INFORMATION NOTE
NOVEMBER 2021

World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) information note for UNFCCC COP26: Role of Protected and Conserved Areas (PCAs) in attaining the Paris Agreement Target.

As Parties to the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement convene in Glasgow, Scotland, IUCN and the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) would like to emphasize the following points, building on the key messages agreed on by IUCN's 1,500+ State, Government Agency, NGO and IPO Members in the Marseille Manifesto and various other resolutions at the IUCN World Conservation Congress (WCC) in Marseille, France in September 2021:

I. All pathways to attaining the Paris Agreement target of limiting average global temperature increases to 1.5°C of pre-industrial levels require enhancing ecosystem integrity through the protection of remaining intact ecosystems and primary forests and the restoration of lost and damaged terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems.

o Synergistic delivery of benefits from all three RIO Conventions: UNFCCC, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD), is essential to attaining the Paris Agreement target. In particular, the evolving Global Biodiversity Framework[1] to be approved by Parties to the CBD, Apr. 25 to May 8, 2022, includes several targets, to be achieved by 2030, that are particularly relevant to UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement.

- Target 1: Ensure that all land and sea areas globally are under integrated biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning addressing land- and sea-use change, retaining existing intact and wilderness areas.
- Target 2: Ensure that at least 20% of degraded freshwater, marine and terrestrial ecosystems are under restoration, ensuring connectivity among them and focusing on priority ecosystems.
- Target 3: Ensure that at least 30% globally of land areas and sea areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and its contributions to people, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measure, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes.*
- Target 8: Minimize the impact of climate change on biodiversity, contribute to mitigation and adaptation through ecosystem-base approaches, contributing at least 10 Gt CO_2e per year to global mitigation efforts, and ensure that all mitigation and adaptation efforts avoid negative impacts on biodiversity.

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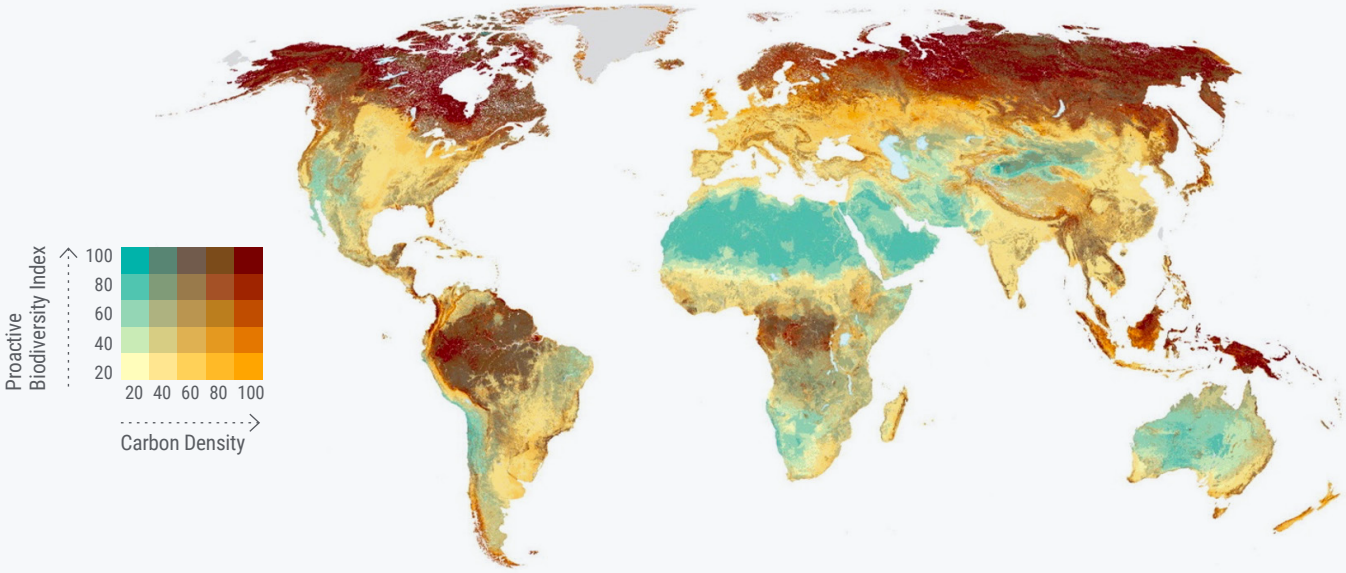
* In this document the term Protected and Conserved Areas (PCA) will be used to refer to all types of protected areas, including what is referred to by the CBD as 'other effective area-base conservation measures' and 'indigenous protected and conserved areas.

1 Convention on Biological Diversity. First Draft of the Post-2020 Global Biodiverseity Framework. (Montreal, Canada, 2021).



This map shows the overlap between areas of high carbon density and areas of intact and highly irreplaceable biodiversity[2]. The darker the brown, the more overlap there is. This is one analysis identifying some of the potential areas that could be targeted as 'carbon reserves' or 'carbon stabilization areas'. Reprinted with permission.

