Convention on Biological Diversity

UNDP

Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 Country Dossier: UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

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UNBiodiversity Lab

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GLOSSARY

AZEs	Alliance for Zero Extinction sites
CEPF	Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund
EBSA	Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Area
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GD-PAME	Global Database on Protected Area Management Effectiveness
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IBA	Important Bird and Biodiversity Area
ICCAs	Indigenous and Community Conserved Area Area (may also be referred to as territories and areas conserved by Indigenous peoples and local communities or "territories of life")
IPLC	Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities
KBA	Key Biodiversity Area
MEOW	Marine Ecosystems of the World
MPA	Marine Protected Area
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
OECM	Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures
PA	Protected Area
PAME	Protected Area Management Effectiveness
PPA	Privately Protected Area
PPOW	Pelagic Provinces of the World
ProtConn	Protected Connected land indicator
SOC	Soil Organic Carbon
TEOW	Terrestrial Ecosystems of the World
WDPA	World Database on Protected Areas
WD-OECM	World Database on Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures

Disclaimer

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this dossier do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD) or United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The information contained in this publication do not necessarily represent those of the SCBD or UNDP.

This country dossier is compiled by the UNDP and SCBD from publicly available information. It is prepared, within the overall work of the Global Partnership on Aichi Biodiversity Target 11, for the purpose of attracting the attention of the Party concerned and other national stakeholders to facilitate the verification, correcting, and updating of country data. The statistics might differ from those reported officially by the country due to differences in methodologies and datasets used to assess protected area coverage and differences in the base maps used to measure terrestrial and marine area of a country or territory. Furthermore, the suggestions from the UNDP and SCBD are based on analyses of global datasets, which may not necessarily be representative of national policy or criteria used at the national level. The analyses are also subject to the limits inherent in global indicators (precision, reliability, underlying assumptions, etc.). Therefore, they provide useful information but cannot replace analyses at a national level nor constitute a future benchmark for national policy or decision-making.

The preparation of this dossier was generously supported by: the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GMbH*; the European Commission; the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; and the Government of Japan (Japan Biodiversity Fund). The dossier does not necessarily reflect their views.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document provides information on the coverage of protected areas (PAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs), as currently reported in global databases (the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA) and World Database on Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (WD-OECM)). It also includes details on the status of the other qualifying elements of Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 based on this data. These statistics might differ from those reported officially by countries due to difference in methodologies and datasets used to assess protected area coverage, differences in the base maps used to measure terrestrial and marine area of a country or territory, or if global datasets differ from the criteria and indicators used at the national level. Where available, data from national statistics for the elements of Target 11 are included alongside records from these global databases. This dossier also provides a summary of commitments made under Aichi Biodiversity Target 11, and a summary of potential opportunities regarding elements of the target for future planning.

The dossier has been developed in consultation with the UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), which manages the WDPA, WD-OECM and Global Database on Protected Area Management Effectiveness (GD-PAME). Parties to the CBD are requested to contact protectedareas@unep-wcmc.org with any updates to the information in these databases.

Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 Elements: Current status and opportunities for action

Coverage - Terrestrial & Marine

- **Status:** as of May 2021 (in the WDPA), terrestrial coverage in United Arab Emirates is 13,724.2 km^2 (19.4%) and marine coverage is 6,281.1 km^2 (11.5%); national reporting shows coverage of 18.4% terrestrial and 12.0% marine.

- **Opportunities for action:** opportunities for the near-term include updating the WDPA with any unreported PAs, and the recognizing and reporting OECMs to the WD-OECM. In the future, focus on relatively intact areas, while addressing the elements in the following sections, could be considered when planning new PAs or OECMs.

Ecological Representativeness– Terrestrial & Marine

- **Status:** United Arab Emirates contains 6 terrestrial ecoregions, 2 marine ecoregions, and 1 pelagic province: the mean coverage by reported PAs and OECMs is 11.1% (terrestrial), 5.9% (marine), and 0.0% (pelagic); 1 terrestrial ecoregion and 1 pelagic province have no coverage by reported PAs and OECMs.

- **Opportunities for action:** there is opportunity for United Arab Emirates to increase protection in terrestrial and marine ecoregions and pelagic provinces that have lower levels of coverage by PAs or OECMs. Ecoregions which currently have no coverage by PAs or OECMs are key areas for action. There is also opportunity to

continue implementation of the national habitat mapping project, and to utilize the results to enhance ecological representativeness

Areas Important for Biodiversity

- **Status:** United Arab Emirates has 14 Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs): the mean coverage of KBAs by reported PAs and OECMs is 51.5%, while 6 KBAs have no coverage by reported PAs and OECMs.

