

## WDPCA Data Status Report

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# The World Database on Protected and Conserved Areas (WDPCA)

November 2025

### About this Report, protected and conserved areas

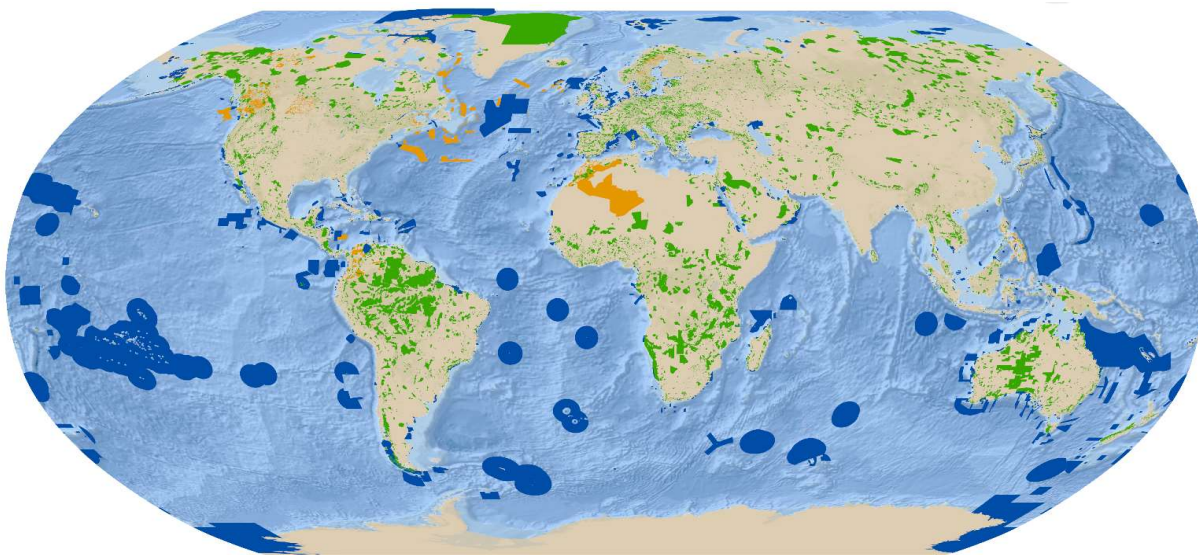
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The WDPCA is the most comprehensive global dataset on terrestrial and marine protected and conserved areas, incorporating data compiled and managed by UNEP-WCMC, in collaboration with governments, non-governmental organisations, and other data-providers. The WDPCA dataset is not necessarily a complete representation of all the protected and conserved areas which have been designated in country. The quality of the WDPCA 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 WDPCA for all sites included in the November 2025 monthly release.

### Map showing protected and conserved areas in the WDPCA

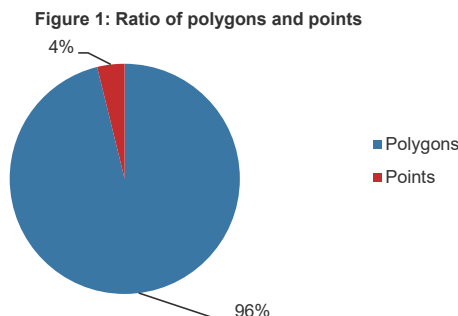
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Source: UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2025). Protected Planet: The World Database on Protected and Conserved Areas (WDPCA) [On-line], November 2025, Cambridge, UK: UNEP-WCMC. Available at [www.protectedplanet.net](http://www.protectedplanet.net)

## Protected and conserved areas data in the WDPCA

There are 312,216 protected and conserved area records stored in the WDPCA. 276,009 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.



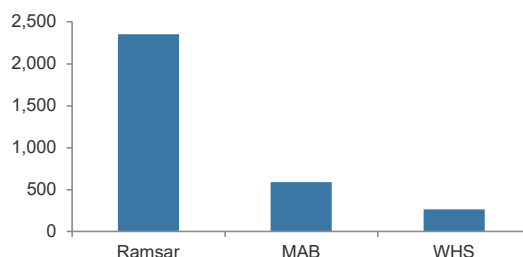
Of the 312,216 protected and conserved areas, 17,215 (6%) include a marine or coastal component. These protected and conserved areas may be either partially or completely within the marine environment.

