IUCN Category IV - Habitat / Species Management Area

DEFINITION

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.

DESCRIPTION

IUCN Management Category IV (Habitat/Species Management Area) refers to areas that are managed to protect particular species or habitats. They are defined by IUCN as *"protected areas aiming to protect particular species or habitats and management reflect 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."*[1] The primary objective of protected areas in this category is to maintain, conserve and restore species and habitats. Other objectives include to protect vegetation patterns through traditional management approaches and to provide a means by which urban residents may obtain regular contact with nature.

SUPPORTED BY

Developed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) with support of the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) and other international institutions such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and assigned by national governments.

YEAR OF CREATION

The current IUCN Categories were approved in 1994, and revised guidelines were published in 2008.[1]

COVERAGE

Globally applicable.

CRITERIA

Category IV protected areas usually help to protect, or restore flora and fauna species of international, national or local importance; including resident or migratory fauna; and/or habitats. The size of the area varies but can often be relatively small; this is however not a distinguishing feature. As these protected areas often include fragments of an ecosystem, they may not be self-sustaining and will require regular and active management interventions to ensure the survival of specific habitats and/or to meet the requirements of particular species. A number of approaches are suitable: [1]

- *Protection of particular species*: to protect particular target species, which will usually be under threat (e.g., one of the last remaining populations);
- *Protection of habitats*: to maintain or restore habitats, which will often be fragments of ecosystems;
- *Active management to maintain target species*: to maintain viable populations of particular species, which might include for example artificial habitat creation or maintenance (such as artificial reef creation), supplementary feeding or other active management systems;
- *Active management of natural or semi-natural ecosystems*: to maintain natural or semi-natural habitats that are either too small or too profoundly altered to be self-sustaining, e.g., if natural herbivores are absent they may need to be replaced by livestock or manual cutting; or if hydrology has been altered this may necessitate artificial drainage or irrigation;
- *Active management of culturally-defined ecosystems*: to maintain cultural management systems where these have a unique associated biodiversity. Continual intervention is needed because the ecosystem has been created or at least substantially modified by management. The primary aim of management is maintenance of associated biodiversity.

MANAGEMENT

These areas are managed to maintain or restore certain species and/or habitats, and this can be carried out by a range of actors depending on the governance type of the area (see IUCN Protected Area Management Categories for information on governance types). These are often areas that have already undergone substantial modification, where a high degree of human pressure often exists, and significant management intervention is necessary. Category IV areas will generally be publically accessible.

BUSINESS RELEVANCE

Legal and compliance – The classification of a category IV protected area requires that such areas are managed for conservation by legal or other effective means, and therefore legal recognition and protection at the national or sub-national level is likely to be present in these sites. The level of legal protection will however vary between countries, and will depend on the governance type of the area, as they receive differing levels of recognition by government in different countries. Nonetheless a number of national laws are likely to apply to these sites that deter large-scale economic activities in order to maintain the conservation values of these areas.

As designated protected areas, these sites receive international attention and have been incorporated into a number of environmental safeguard standards. These include those of multilateral financial institutions, such as but not limited to the World Bank [2] and the International Finance Corporation [3]. For details on environmental safeguard standards which are applicable to all protected areas, please see the Protected Areas page.

In addition, a number of sector specific safeguard standards refer to protected areas, many of which are related to certification programs, including the Roundtable on Sustainable Biomaterials (RSB) that declares categories I to IV as 'no-go' areas. [4] For details on certification programmes which are applicable to all protected areas, please see the Protected Areas page.

Biodiversity importance – Category IV areas are important for their role in 'plugging the gaps' in conservation strategies by protecting key species or habitats in ecosystems. It provides a management approach for areas that have already undergone substantial modification, necessitating protection of remaining fragments for identified target species with or without intervention.

Socio-cultural values – While Category IV areas are not necessarily associated with human presence and intervention, many exist in crowded landscapes and seascapes where human pressure is comparatively greater, both in terms of potential illegal use and visitor pressure.

REFERENCES & WEBSITE

1. Dudley, N. (Ed). Guidelines for Applying Protected Area Management Categories (2008).
2. The World Bank. World Bank Operational Manual. Revised Version 2013. OP 4.04 Natural habitats (2013).
3. International Finance Corporation (IFC). Performance Standard 6: Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources (2012).
4. Roundtable on Sustainable Biomaterials. RSB Conservation Impact Assessment Guidelines, version 2.0, 1–23 (2011)..



Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge, Alabama, USA. Danny E Hooks/Shutterstock.com

Category:

Protected areas

Related pages

IUCN Protected Area Management Categories (Areas)

IUCN Category Ia - Strict Nature Reserve (Areas)

IUCN Category Ib - Wilderness Area (Areas)

IUCN Category II - National Park (Areas)

IUCN Category III - Natural Monument or Feature (Areas)

IUCN Category IV - Habitat / Species Management Area (Areas)

IUCN Category V - Protected Landscape / Seascape (Areas)

IUCN Category VI - Protected Area with Sustainable Use of Natural Resources (Areas)

Tools

Protected Planet a tool for visualizing information on protected areas at the site level, country level, regional level and global level. This includes information on the IUCN category where known. Protected Planet brings together spatial data, descriptive information and images from the World Database on Protected Areas, WikipediaTM and PanaramioTM.

The Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool (IBAT) provides a visualisation and GIS download tool for protected areas, including the IUCN category where known.

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