

## Protected areas

### Protected natural areas

The definition of a protected area is "a clearly defined geographical area, recognized, dedicated and managed through legal or other similarly effective for achieving conservation of nature with its associated ecosystem services and cultural values" (WCPA).

**The World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA)** of the International Union for the Conservation of Resources (IUCN) has identified six categories of protected areas:

#### Category I

##### Ia. Strict nature reserve

Objective	Protection of the biodiversity & geological features
Restrictions	Visits, use & impacts controlled & limited
Benefits	Areas of reference for scientific research & monitoring
Size	Often small

##### Ib. Wild area

Objective	To have large areas with little alteration in which protection & management preserves its natural condition
Restrictions	Without permanent or substantial human habitation
Benefits	Maintain natural characteristics & influences
Size	Generally large

#### Category II

##### National park

Objective	Protection of large-scale ecological processes, species and ecosystems characteristic of the area
Restrictions	Natural or semi-natural areas of considerable size
Benefits	Provide the basis for environmental and cultural opportunities for visitors to provide spiritual, scientific, educational and recreational opportunities
Size	Generally large

#### Category III

##### Monument or natural feature

Objective	Protection of natural features such as landforms, caves or unique forest
Restrictions	
Benefits	Small areas with a high value for visitors
Size	Generally small

#### Category IV

##### Area of management of habitat/species

Objective	Protection of particular habitats or species
Restrictions	In general require regular intervention to maintain the requirements of the species or the habitats
Benefits	Maintain species and/or particular habitat
Size	Often small

#### Category V

##### Protected landscape, terrestrial or marine

Objective	Maintain characteristics produced by the interaction between humans and nature which are of ecological, biological, cultural and scenic value.
Restrictions	
Benefits	Maintain the area and its associated values such as nature conservation, among others.
Size	Generally large

#### Category VI

##### Protected area with sustainable use of natural resources

Objective	Protection of ecosystems and habitats associated with cultural values and traditional management systems of natural resources
Restrictions	Low levels of sustainable use of natural resources
Benefits	Make the use of resources compatible with nature conservation
Size	Generally large