

WDPA Data Status Report

The World Database on Protected Areas

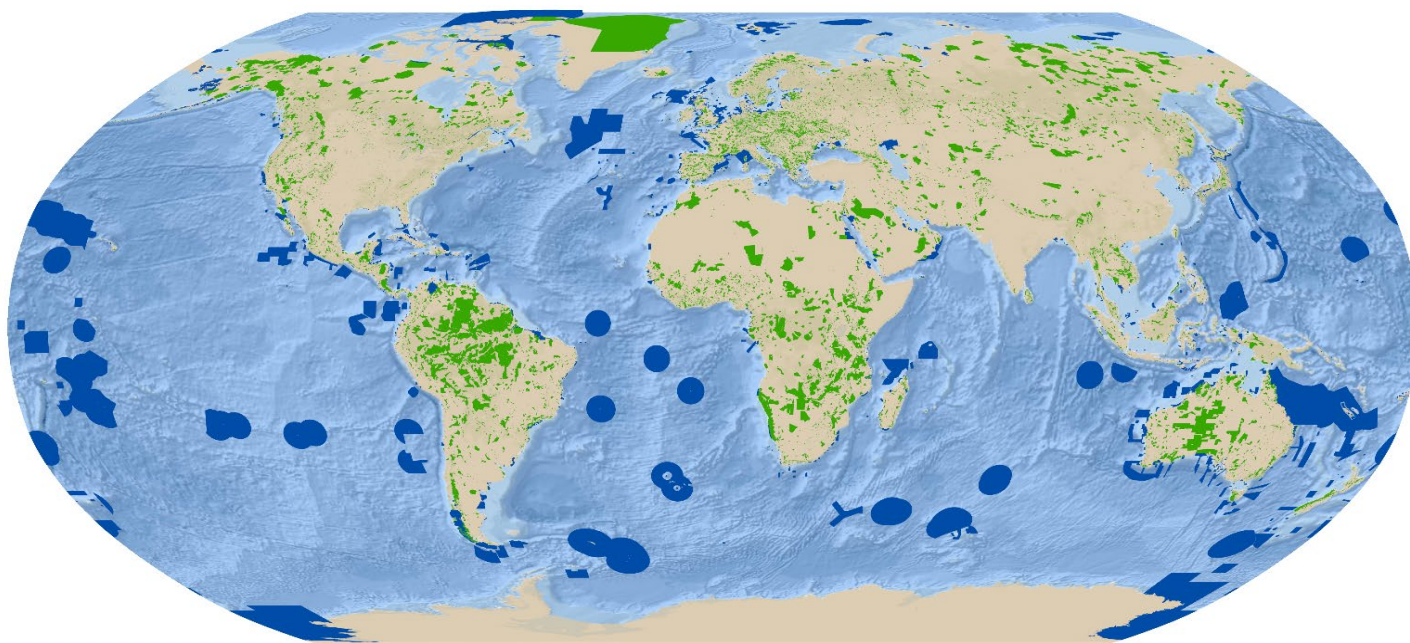
March 2025

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



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 March 2025 monthly release.

Map showing protected areas in the WDPA

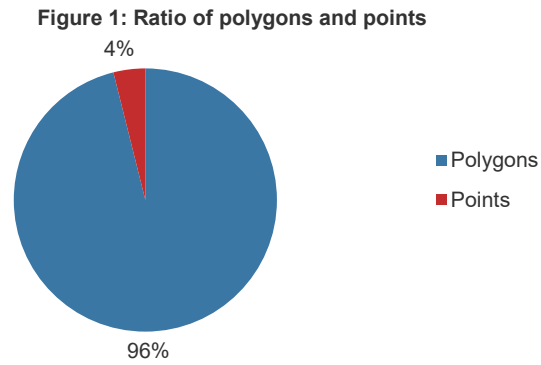


Source: UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2025). Protected Planet: The World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA) [On-line], March 2025, Cambridge, UK: UNEP-WCMC. Available at www.protectedplanet.net

 Terrestrial & inland waters protected areas  Marine and coastal protected areas

Protected areas data in the WDPa

There are 305,133 protected area records stored in the WDPa. 269,116 are national-level protected areas with 35,764 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.



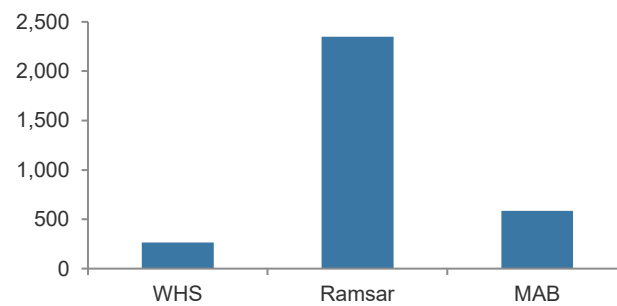
Of the 305,133 protected areas, 16,932 (6%) include a marine or coastal component. These protected areas may be either partially or completely within the marine environment.