- **Opportunities for action:** there is opportunity for United Arab Emirates to increase protection of KBAs that have lower levels of coverage by PAs and OECMs; priority could be given to those with no current coverage. There is also opportunity to continue implementation of the national KBA assessment.

Areas Important for Ecosystem Services

- **Status:** coverage of areas important for ecosystem services: In United Arab Emirates, 18.5% of aboveground biomass carbon, 19.1% of belowground biomass carbon, 19.4% of soil organic carbon, 9.0% of carbon stored in marine sediments is covered by PAs and OECMs. The United Arab Emirates is currently undertaking a National Blue Carbon Project.

- **Opportunities for action:** for carbon, there is opportunity for United Arab Emirates to increase PA and OECM coverage in both marine and terrestrial areas with high carbon stocks. Protecting areas with high carbon stocks secures the benefits of carbon sequestration in the area.

- For water, there is opportunity to increase the area of the water catchment under protection by PAs and OECMs, or in cases where there is high levels of protection, focus on effective management for these areas. Protecting the current area of forested land and potentially reforesting would have benefits for improving water security.

- There is also opportunity to continue the process of the National Smart Map of Ecosystem Services and Habitats and to implement the results accordingly, as well as to continue progress on the National Blue Carbon Project.

Connectivity and Integration

- **Status:** coverage of protected-connected lands is 10.8%. There are currently two emirate level networks of PAs (Sheikh Zayed PA Network and the Dubai PA Network). The United Arab Emirates is also in the midst of conducting the National Smart Map of Ecosystem Services and Habitats.

- **Opportunities for action:** there is opportunity for a targeted increase in connecting PAs or OECMs and to focus on PA and OECM management for enhancing and maintaining connectivity. Improving connectivity increases the effectiveness of PAs and OECMs and reduces the impacts of fragmentation.

- As well, a range of suggested steps for enhancing and supporting integration are included in the voluntary guidance on the integration of PAs and OECMs into the

wider land- and seascapes and mainstreaming across sectors to contribute, inter alia, to the SDGs (Annex I of COP Decision 14/8).

Governance Diversity

- **Status:** the most common governance type(s) for reported PAs in United Arab Emirates is: 8.2% under Government (6.6% Government-delegated management; 1.6% Sub-national ministry or agency).

- **Opportunities for action:** increase efforts to identify the governance types for the 91.8% of sites that do not have their governance type reported. If applicable, explore opportunities for governance types that have lower representation

- There is also opportunity for United Arab Emirates to complete governance and equity assessments, to establish baselines and identify relevant actions for improvement. As well, a range of suggested actions are included in the voluntary guidance on effective governance models for management of protected areas, including equity (Annex II of COP Decision 14/8).

Protected Area Management Effectiveness

- **Status:** 31 out of 49 PAs in United Arab Emirates have completed Protected Area Management Effectiveness (PAME) assessments; 76.6% of terrestrial PAs and 100% of marine PAs have completed PAME assessments. In 2020, the average METT score PAs in the UAE was 71%.

- **Opportunities for action:** the 60% target for completed management effectiveness assessments (per COP Decision X/31) **has** been met for terrestrial PAs and **has** been met for marine PAs. Further increasing this percentage, for terrestrial PAs, could be beneficial overall for understanding how well protected areas are being managed.

- There is also opportunity to continue implementing the results of completed METT assessments, to improve the quality of management for existing PAs and OECMs (e.g., through adaptive management and information sharing, increasing the number of sites reporting 'sound management') and to increase reporting of biodiversity outcomes in PAs and OECMs.

