

WDPA and WD-OECM Data Status Report

The World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA) and World Database on Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (WD-OECM)

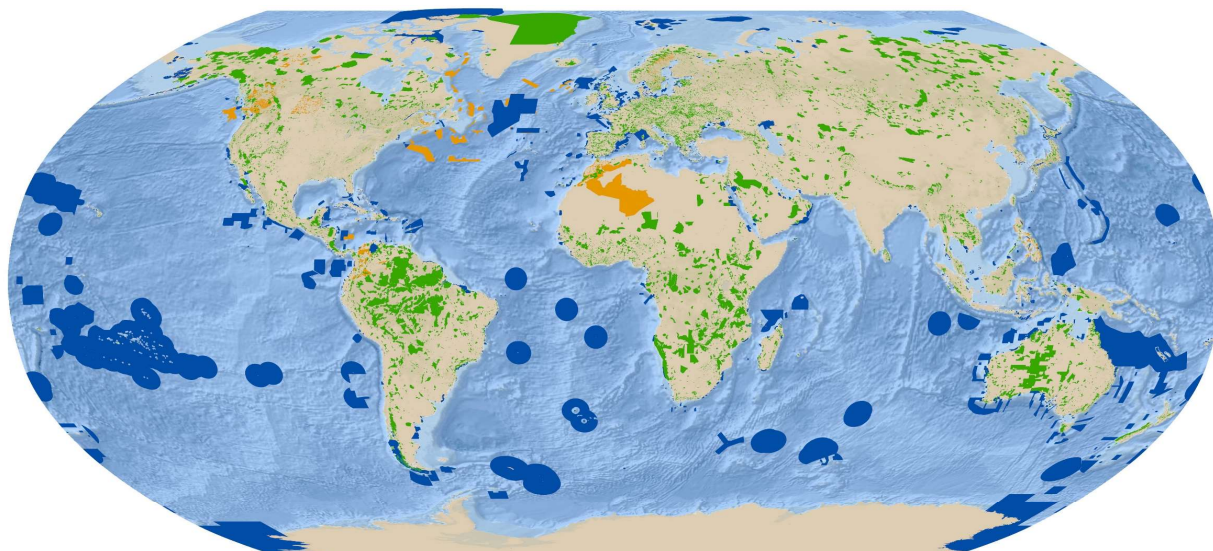
October 2025

About this Report, protected and conserved areas

The WDPA and WD-OECM is the most comprehensive global dataset on terrestrial and marine protected and conserved areas, incorporating data compiled and managed by UNEP-WCMC, in collaboration with governments, non-governmental organisations, and other data-providers. The WDPA and WD-OECM dataset is not necessarily a complete representation of all the protected and conserved areas which have been designated in country. The quality of the WDPA and WD-OECM depends on the accessibility of accurate, comprehensive, up-to-date protected and conserved areas information from data holders.

This report describes the current status of data in the WDPA and WD-OECM for all sites included in the October 2025 monthly release.

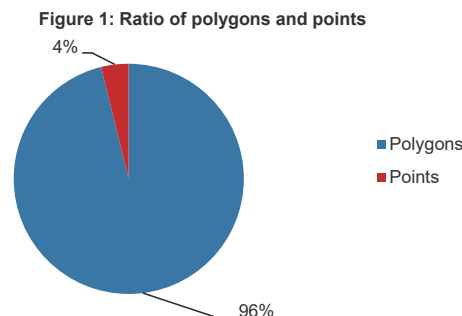
Map showing protected and conserved areas in the WDPA and WD-OECM



Source: UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2025). Protected Planet: The World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA) and World Database on Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (WD-OECM) [On-line], October 2025, Cambridge, UK: UNEP-WCMC. Available at www.protectedplanet.net

Protected and conserved areas data in the WDPA and WD-OECM

There are 312,213 protected and conserved area records stored in the WDPA and WD-OECM. 276,006 are national-level protected and conserved areas with 35,779 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.



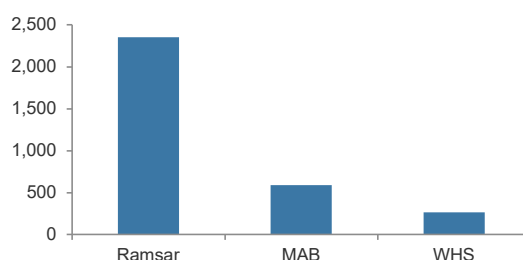
Of the 312,213 protected and conserved areas, 17,215 (6%) include a marine or coastal component. These protected and conserved areas may be either partially or completely within the marine environment.

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

There are 3,208 protected and conserved areas in the WDPA and WD-OECM designated under international conventions or agreements.

266 are World Heritage sites (WHs), 2,353 are Ramsar Wetlands of International Importance, 589 are UNESCO Man and Biosphere Reserves (MAB). See Figure 2.