- Parties to the Paris Agreement are encouraged to acknowledge and incorporate the above targets into their decisions.
- Recognize that carbon and species rich natural ecosystems are irreplaceable in CBD and UNFCCC timelines of 2030 and 2050.
- Reflect on how best to operationalize the ecosystem provisions of the Paris Agreement, UNFCCC to give effect to the call in para 15 of Decisions 1/CP.25 that "underlines the essential contribution of nature to addressing climate change and its impacts and the need to address biodiversity loss and climate change in an integrated manner".
- Building on the IPBES-IPCC 2021 Co-sponsored Workshop Report on Biodiversity and Climate Change[3], which makes repeated reference to protected areas, and Article 5.1 of the Paris Agreement, that states "Parties should take action to conserve and enhance, as appropriate, sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gasses", the Parties to the Paris Agreement Parties should develop an assessment, jointly with the CBD, that identifies, *inter alia*
  - The positive and negative impacts of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures on natural ecosystems;
  - The importance of ecosystem integrity for the long-term stability and resilience of natural carbon sinks and reservoirs;
  - Mitigation and adaptation measures that would enhance ecosystem integrity;
  - The barriers and opportunities under the UN Conventions to encouraging integrated and holistic solutions to the climate and biodiversity crises.

II. Enhancement of protected and conserved areas is a key nature-based solution. Significantly scaling up the proportion of land, inland waters and ocean effectively protected, conserved and restored is necessary to reverse the decline of nature, tackle climate change and attain the UN Sustainable Development Goals[4-6].

2 Soto-Navarro, C. *et al.* Mapping co-benefits for carbon storage and biodiversity to inform conservation policy and action. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences* **375,** 20190128, (2020).

3 Pörtner, H. O. *et al.* IPBES-IPCC Co-sponsored Workshop Report on Biodiversity and Climate Change. (2021).

4 Diaz, S. *et al.* Summary for policymakers of the global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. (Bonn, Germany, 2019).

5 IPCC. Summary for policymakers. in Global Warming of 1.5°C. *An IPCC Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty* (eds V. Masson-Delmotte *et al.*) 1-26 (World Meteorological Organization, 2018).

6 MacKinnon, K. *et al.* Strengthening the Global System of Protected Areas post 2020: A Perspective from the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas. *Parks Stewardship Forum* **36,** (2020).

- The emerging scientific evidence is that at least 30% and up to 70% or more of the world should be protected, conserved and restored in an interconnected way to safeguard biodiversity, stabilize the climate and provide a foundation for a sustainable relationship with Earth[7].
- The 2021 WCC called on IUCN to support at a minimum a target of effectively and equitably protecting at least 30% of terrestrial inland water, while also recognizing that "protecting, conserving and restoring at least half or more of the planet is likely necessary to reverse biodiversity loss, address climate change and as a foundation for sustainably managing the whole planet". (resolution 101)
- The WCC 2016 called on state members to designate at least 30% of marine habitat in a network of highly protected areas (MPAs) by 2030.
- PCAs, which include state or privately protected areas and a wide range of Indigenous or community-led approaches, are essential to halt deforestation and degradation of intact forests and other carbon-rich ecosystems, such as mangroves, peatlands and seagrass ecosystems and increasingly also to restore elements of integrity such as rewilding.
- Terrestrial protected areas store at least 12% of the terrestrial carbon stocks and marine protected areas can mitigate and promote adaptation to climate change through protecting of oceans, which have been a sink of approximately 20-25% of the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere since 2008. If effectively managed PCAs can safeguard biodiversity in both the terrestrial and marine realms, and help society cope with climate change impacts by reducing risks associated with climate-related hazards.
- Parties to the Paris Agreement are encouraged to adopt the target to protect at least 30% of lands and oceans by 2030 to simultaneous reduce greenhouse gas emissions and biodiversity loss.

III. Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to the Paris Agreement already underscore the role PCAs play in reaching global mitigation and adaptation targets.

- Many Parties have identified protected areas as a means of attaining their adaptation and mitigation goals and almost half of these countries have expressed an intention to add new protected areas or expand coverage of those already in place.
- Parties are encouraged to include a range of PCAs, including climate reserves or climate stabilization areas, in their updated NDCs.
- Parties are also encouraged to include concrete and quantified targets on Nature-based Solutions in their future NDCs, National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and Long-term low greenhouse gas emission development strategies (LT-LEDS), in addition to enhanced targets on GHG emissions reductions.

IV. Indigenous Peoples, and particularly Indigenous Conserved and Protected Areas, have a central role to play in the implementation of nature-based climate solutions.

