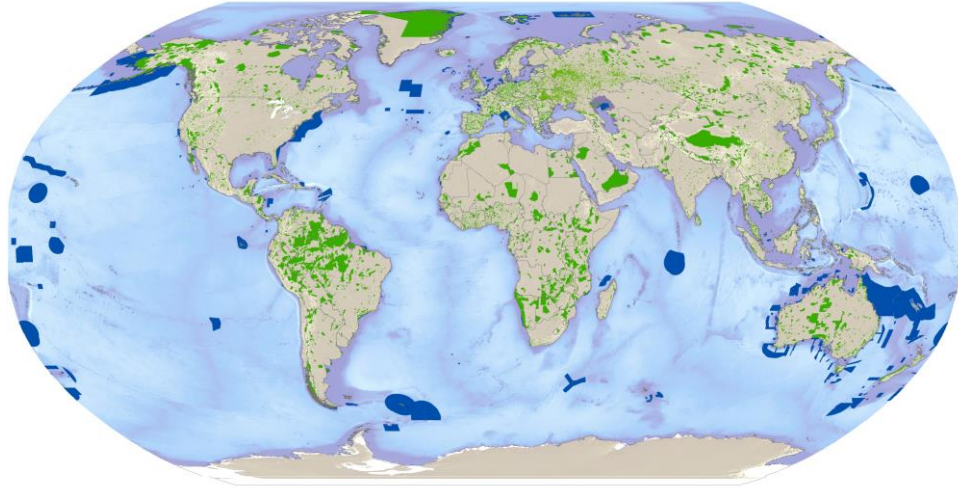


## World Database on Protected Areas



**Description:** The World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA) is a joint project between the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), managed by UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC).

The dataset described here shows the global distribution of terrestrial and marine protected areas as well as sites that do not meet the standard definition of a protected area but do achieve conservation in the long-term, generically referred to as other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs). Throughout this metadata document, protected areas and OECMs are collectively referred to as conservation areas.

The dataset contains protected areas designated at the national level and under regional and international conventions and agreements. International designations include those under the Ramsar Convention, the World Heritage Convention (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO), and sites under the UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB). Regional agreements include sites under the Natura 2000 network (European), as well as Marine Protected Areas designated under regional conventions such as the Convention for the Protection of the marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR) and many others. It also contains data on protected areas and OECMs established by other means.

**Citation(s):** IUCN, UNEP-WCMC (year). The World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA). [Insert month/year of the version downloaded]. Cambridge (UK): UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre. Available at: [www.protectedplanet.net](http://www.protectedplanet.net)

**Other cited reference(s):**  
UNEP-WCMC (2015). World Database on Protected Areas User Manual 1.0. UNEP-WCMC: Cambridge, UK

Juffe-Bignoli, D, et al. (2014). Protected Planet Report 2014. Cambridge (UK): UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre

Thomas H.L., et al. (2014). Evaluating official marine protected area coverage for Aichi Target 11: appraising the data and methods that define our progress. *Aquatic Conservation: Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems* 24 (suppl. 2)

UNEP-WCMC (2014) Global statistics from the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA), August 2014. Cambridge (UK): UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre.

Deguignet et al. (2014). United Nations List of Protected Areas. Cambridge (UK): UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre.

**Temporal range:** 1819 - present

**Geographical range:** Global, marine, terrestrial

**Supplementary information:** A WDPA Manual (UNEP-WCMC 2015) is provided with the dataset which includes a data dictionary and guide to interpreting the WDPA attributes. The WDPA can be viewed at, and downloaded from, Protected Planet ([www.protectedplanet.net](http://www.protectedplanet.net)). Juffe-Bignoli et al. (2014) and Deguignet et al. (2014) provide global statistics for protected areas globally in 2014. The methodology used to calculate surface area statistics for terrestrial protected areas is available in Juffe-Bignoli et al. (2014). Thomas et al. (2014) describe the methodology used to calculate surface area statistics for marine protected areas.

