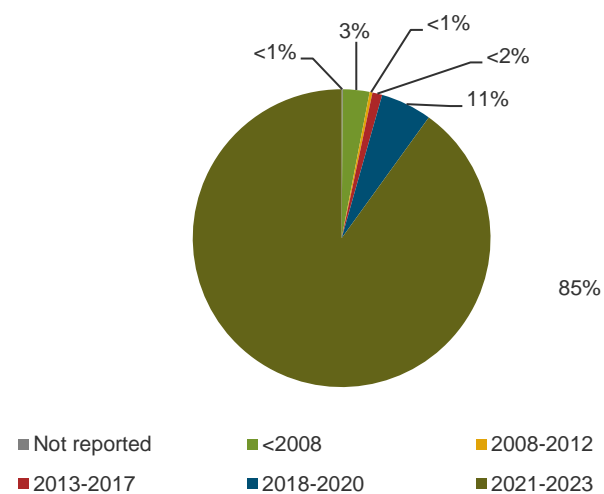
Figure 4 shows the breakdown of when protected area records in the WDPA were last updated or validated.

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 746 records in the WDPA with no reported source.

Figure 4: Percentage of records updated or validated by year



**Table 2: WDPA Data (as of December 2023)**

	Polygons	Points	Total
<b>Realm</b>			
Terrestrial	265,231	11,571	<b>276,802</b>
Coastal*	12,203	0	<b>12,203</b>
Marine	6,082	424	<b>6,506</b>
<i>* under validation by data providers</i>			
<b>Status</b>			
Designated	279,566	11,591	<b>291,157</b>
Proposed	1,246	202	<b>1,448</b>
Established	2,670	191	<b>2,861</b>
Status not reported	34	11	<b>45</b>
<b>Areas designated under international conventions and agreements</b>	<b>2,416</b>	<b>732</b>	<b>3,148</b>
UNESCO World Heritage sites (natural or mixed)	250	0	<b>250</b>
Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites)	1,901	444	<b>2,345</b>
UNESCO Man and Biosphere Reserves	265	288	<b>553</b>
<b>Areas designated under regional conventions and agreements</b>	<b>30,899</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>30,899</b>
Areas of Special Conservation Interest, Emerald Network (Bern Convention)	1,200	0	<b>1,200</b>
ASEAN Heritage Park	12	0	<b>12</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)	3,845	0	<b>3,845</b>
Special Areas of Conservation (Habitats Directive)	19,704	0	<b>19,704</b>
Special Protection Area (Birds Directive)	5,398	0	<b>5,398</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>250,139</b>	<b>11,072</b>	<b>261,211</b>
Ia: Strict Nature Reserve	14,862	68	<b>14,930</b>
Ib: Wilderness Area	4,073	4	<b>4,077</b>
II: National Park	6,583	128	<b>6,711</b>
III: Natural Monument or Feature	18,097	6,809	<b>24,906</b>
IV: Habitat / Species Management Area	87,874	1,439	<b>89,313</b>
V: Protected Landscape / Seascape	50,563	146	<b>50,709</b>
VI: Protected area with sustainable use of natural resources	8,208	118	<b>8,326</b>
Not Assigned	48,328	1,215	<b>49,543</b>
Not Reported	11,551	1,145	<b>12,696</b>
<b>Areas protected by local communities, indigenous people and private entities, through non-legal means</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>253</b>
Established	62	191	<b>253</b>
<b>Total number of records in the WDPA</b>	<b>283,516</b>	<b>11,995</b>	<b>295,511</b>

## WDPA Quality Indicators

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### *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 (December 2018 to December 2023).



### *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.