INTRODUCTION

The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 was adopted at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) held in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture, Japan from 18-29 October 2010. The vision of the Strategic Plan is one of "Living in harmony with nature" where *"By 2050, biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people"* (CBD, 2010). In addition to this vision, the Strategic Plan is composed of 20 targets, under five strategic goals. Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 states that *"By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes."*

With the conclusion of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets in 2020, Target 11 on area-based conservation has seen success in the expansion of the global network of protected areas (PA) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs). The negotiation of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and its future targets provide an essential opportunity to further improve the coverage of PAs and OECMs, to improve other aspects of area-based conservation, to accelerate progress on biodiversity conservation more broadly, while also addressing climate change, and the Sustainable Development Goals. This next set of global biodiversity targets are to be adopted at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. These new targets must aim to build upon lessons learned from the last decade of progress to deliver transformative change for the benefit of nature and people, to realize the 2050 Vision for biodiversity.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity have developed the Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 Country Dossiers, which provide countries with an overview of the status of Target 11 elements, opportunities for action, and a summary of commitments made by Parties over the last decade. Each dossier can support countries in assessing their progress on key elements of Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 and identifying opportunities to prioritize new protected areas and OECMs.

This dossier provides an overview of area-based conservation in United Arab Emirates. Section I of the dossier presents data on the current status of United Arab Emirates' PAs and OECMs. The data presented in Section I relates to each element of Target 11. Section I also presents the PA and OECM coverage for two critical ecosystem services: water security and carbon stocks. In addition, the dossier presents potential opportunities for action for United Arab Emirates, in relation to each Target 11 element. The analyses present options for improving United Arab Emirates' area-based conservation network to achieve enhanced protection and benefits for livelihoods and climate change. Section II presents details on United Arab Emirates' existing PA and OECM commitments as a summary of existing efforts towards achieving Target 11. This gives focus not only to national policy

and actions but also voluntary commitments to the UN. Furthermore, where data is available, this dossier provides information on potential OECMs, Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas (ICCAs; also, often referred to as territories and areas conserved by Indigenous peoples and local communities or "territories of life") and Privately Protected Areas (PPAs) and the potential contribution they will have in achieving the post-2020 targets.

The information on PAs and OECMs presented here is derived from the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA) and World Database on Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (WD-OECM). These databases are joint products of UNEP and IUCN, managed by UNEP-WCMC, and can be viewed and downloaded at www.protectedplanet.net. Parties are encouraged to provide data on their PAs and OECMs to UNEP-WCMC for incorporation into the databases (see e.g., Decisions 10/31 and 14/8). The significant efforts of Parties in updating their data in the build up to the publication of the Protected Planet Report 2020 (UNEP-WCMC and IUCN, 2021) were greatly appreciated. UNEP-WCMC welcomes further updates, following the data standards described here (www.wcmc.io/WDPA_Manual), and these should be directed to protectedareas@unep-wcmc.org. The statistics presented in this dossier are derived from the May 2021 WDPA and WD-OECM releases, unless explicitly stated otherwise. Readers should consult www.protectedplanet.net for the latest coverage statistics (updated monthly).

Some data from the WDPA and WD-OECM are not made publicly available at the request of the data-provider. This affects some statistics, maps, and figures presented in this dossier. Statistics provided by UNEP-WCMC (terrestrial and marine coverage) are based upon the full dataset, including restricted data. All other statistics, maps, and figures are based upon the subset of the data that is publicly available.

Where data is less readily available, such as for potential OECMs, ICCAs and PPAs, data has also been compiled from published reports and scientific literature to provide greater awareness of these less commonly recorded aspects. These data are provided to highlight the need for comprehensive reporting on these areas to the WDPA and/or WD-OECM. Parties are invited to work with indigenous peoples, local communities and private actors to submit data under the governance of these actors, with their consent, to the WDPA and/or WD-OECM.

Overall, PAs and OECMs are essential instruments for biodiversity conservation and to sustain essential ecosystem services that support human well-being and sustainable development, including food, medicine, and water security, as well as climate change mitigation and adaptation and disaster risk reduction. The data in this dossier, therefore, aims to celebrate the current contributions of PAs and OECMs, whilst the gaps presented hope to encourage greater progress, not just for the benefit of biodiversity and the post-2020 GBF, but also to recognize the essential role of PAs and OECMs to the Sustainable Development Goals and for addressing the climate crisis.

SECTION I: CURRENT STATUS

Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 refers to both protected areas (PAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs). This section provides the current status for all elements of Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 where indicators with global data are available. Statistics for all elements are presented using data on both PAs and OECMs (where this data is available and reported in global databases like the WDPA and WD-OECM). It is recognized that statistics reported in the WPDA and WD-OECM might differ from those reported officially by countries due to differences in methodologies and datasets used to assess protected area coverage and differences in the base maps used to measure terrestrial and marine area of a country or territory. Details on UNEP-WCMC's methods for calculating PA and OECM coverage area available here. The global indicators adopted here for presenting the status of other elements of Target 11 may also differ from those in use nationally. Where available, results from national reporting are also included.