Figure 2: Sites designated under international conventions and agreements



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

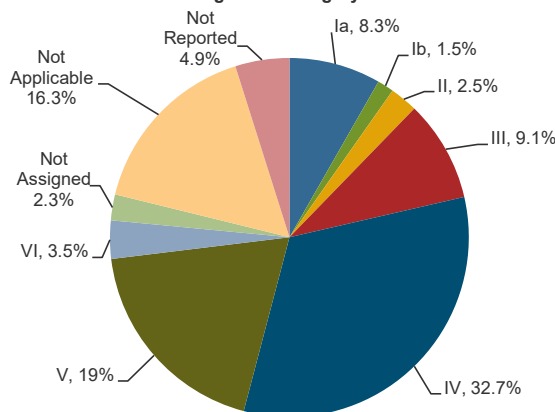
There are 32,533 protected areas in the WDPA and 38 conserved areas in the WD-OECM designated under regional conventions or agreements. For protected areas, 29,205 are Natura2000 sites, 740 sites are designated under regional seas conventions, 2,576 are Areas of Special Conservation Interest (Emerald Network) and 12 are ASEAN Heritage Parks. For conserved areas, all 38 sites are designated under regional fisheries commissions/organizations.

Data for national-level protected and conserved areas

There are 276,006 national-level protected and conserved area records in the WDPA and WD-OECM. IUCN Management Categories have been reported for 211,183 of these records. The remaining 58,410 are recorded as Not Reported and Not Assigned. All 6,413 conserved areas are recorded as Not Applicable as these categories do not apply.

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

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



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

There are 428 records in the WDPA and WD-OECM that are established through non-legal means.

Completeness of WDPA and WD-OECM Data Attributes

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

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

Table 1: Completeness of selected attributes

Attribute	Completeness
IUCN Category	77%
Status (designated or proposed)	99%
Status Year	89%
Governance Type	94%
Management Authority	84%
Link to Management Plan	15%

The WDPA and WD-OECM User Manual 1.6 can be viewed at https://resources.unep-wcmc.org/products/WCMC_CB007.

Data sources in the WDPA and WD-OECM

Data for protected and conserved area records in the WDPA and WD-OECM have been obtained or validated from approximately 400 sources.

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

Data for protected and conserved 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 and conserved areas in the WDPA and WD-OECM 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 and WD-OECM records for their country. All updates to the WDPA and WD-OECM by national authorities take priority over other sources and are considered to be the authoritative version.

There are 689 records in the WDPA and WD-OECM with no reported source.

Figure 4: Percentage of records updated or validated by year

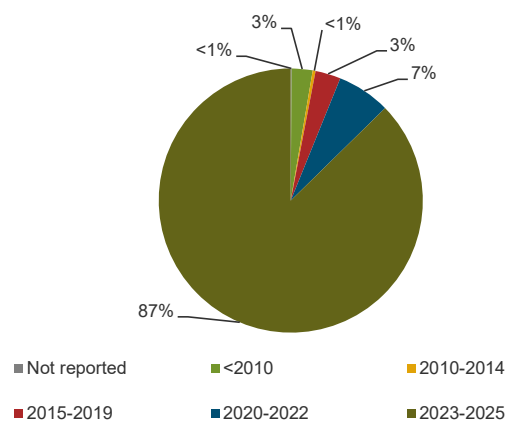


Table 2: WDPA and WD-OECM Data (as of October 2025)

	Polygons	Points	Total
Realm			
Terrestrial	283,416	11,582	294,998
Coastal*	10,478	0	10,478
Marine	6,259	478	6,737
* under validation by data providers			
Status			
Designated	295,274	11,622	306,896
Proposed	1,183	100	1,283
Established	3,664	328	3,992
Status not reported	32	10	42
Areas designated under international conventions and agreements	2,494	714	3,208
UNESCO World Heritage sites (natural or mixed)	1,924	429	2,353
Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites)	304	285	589
UNESCO Man and Biosphere Reserves	266	0	266
Areas designated under regional conventions, agreements and commissions	32,570	1	32,571
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)	2,268	0	2,268
Special Areas of Conservation (Habitats Directive)	21,503	0	21,503
Special Protection Area (Birds Directive)	5,434	0	5,434
Specially Protected Area (Cartagena Convention)	29	0	29
Specially Protected Area of Mediterranean Importance (Barcelona Conv.)	34	0	34
Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECM)	38	0	38
National-level protected and conserved areas: IUCN Management Category	264,988	11,018	276,006
Ia: Strict Nature Reserve	22,721	67	22,788
Ib: Wilderness Area	4,158	4	4,162
II: National Park	6,763	125	6,888
III: Natural Monument or Feature	18,413	6,793	25,206
IV: Habitat / Species Management Area	88,878	1,342	90,220
V: Protected Landscape / Seascape	52,257	136	52,393
VI: Protected area with sustainable use of natural resources	9,408	118	9,526
Not Applicable	6,404	9	6,413
Not Assigned	43,816	1,201	45,017
Not Reported	12,170	1,223	13,393
Areas protected by local communities, indigenous people and private entities, through non-legal means	101	327	428
Established	101	327	428
Total number of records in the WDPA and WD-OECM	300,153	12,060	312,213

WDPA and WD-OECM Quality Indicators

The percentage of records with boundaries in polygon format

The WDPA and WD-OECM 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 and conserved 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 and WD-OECM 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 and WD-OECM at least every five years. This indicator shows the percentage of records updated in the last 5 years (October 2020 to October 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 and conserved 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.