**Purpose of creation:** The WDPA has been in existence since 1981, and is the most comprehensive global database on terrestrial and marine conservation areas, comprising both spatial data (i.e. boundaries) and attribute data (i.e. descriptive information). The mandate of the database dates from 1959 when the United Nations (UN) Economic and Social Council called for a list of national parks and equivalent reserves in recognition that they 'are valuable for economic and scientific reasons and also as areas for the future preservation of fauna and flora and geologic structures in their natural state' Resolution 713 (XXVIII). The first UN List of Protected Areas, as it became known, was subsequently published in 1962. The database is also used to generate indicators to track progress towards the Convention on Biological Diversity Aichi Targets and the UN Millennium Development Goals. In March 2015 the WDPA expanded to record OECMs. This allows it to capture other conservation areas that do not meet the standard protected area definition but do achieve conservation in the long-term.

**Creation methodology:** Data for conservation area records in the WDPA have been obtained from over 600 sources. Along with information on the data verifier, these sources are listed in the source table ("WDPA\_Source\_Table") that is included in the file geodatabase with each monthly release. Data for protected areas designated under international agreements and conventions have been sourced from the relevant convention secretariats. Data for national-level conservation areas have been sourced from national authorities wherever possible. Information may also be supplemented by data from other agencies, organisations or individuals. All data in the WDPA has been verified either by the national authorities or by non-government expert partners.

Protected areas and OECMs can be differentiated in the database using the PA\_DEF (protected area definition) field. A value of 1 indicates compliance with the standard definition of a protected area. A value of 0 indicates that the site does not meet this definition, but instead qualifies as an OECM.

For detailed information on the WDPA attributes and verification processes the WDPA manual (UNEP-WCMC 2015) should be consulted.

Dataset ID: WCMC-016

**Version:** Released monthly

**Data lineage:** Note that the map shown in the metadata sheet is using the April 2015 release. ProtectedPlanet.net displays the latest version of the dataset.

**Category:** Protected area

**Keywords:** Protected Areas, Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures, Conservation Areas

**Similar datasets:** None

**Limitations:** The WDPA dataset is not necessarily a complete representation of all the conservation areas which have been designated in country; the quality of the WDPA depends on the accessibility of accurate, comprehensive, up-to-date conservation areas information from data holders. Thus, mismatches between on the ground conservation areas and conservation areas in the WDPA may be due to a number of reasons that include but are not restricted to: new data being quality checked to fit the WDPA standards, data not submitted to the WDPA yet, new conservation area boundaries not being accurately digitised or simply not yet being digitised. In many areas, several (up to eight) designations overlap; it is hence necessary to dissolve the dataset before any surface area calculation are carried out. Details on the common issues and quality limitations of the WDPA are described in detail in the WDPA Manual (UNEP-WCMC 2015).

The boundaries, names and designations used in this dataset do not imply official endorsement nor acceptance by the United Nations and contributory organisations.

**Maintenance frequency:** Data are updated on a monthly basis.

**Main access/use constraint:** UNEP-WCMC WDPA Data Licence. See [www.unep-wcmc.org/policies/wdpa-data-licence#data\\_policy](http://www.unep-wcmc.org/policies/wdpa-data-licence#data_policy) and [www.unep-wcmc.org/policies](http://www.unep-wcmc.org/policies). For commercial use, please contact [business-support@unep-wcmc.org](mailto:business-support@unep-wcmc.org).

**Other access/use constraints:** None

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**Organisation type:** Custodian **Acronym:** UNEP-WCMC

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**Web site:** [www.unep-wcmc.org](http://www.unep-wcmc.org)

**Data format(s):** File geodatabase (.fgdb), KML (.kml or .kmz), Tabular (.xls, .csv, or .tab)

**Distribution format(s):** File geodatabase (.fgdb), KML (.kml or .kmz), Tabular (.xls, .csv, or .tab) **Dataset size (uncompressed):** 1.05 Gb (file geodatabase)

**Webpage and/or download:** <http://www.protectedplanet.net/>

**Other webpage:** <http://data.unep-wcmc.org/datasets/12>

Dataset ID: WCMC-016

Web map service: <http://ec2-54-204-216-109.compute-1.amazonaws.com:6080/arcgis/rest/services/wdpa/wdpa/MapServer>

Factsheet: <http://wcmc.io/MPA>

Resolution, scale:	Not applicable	Reference system:	WGS 1984
West bounding:	-180.0	East bounding:	180.0
South bounding:	-90.0	North bounding:	90.0
Metadata standard:	UNEP-WCMC Specific	Date of metadata:	29/05/2015