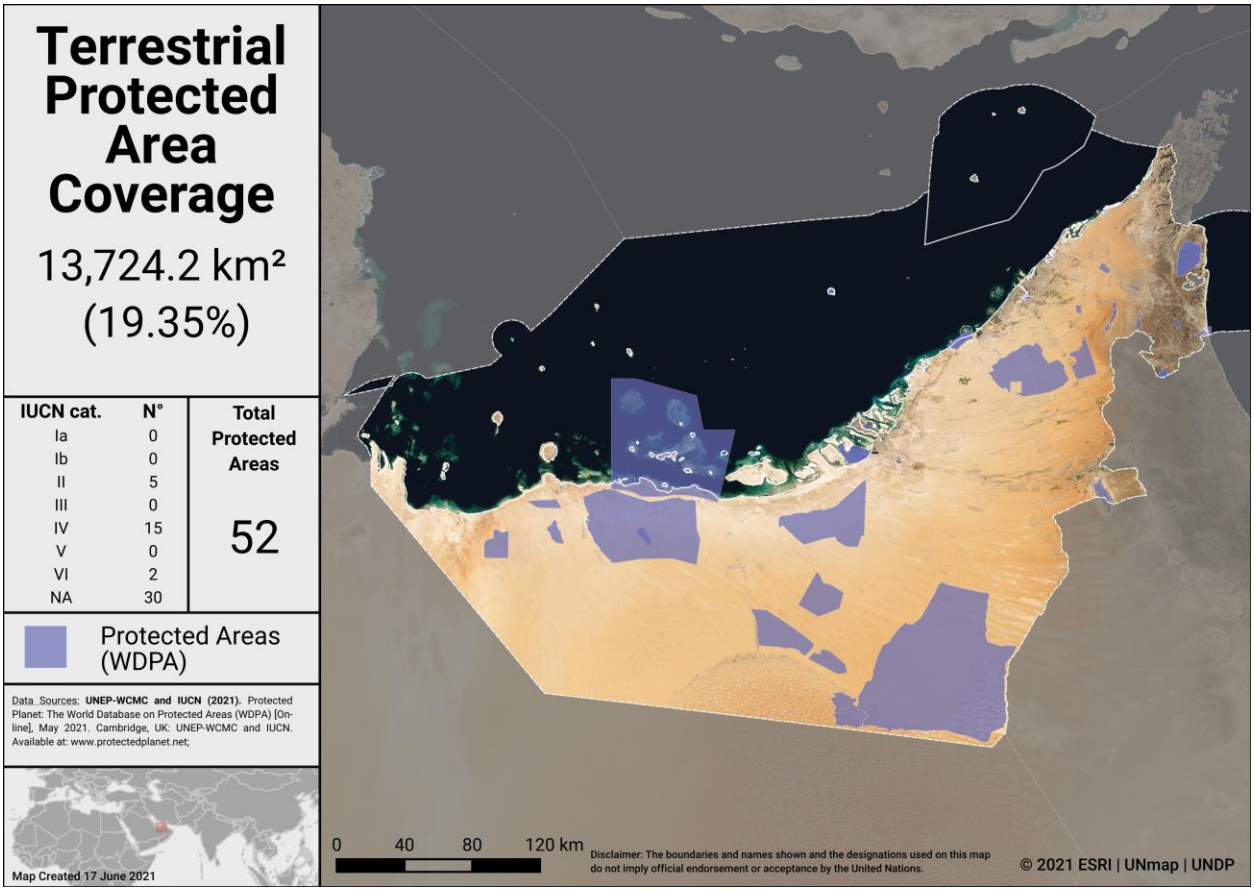
COVERAGE - TERRESTRIAL & MARINE

As of May 2021, United Arab Emirates has **61** protected areas reported in the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA). 2 UNESCO-MAB Biosphere Reserves are not included in the following statistics (see details on UNWP-WCMC's methods for calculating PA and OECM coverage **here**). As of May 2021, United Arab Emirates has **0** OECMs reported in the world database on OECMs (WD-OECM).

