Transboundary Protected Areas

DEFINITION

Protected areas, or series of, that traverse national or sub-national boundaries.

DESCRIPTION

IUCN defines a Transboundary Protected Area as: *"an area of land and/or sea that straddles one or more borders between states, sub-national units such as provinces and regions, autonomous areas and/or areas beyond the limit of national sovereignty or jurisdiction, whose constituent parts are especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources, and managed cooperatively through legal or other effective means"*. [1]

Transboundary Protected Areas can be developed based on a wide variety of different cross-boundary arrangements including:

- Two or more contiguous protected areas across a national boundary
- A cluster of protected areas and the intervening land
- A cluster of separated protected areas without intervening land
- A trans-border area including proposed protected areas
- A protected area in one country aided by sympathetic land use over the border

Transboundary protected areas are one of the four types of transboundary conservation initiative recognised by the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas' (WCPA) Transboundary Conservation Specialist Group: [2]

- Transboundary protected areas
- Parks for Peace
- Transboundary Conservation and Development Areas
- Transboundary Migratory Corridors

Two protected area designations are commonly identified as a mechanism for transboundary

conservation, UNESCO World Heritage sites and UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Reserves.

The terminology "transboundary protected area" is not universally applied, other terms used in literature include ‘transboundary parks’, ‘transfrontier parks’, ‘cross-border parks’, ‘transfrontier protected area complexes’ and ‘peace parks’.
Examples of transboundary protected areas are numerous, and include international protected areas such as the European Green Belt, international marine protected areas such as the Red Sea Marine Peace Park or the interstate parks in the United States.

Transboundary protected areas are also a significant feature of the Convention on Biological Diversity’s (CBD) Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA), agreed in 2004 and reaffirmed with additional elements in 2010 in Nagoya, Japan. Goal 1.3 requests Parties: “To establish and strengthen regional networks, transboundary protected areas and collaboration between neighbouring protected areas across national boundaries”. [3]

SUPPORTED BY

International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

YEAR OF CREATION

The first officially declared transboundary protected area was the Glacier-Waterton International Peace Park on the Canadian-US border, established in 1932. The growth in transboundary protected areas has accelerated rapidly since then, particularly in recent years. The designation of transboundary protected areas remains widespread.

COVERAGE

Global in extent. The 2007 global inventory of transboundary protected areas and other sites not necessarily adjacent but linked by various transboundary conservation initiatives identified 227 transboundary protected area complexes incorporating 3,043 individual protected areas. [4]

CRITERIA

For an area of land and/or sea to be considered as a transboundary protected area according to the IUCN: [1]

- It has to conform to the IUCN definition of a protected area;
- It has to traverse one or more international or sub-national borders, and/or areas beyond limits of national jurisdiction;
- There has to be some form of cooperative management.

Key considerations for developing a transboundary protected area can include:

- **Ecological** – A protected region is likely to be more efficient if it follows natural ecosystem boundaries rather than political boundaries, as this will more likely maintain landscape and species connections.
- **Human** – Social considerations are highly regarded in establishing transboundary protected areas, placing particular importance on the needs of traditional communities, many of which cross political

boundaries or live migratory lifestyles, or to foster peace and collaboration between neighbouring countries (sometimes following armed conflicts).

- **Legal** – As transboundary protected areas may often occur in areas where more than one sovereign legal regime applies, they require special legal agreements between the authorities involved.

MANAGEMENT

Transboundary protected areas are managed cooperatively between two or more countries or the national sub-units such as provinces or states. Cooperation can range from communication with basic information sharing to full cooperation with joint decision making. Transboundary protected areas are managed according to the nature conservation objectives and are legally protected. They may also have an assigned IUCN Protected Area Management Category. Cooperative and coordinated management of these areas includes greater efficiency in terms of finances and human resources, as well as more dynamic problem solving.

BUSINESS RELEVANCE

Legal and compliance – Although there is no international designation or convention that sets up transboundary protected areas, there are many types of laws that can play a role in their establishment and management, including international law, national and sub-national policy, law and regulations, and traditional law. Cooperative agreements can be formal (based on multi-lateral agreement, memorandum of understanding, regional mechanism, international convention) or more economic, or informal (representation in each other's advisory board, friendly collaboration between managers etc).

Biodiversity importance – Transboundary protected areas are of significant biodiversity importance as large protected areas. A common reason for their creation is to safeguard the protection of a large ecologically significant region, which is effective for allowing greater migration of species, especially fauna, maintenance of landscape connections, where animals, plants, and ecological processes, including the human being, can move freely from one habitat to another. [5] They are also important for adapting to climate change by linking landscapes and allowing ecological processes to take place in fragmented ecosystems. [6] Transboundary protected areas also allow for greater control of pest species or alien invasive species, poaching and illegal trade across boundaries and the reintroduction of large species.

Socio-cultural values – Socio-cultural aspects of transboundary protected areas are considered of primary importance by IUCN and the use of participatory, inclusive approaches to integrate and agree on issues relating to local communities is an important aspect of success of transboundary conservation. IUCN suggests that planners and managers should: 'work together with communities from the beginning, incorporating their objectives in transboundary conservation plans; strive to provide security to people in every sense; support actions with healing effects on communities divided by boundaries; and support strengthening of local institutions and cultures'. [1]

REFERENCES & WEBSITE

1. Sandwith, T., Shine, C., Hamilton, L. & Sheppard, D. Transboundary Protected Areas for peace and co-operation. (IUCN, 2001).
2. Sandwith, T. & Lockwood, M. Linking the Landscape. in Managing Protected Areas: A Global Guide. (eds. Lockwood, M., Worboys, G. L. & Kothari, A.) 574–602 (Earthscan, 2006).

3. Dudley, N. The CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas. (2011).
4. Lysenko, I. et al. Global List of Transboundary Protected Areas. 1–78 (UNEP-WCMC, 2007).
5. Chassot, O. Ecological issues - transboundary conservation. (2011).
6. Spehn, E. M. et al. Mountain Biodiversity and global change. (GMBA-DIVERSITAS, 2010).



The Iguazu Falls, a transboundary protected area between Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay. Sergio Schnitzler/Shutterstock.com

Category:

Protected areas

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Protected areas (Areas)

Tools

Protected Planet is 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, Wikipedia TM and Panaramio TM.

The Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool (IBAT) provides a visualisation and GIS download tool for protected areas data.

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