



Australian IUCN  
Reserve Management  
Principles for  
Commonwealth  
Marine Protected  
Areas

COMMONWEALTH  
MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

*Benefits for All*

In 1994 The World Conservation Union (IUCN) published the Guidelines for Protected Area Management Categories.

The IUCN identified seven international categories which form the basis for the Australian IUCN Reserve Management Principles.

All seven categories are important. The number assigned to a category does not reflect its importance: all categories are needed for conservation and sustainable development. The categories do represent varying degrees of human intervention.

Protected areas are established to meet objectives consistent with national and local goals and needs, such as those established by Australia's Oceans Policy. Once these objectives are identified for a particular marine protected area (MPA), an IUCN category is assigned. The assigned category is that one which most closely aligns with the objectives of the MPA.

Activities considered appropriate in each reserve must be consistent with the Australian IUCN Reserve Management Principles and are decided in a case by case assessment, based on all the information available for a specific reserve and in a way that provides stakeholders with opportunities to be involved in these decisions in an open and transparent way.

The *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* provides that:

- the proclamation of a Commonwealth reserve must assign the reserve to an IUCN category and may also assign an IUCN category to any zones
- the Minister must be satisfied that the reserve or zone has the characteristics listed in the Act
- the reserve or zone should be managed in accordance with the Australian IUCN Reserve Management Principles
- the management plan for each Commonwealth reserve must also assign the reserve to an IUCN category.

This booklet provides the IUCN definition of each protected area management category and the Australian IUCN Reserve Management Principles for each category as set out in the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Regulations.

# Strict Nature Reserve

## IUCN 1994 DESCRIPTION

### **Category IA: Strict Nature Reserve: Protected Area managed mainly for science**

Area of land and/or sea possessing some outstanding or representative ecosystems, geological or physiological features and/or species, available primarily for scientific research and/or environmental monitoring.

### **Australian IUCN reserve management principles**

*(Schedule 8 of the EPBC Regulations 2000)*

- 1.01** The reserve or zone should be managed primarily for scientific research or environmental monitoring based on the following principles.
- 1.02** Habitats, ecosystems and native species should be preserved in as undisturbed a state as possible.
- 1.03** Genetic resources should be maintained in a dynamic and evolutionary state.
- 1.04** Established ecological processes should be maintained.
- 1.05** Structural landscape features or rock exposures should be safeguarded.
- 1.06** Examples of the natural environment should be secured for scientific studies, environmental monitoring and education, including baseline areas from which all avoidable access is excluded
- 1.07** Disturbance should be minimised by careful planning and execution of research and other approved activities.
- 1.08** Public access should be limited to the extent it is consistent with these principles.

# Wilderness Area

## IUCN 1994 DESCRIPTION

### **Category 1B: Wilderness Area: Protected Area managed mainly for wilderness protection**

Large area of unmodified or slightly modified land and/or sea, retaining its natural character and influence, without permanent or significant habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural condition.

### **Australian IUCN reserve management principles**

*(Schedule 8 of the EPBC Regulations 2000)*

- 2.01** The reserve or zone should be protected and managed to preserve its unmodified condition based on the following principles.
- 2.02** Future generations should have the opportunity to experience, understand and enjoy reserves or zones that have been largely undisturbed by human action over a long period of time.
- 2.03** The essential attributes and qualities of the environment should be maintained over the long term.
- 2.04** Public access should be provided at levels and of a type that will best serve the physical and spiritual well-being of visitors and maintain the wilderness qualities of the reserve or zone for present and future generations.
- 2.05** Indigenous human communities living at low density and in balance with the available resources should be able to maintain their lifestyle.

# National Park

## IUCN 1994 DESCRIPTION

**Category II: National Park: Protected Area managed mainly for ecosystem conservation and recreation.**

Natural area of land and/or sea, designated to (a) protect the ecological integrity of one or more ecosystems for this and future generations, (b) exclude exploitation or occupation inimical to the purposes of designation of the area, and (c) provide a foundation for spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational and visitor opportunities, all of which must be environmentally and culturally compatible.

## **Australian IUCN reserve management principles**

*(Schedule 8 of the EPBC Regulations 2000)*

- 3.01** The reserve or zone should be protected and managed to preserve its natural condition according to the following principles.
- 3.02** Natural and scenic areas of national and international significance should be protected for spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational or tourist purposes.
- 3.03** Representative examples of physiographic regions, biotic communities, genetic resources, and native species should be perpetuated in as natural a state as possible to provide ecological stability and diversity.
- 3.04** Visitor use should be managed for inspirational, educational, cultural and recreational purposes at a level that will maintain the reserve or zone in a natural or near natural state.
- 3.05** Management should seek to ensure that exploitation or occupation inconsistent with these principles does not occur.
- 3.06** Respect should be maintained for the ecological, geomorphologic, sacred and aesthetic attributes for which the reserve or zone was assigned to this category.
- 3.07** The needs of indigenous people should be taken into account, including subsistence resource use, to the extent that they do not conflict with these principles.
- 3.08** The aspirations of traditional owners of land within the reserve or zone, their continuing land management practices, the protection and maintenance of cultural heritage and the benefit the traditional owners derive from enterprises, established in the reserve or zone, consistent with these principles should be recognised and taken into account.

# Natural Monument

## IUCN 1994 DESCRIPTION

**Category III: Natural Monument: Protected Area managed for conservation of specific natural features.**

Area containing one or more specific natural or natural/cultural feature which is of outstanding value because of its inherent rarity, representative or aesthetic qualities or cultural significance.