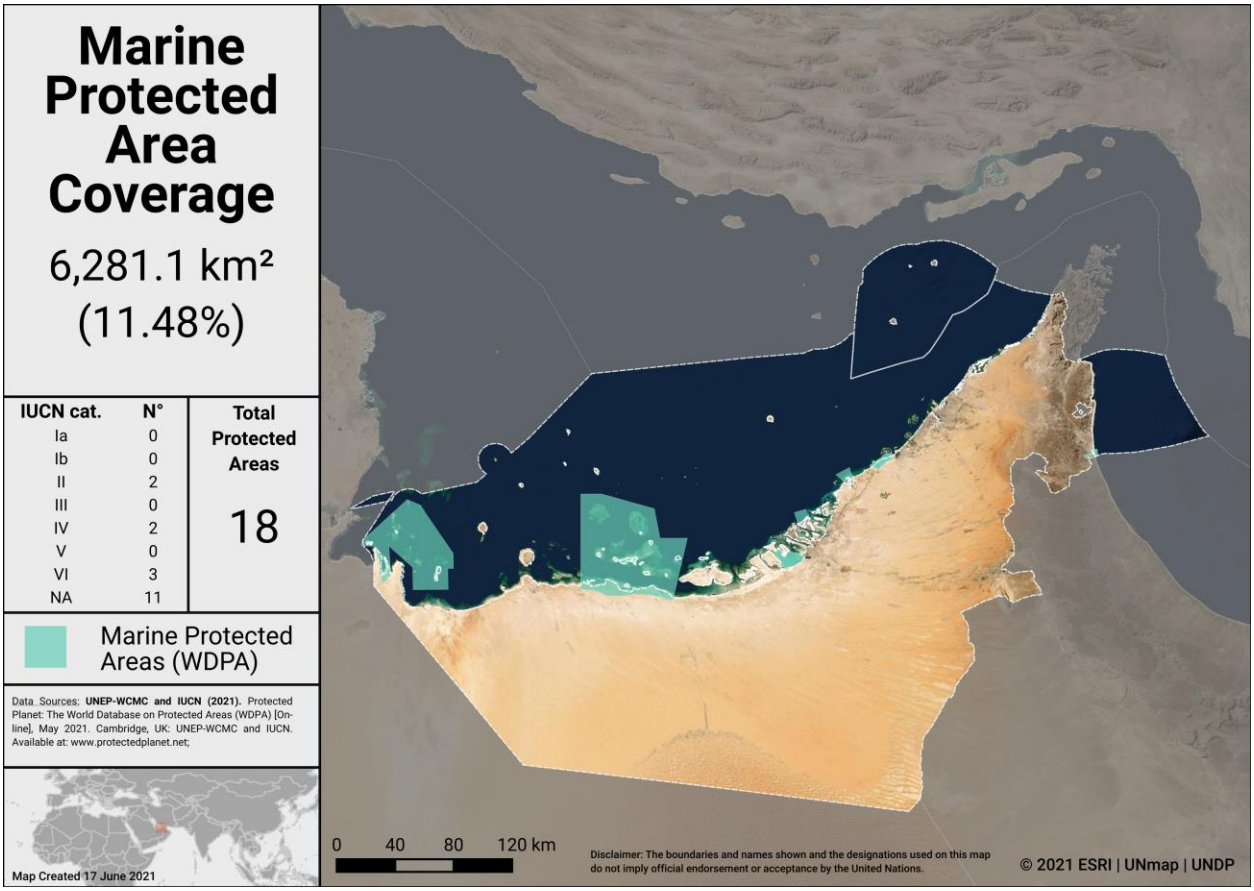
Current coverage for United Arab Emirates (from the WDPA):

- 19.4% terrestrial (52 protected areas, 13,724.2 km^2)
- 11.5% marine (18 protected areas, 6,281.1 km^2)

There are a total of 33 terrestrial and 16 marine PAs in the United Arab Emirates (the WDPA figures above include sites that have both national and international designations). National reporting for UAE shows coverage of 18.4% terrestrial and 12.0% marine.