- The WCC called on "all components of IUCN to prioritize support for the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples and the implementation of all protection, conservation and restoration activities with the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples, and with appropriate recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples to their lands, territories and resources, as set out under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and full respect for their diverse knowledge systems" (resolution 101).
- Thirty-seven percent of all remaining natural lands on the planet are Indigenous Peoples' lands[8]. These lands store about 13% of all carbon stored in terrestrial ecosystems and make up 40% of the total area that is formally protected[4].
- More than one third of the carbon identified in community lands across the tropics lies in areas without secure tenure rights.
- The Amazon Basin, Congo Basin, boreal, tundra, Borneo and New Guinea ecoregions all store massive amounts of above and below-ground carbon and overlap with lands of Indigenous Peoples.

7 Woodley, S., Jarvis, J. B. & Rhodes, A. Ensuring area-based conservation meets the twin challenges of biodiversity loss and climate change. *Parks Stewarship Forum* **37,** (2021).

8 Dinerstein, E. *et al.* A Global Deal For Nature: Guiding principles, milestones, and targets. *Science Advances* **5,** (2019).

- Parties are encouraged to include the rights of Indigenous Peoples in their decisions, particularly as they relate to the use of nature-based solutions and operationalizing Article 6.

V. Climate change is one of the top five drivers of biodiversity loss[4]. Attaining the Paris Agreement target is critical to ensuring the maintenance of biodiversity and ecosystem integrity on which human well-being depends.

- At the same time that PCAs represent part of the solution to climate change, they are also compromised by its impacts.
- Climate change impacts experienced in the past few years, including the increasing frequency and intensity of heatwaves, has resulted in coral bleaching[9], mass die-offs of intertidal marine life[10], mass tree mortality[11,12], increased intensity and extent of fires and changes in seasonal activities of animals[13] and has resulted in the inability of many PCAs to achieve their objectives.

VI. WCPA reinforces the importance of ensuring ecosystem integrity and adequate environmental and social safeguards in finalizing the rules, modalities, procedures and guidance of operationalizing Article 6 of the Paris Agreement.

- The use of Nature-based Solutions should be in addition to the imperative to reduce direct GHG emissions.
- Parties are encouraged to include, in their NDCs, separate targets for direct GHG emissions and nature-based solutions.

VII. Recognizing that countries will need to create or re-establish jobs quickly during and after the Covid-19 pandemic, WCPA reminds countries that the establishment and management of PCAs creates an opportunity for an economic recovery compatible with climate change and biodiversity goals.

- The World Economic Forum estimates that it will take US$ 140 billion to protect 30% of the planet[14], a fraction of the more than US$ 17.2 trillion pledged for COVID relief to date[15].
- To prevent future pandemics, governments need to address the destruction of nature, including deforestation and high-risk wildlife trade as land-use change is the main driver of the emergence of zoonotic diseases. PCAs can effectively limit land-use change and habitat loss[16].
- Investments in PCAs can achieve multiple goals cost-effectively, including biodiversity protection[17], climate change mitigation[18], improvements to physical and mental health[19], and local economic development.[20]
- Continued momentum toward ambitious nature-positive recovery and implementation is required to turn pledges into action. Resilient PCAs require adequate support to ensure that they are effectively managed and equitably governed, and can realize their full potential. There is now a once-in-a-generation opportunity to invest in PCAs – a public health and planetary imperative.

9 Skirving, W. J. *et al.* The relentless march of mass coral bleaching: a global perspective of changing heat stress. *Coral reefs* **38,** 547-557, (2019).

10 Cecco, L. 'Heat dome' probably killed 1bn marine animals on Canada coast, experts say. *The Guardian* (2021).

11 Ruthrof, K. X. *et al.* Subcontinental heat wave triggers terrestrial and marine, multi-taxa responses. *Scientific reports* **8,** 13094, (2018).

12 Brodribb, T. J., Powers, J., Cochard, H. & Choat, B. Hanging by a thread? Forests and drought. *Science* **368,** 261-266, (2020).

13 IPCC. Summary for Policymakers. In *Special Report. Climate Change and Land* 1-41 (WMO and UNEP, 2019).

14 Anonymous. World Economic Forum emphasises need for nature positive economy. *Northglen News* (2020).

15 Vivideconomics & Finance for Biodiversity Initiative. Greeenness of Stimulus Index. (2021).

16 Joppa, L. N. & Pfaff, A. Global protected area impacts. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences* **278,** 1633-1638, (2021).

17 Seidl, A., Mulungu, K., Arlaud, M., van den Heuvel, O. & Riva, M. The effectiveness of national biodiversity investments to protect the wealth of nature. *Nature Ecology & Evolution* **5,** 530-539, (2021).

18 Smith, R., Cannizzo, Z. J., Belle, E. & Wenzel, L. Role of Protected Areas in Climate Change Mitigation, Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction. *Climate Action. Encylopedia of the UN Sustainable Development Goals*., (2020).

19 Stolton, S. *et al.* Values and Benefits of Protected Areas. in *Protected Area Governance and Management* (eds G.L. Worboys *et al.*) 145-168 (ANU Pres, 2015).

20 Naidoo, R. *et al.* Evaluating the impacts of protected areas on human well-being across the developing world. *Science Advances* **5,** eaav3006, (2019).