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

There are 3,208 protected and conserved areas in the WDPCA 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

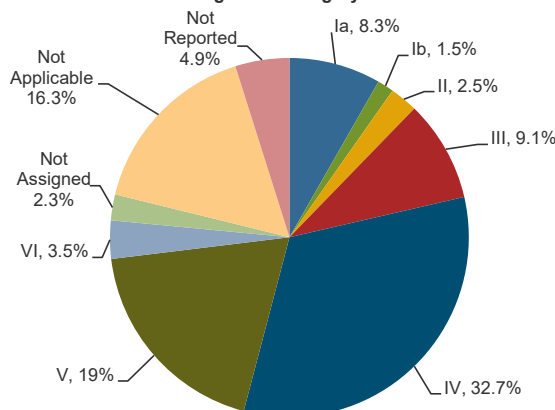
There are 32,533 protected areas and 38 conserved areas in the WDPCA designated under regional conventions or agreements. For protected areas, 29,205 are Natura2000 sites, 740 sites are designated under regional seas conventions, 2,576 are Areas of Special Conservation Interest (Emerald Network) and 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 276,009 national-level protected and conserved area records in the WDPCA. IUCN Management Categories have been reported for 211,186 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 WDPCA (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 WDPCA that are established through non-legal means.

## Completeness of WDPCA Data Attributes

The WDPCA 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 WDPCA.

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](https://resources.unep-wcmc.org/products/WCMC_CB007).

## Data sources in the WDPCA

Data for protected and conserved area records in the WDPCA have been obtained or validated from approximately 400 sources.

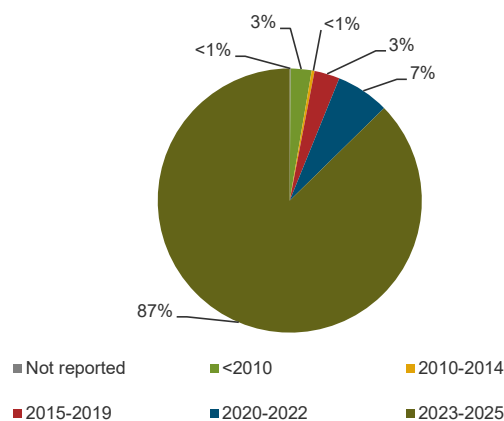
Figure 4 shows the breakdown of when protected area records in the WDPCA were last updated or validated.

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 WDPCA 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 WDPCA records for their country. All updates to the WDPCA by national authorities take priority over other sources and are considered to be the authoritative version.

There are 689 records in the WDPCA with no reported source.

Figure 4: Percentage of records updated or validated by year



**Table 2: WDPCA Data (as of November 2025)**

	Polygons	Points	Total
<b>Realm</b>			
Terrestrial	283,419	11,582	<b>295,001</b>
Coastal*	10,478	0	<b>10,478</b>
Marine	6,259	478	<b>6,737</b>
* under validation by data providers			
<b>Status</b>			
Designated	295,274	11,622	<b>306,896</b>
Proposed	1,183	100	<b>1,283</b>
Established	3,667	328	<b>3,995</b>
Status not reported	32	10	<b>42</b>
<b>Areas designated under international conventions and agreements</b>	<b>2,494</b>	<b>714</b>	<b>3,208</b>
UNESCO World Heritage sites (natural or mixed)	1,924	429	<b>2,353</b>
Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites)	304	285	<b>589</b>
UNESCO Man and Biosphere Reserves	266	0	<b>266</b>
<b>Areas designated under regional conventions, agreements and commissions</b>	<b>32,570</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>32,571</b>
Areas of Special Conservation Interest, Emerald Network (Bern Convention)	2,575	1	<b>2,576</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)	2,268	0	<b>2,268</b>
Special Areas of Conservation (Habitats Directive)	21,503	0	<b>21,503</b>
Special Protection Area (Birds Directive)	5,434	0	<b>5,434</b>
Specially Protected Area (Cartagena Convention)	29	0	<b>29</b>
Specially Protected Area of Mediterranean Importance (Barcelona Conv.)	34	0	<b>34</b>
Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECM)	38	0	<b>38</b>
<b>National-level protected and conserved areas: IUCN Management Category</b>	<b>264,991</b>	<b>11,018</b>	<b>276,009</b>
Ia: Strict Nature Reserve	22,721	67	<b>22,788</b>
Ib: Wilderness Area	4,158	4	<b>4,162</b>
II: National Park	6,763	125	<b>6,888</b>
III: Natural Monument or Feature	18,413	6,793	<b>25,206</b>
IV: Habitat / Species Management Area	88,883	1,342	<b>90,225</b>
V: Protected Landscape / Seascape	52,257	136	<b>52,393</b>
VI: Protected area with sustainable use of natural resources	9,406	118	<b>9,524</b>
Not Applicable	6,404	9	<b>6,413</b>
Not Assigned	43,816	1,201	<b>45,017</b>
Not Reported	12,170	1,223	<b>13,393</b>
<b>Areas protected by local communities, indigenous people and private entities, through non-legal means</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>327</b>	<b>428</b>
Established	101	327	<b>428</b>
<b>Total number of records in the WDPCA</b>	<b>300,156</b>	<b>12,060</b>	<b>312,216</b>

## WDPCA Quality Indicators

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

The WDPCA 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 WDPCA 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 WDPCA at least every five years. This indicator shows the percentage of records updated in the last 5 years (November 2020 to November 2025).



### 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 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.