Data for protected areas designated under international conventions and agreements

There are 3,199 protected areas in the WDPa designated under international conventions or agreements.

266 are World Heritage sites (WHS), 2,348 are Ramsar Wetlands of International Importance, 585 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

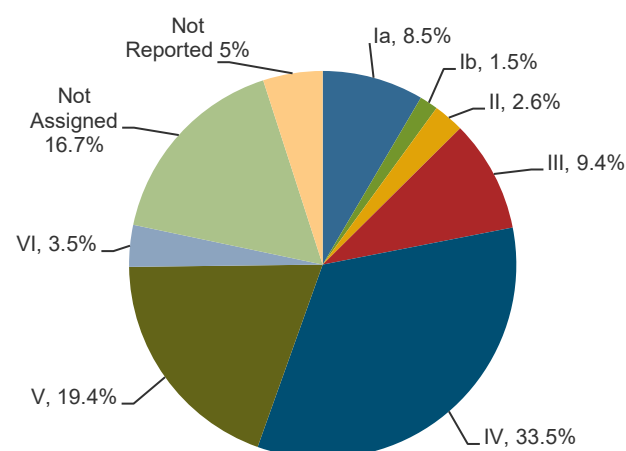
There are 32,565 protected areas in the WDPa designated under regional conventions or agreements. 29,237 are Natura2000 sites, 752 sites are designated under regional seas conventions and 2,576 are Areas of Special Conservation Interest (Emerald Network).

Data for national-level protected areas

There are 269,116 national-level protected area records in the WDPa. IUCN Management Categories have been reported for 210,713 of these records. The remaining 58,403 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	78%
Status (designated or proposed)	99%
Status Year	88%
Governance Type	94%
Management Authority	84%
Link to Management Plan	15%

The WDPA User Manual 1.6 can be viewed at 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 705 records in the WDPA with no reported source.

Figure 4: Percentage of records updated or validated by year

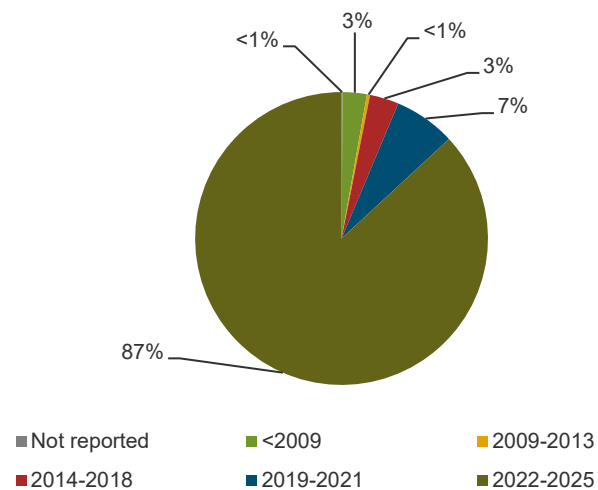


Table 2: WDPA Data (as of March 2025)

	Polygons	Points	Total
Realm			
Terrestrial	276,667	11,534	288,201
Coastal*	10,438	0	10,438
Marine	6,098	396	6,494
* under validation by data providers			
Status			
Designated	288,800	11,623	300,423
Proposed	1,182	105	1,287
Established	3,189	192	3,381
Status not reported	32	10	42
Areas designated under international conventions and agreements			
UNESCO World Heritage sites (natural or mixed)	266	0	266
Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites)	1,918	430	2,348
UNESCO Man and Biosphere Reserves	296	289	585
Areas designated under regional conventions and agreements			
Areas of Special Conservation Interest, Emerald Network (Bern Convention)	2,575	1	2,576
ASEAN Heritage Park	12	0	12
Baltic Sea Protected Area (HELCOM)	177	0	177
Marine Protected Area (CCAMLR)	6	0	6
Marine Protected Area (OSPAR)	494	0	494
Site of Community Importance (Habitats Directive)	4,301	0	4,301
Special Areas of Conservation (Habitats Directive)	19,514	0	19,514
Special Protection Area (Birds Directive)	5,422	0	5,422
Specially Protected Area (Cartagena Convention)	29	0	29
Specially Protected Area of Mediterranean Importance (Barcelona Conv.)	34	0	34
National-level protected areas: IUCN Management Category			
Ia: Strict Nature Reserve	22,718	67	22,785
Ib: Wilderness Area	4,153	4	4,157
II: National Park	6,757	126	6,883
III: Natural Monument or Feature	18,413	6,783	25,196
IV: Habitat / Species Management Area	88,867	1,352	90,219
V: Protected Landscape / Seascape	51,957	135	52,092
VI: Protected area with sustainable use of natural resources	9,263	118	9,381
Not Assigned	43,816	1,201	45,017
Not Reported	12,153	1,233	13,386
Areas protected by local communities, indigenous people and private entities, through non-legal means			
Established	62	191	253
Total number of records in the WDPA			
	293,203	11,930	305,133

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 (March 2020 to March 2025).



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

The area (km²) 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.