## **Australian IUCN reserve management principles**

*(Schedule 8 of the EPBC Regulations 2000)*

- 4.01** The reserve or zone should be protected and managed to preserve its natural or cultural features based on the following principles.
- 4.02** Specific outstanding natural features should be protected or preserved in perpetuity because of their natural significance, unique or representational quality or spiritual connotations.
- 4.03** Opportunities for research, education, interpretation and public appreciation should be provided to an extent consistent with these principles.
- 4.04** Management should seek to ensure that exploitation or occupation inconsistent with these principles does not occur.
- 4.05** People with rights or interests in the reserve or zone should be entitled to benefits derived from activities in the reserve or zone that are consistent with these principles.

# Habitat/Species Management Area

IUCN 1994 DESCRIPTION

**Category iv: Habitat/Species Management Area: Protected Area managed mainly for conservation through management intervention.**

Area of land and/or sea subject to active intervention for management purposes so as to ensure the maintenance of habitats and/or to meet the requirements of specific species.

## **Australian IUCN reserve management principles**

*(Schedule 8 of the EPBC Regulations 2000)*

- 5.01** The reserve or zone should be managed primarily, including (if necessary) through active intervention, to ensure the maintenance of habitats or to meet the requirements of collections or specific species based on the following principles.
- 5.02** Habitat conditions necessary to protect significant species, groups or collections of species, biotic communities or physical features of the environment should be secured and maintained, if necessary through specific human manipulation.
- 5.03** Scientific research and environmental monitoring that contribute to reserve management should be facilitated as primary activities associated with sustainable resource management.
- 5.04** The reserve or zone may be developed for public education and appreciation of the characteristics of habitats, species or collections and of the work of wildlife management.
- 5.05** Management should seek to ensure that exploitation or occupation inconsistent with these principles does not occur.
- 5.06** People with rights or interests in the reserve or zone should be entitled to benefits derived from activities in the reserve or zone that are consistent with these principles.
- 5.07** If the reserve or zone is declared for the purpose of a botanic garden, it should also be managed for the increase of knowledge, appreciation and enjoyment of Australia's plant heritage by establishing, as an integrated resource, a collection of living and herbarium specimens of Australian and related plants for study, interpretation, conservation and display.

# Protected Landscape/Seascape

IUCN 1994 DESCRIPTION

**Category v: Protected Landscape/Seascape: Protected Areas managed mainly for landscape/seascape conservation and recreation.**

Area of land, with coast and seas as appropriate, where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant aesthetic, cultural and/or ecological value, and often with high biological diversity. Safeguarding the integrity of this traditional interaction is vital to the protection, maintenance and evolution of such an area.

## **Australian IUCN reserve management principles**

*(Schedule 8 of the EPBC Regulations 2000)*

- 6.01** The reserve or zone should be managed to safeguard the integrity of the traditional interactions between people and nature based on the following principles.
- 6.02** The harmonious interaction of nature and culture should be maintained through the protection of landscape or seascape and the continuation of traditional uses, building practices and social and cultural manifestations.
- 6.03** Lifestyles and economic activities that are in harmony with nature, and the preservation of the social and cultural fabric of the communities in the reserve or zone concerned should be supported.
- 6.04** The diversity of landscape, seascape and habitat, and of associated species and ecosystems, should be maintained.
- 6.05** Land and sea uses and activities that are inappropriate in scale or character should not occur.
- 6.06** Opportunities for public enjoyment should be provided through recreation and tourism appropriate in type and scale to the essential qualities of the reserve or zone.
- 6.07** Scientific and educational activities, that will contribute to the long-term well-being of resident populations and to the development of public support for the environmental protection of similar areas, should be encouraged.
- 6.08** Benefits to the local community, and contributions to its well-being, through the provision of natural products and services should be sought and promoted if they are consistent with these principles.

# Managed Resource Protected Area

## IUCN 1994 DESCRIPTION

**Category vi: Managed Resource Protected Areas: Protected Area managed mainly for the sustainable use of natural ecosystems.**

Area containing predominantly unmodified natural systems, managed to ensure long term protection and maintenance of biological diversity, while providing at the same time a sustainable flow of natural products and services to meet community needs.

## **Australian IUCN reserve management principles**

*(Schedule 8 of the EPBC Regulations 2000)*

- 7.01** The reserve or zone should be managed mainly for the sustainable use of natural ecosystems based on the following principles.
- 7.02** The biological diversity and other natural values of the reserve or zone should be protected and maintained in the long term.
- 7.03** Management practices should be applied to ensure ecologically sustainable use of the reserve or zone.
- 7.04** Management of the reserve or zone should contribute to regional and national development to the extent that this is consistent with these principles.

In addition, under Schedule 8 of the EPBC Regulations, the general administrative principles enshrine the following principles in relation to all Commonwealth reserves:

- 1 Community participation
- 2 Effective and adaptive management
- 3 Precautionary principle
- 4 Minimum impact
- 5 Ecologically sustainable use
- 6 Transparency of decision-making
- 7 Joint management

FURTHER INFORMATION:

IUCN 1994 *Guidelines for Protected Area Management Categories*  
Gland, Switzerland

*Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation  
Regulations 2000

Environment Australia web address  
[www.ea.gov.au/coasts/mpa/index.html](http://www.ea.gov.au/coasts/mpa/index.html)

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