

## **IUCN Management Categories of Protected Areas**

For many countries, especially in Eastern Europe, the IUCN categorisation of protected areas is the basis for drawing up management plans. IUCN identifies the following categories:

**Ia Strict Nature Reserve:** Category Ia are strictly protected areas set aside to protect biodiversity and also possibly geological/geomorphical features, where human visitation, use and impacts are strictly controlled and limited to ensure protection of the conservation values. Such protected areas can serve as indispensable reference areas for scientific research and monitoring.

**Ib Wilderness Area:** Category Ib protected areas are usually large unmodified or slightly modified areas, retaining their natural character and influence without permanent or significant human habitation, which are protected and managed so as to preserve their natural condition.

**II National Park:** Category II protected areas are large natural or near natural areas set aside to protect large-scale ecological processes, along with the complement of species and ecosystems characteristic of the area, which also provide a foundation for environmentally and culturally compatible, spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational, and visitor opportunities.

**III Natural Monument or Feature:** Category III protected areas are set aside to protect a specific natural monument, which can be a landform, sea mount, submarine cavern, geological feature such as a cave or even a living feature such as an ancient grove. They are generally quite small protected areas and often have high visitor value.

**IV Habitat/Species Management Area:** Category IV protected areas aim to protect particular species or habitats and management reflects this priority. Many Category IV protected areas will need regular, active interventions to address the requirements of particular species or to maintain habitats, but this is not a requirement of the category.

**V Protected Landscape/ Seascape:** A protected area where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant, ecological, biological, cultural and scenic value: and where safeguarding the integrity of this interaction is vital to protecting and sustaining the area and its associated nature conservation and other values. [HYPERLINK "https://www.iucn.org/theme/protected-areas/about/protected-area-categories/category-v-protected-landscape-seascape"](https://www.iucn.org/theme/protected-areas/about/protected-area-categories/category-v-protected-landscape-seascape)

**VI Protected area with sustainable use of natural resources:** Category VI protected areas conserve ecosystems and habitats together with associated cultural values and traditional natural resource management systems. They are generally large, with most of the area in a natural condition, where a proportion is under sustainable natural resource management and where low-level non-industrial use of natural resources compatible with nature conservation is seen as one of the main aims of the area.

Category VI differs from the other categories because:

- Category VI protected areas are particularly adapted to the application of landscape approaches.
- This is an appropriate category for large natural areas, such as tropical forests, deserts and other arid lands, complex wetland systems, coastal and high seas, boreal forests etc. – not only by establishing large protected areas, but also by linking with groups of protected areas, corridors or ecological networks.

- Category VI protected areas may also be particularly appropriate to the conservation of natural ecosystems when there are few or no areas without use or occupation and where those uses and occupations are mostly traditional and low-impact practices, which have not substantially affected the natural state of the ecosystem.