Terrestrial Protected Areas in United Arab Emirates



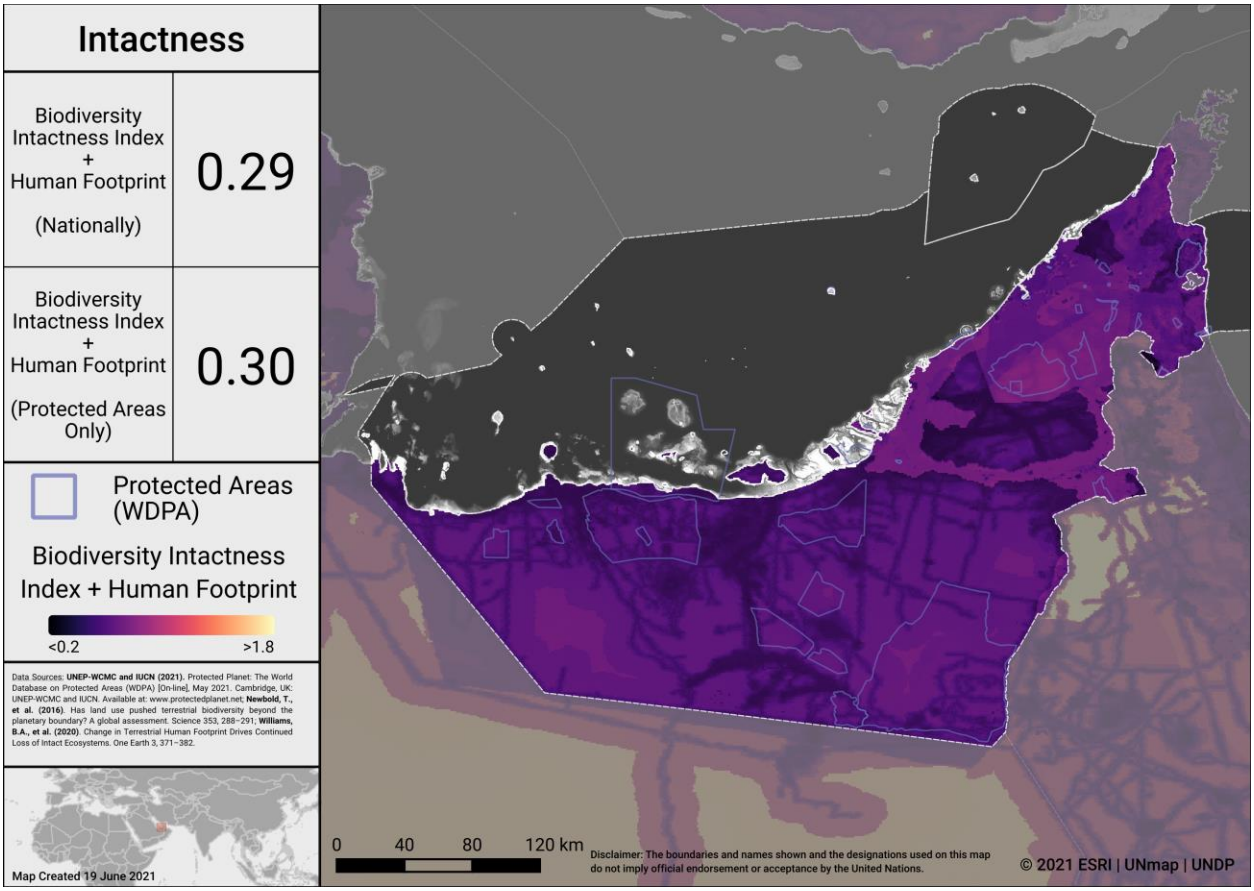
Marine Protected Areas in United Arab Emirates

Potential OECMs

There are currently no potential OECM examples for United Arab Emirates.

Opportunities for action

Opportunities for the near-term include updating the WDPA with any unreported PAs, and the recognizing and reporting OECMs to the WD-OECM. In the future, as United Arab Emirates considers where to add new PAs and OECMs, the map below identifies areas in United Arab Emirates where intact terrestrial areas are not currently protected. Focus on relatively intact areas, while addressing the elements in the following sections, could be considered when planning new PAs or OECMs.



Intactness in United Arab Emirates

To explore more on intactness visit the UN Biodiversity Lab: map.unbiodiversitylab.org.

ECOLOGICAL REPRESENTATIVENESS – TERRESTRIAL & MARINE

Ecological representativeness is assessed based on the PAs and OECMs coverage of broad-scale biogeographic units. Globally, ecoregions have been described for terrestrial areas (Dinerstein et al, 2017), marine coastal and shelf ecosystems (to a depth of 200m; Spalding et al 2007) and surface pelagic waters (Spalding et al 2012).

United Arab Emirates has 6 **terrestrial** ecoregions. Out of these:

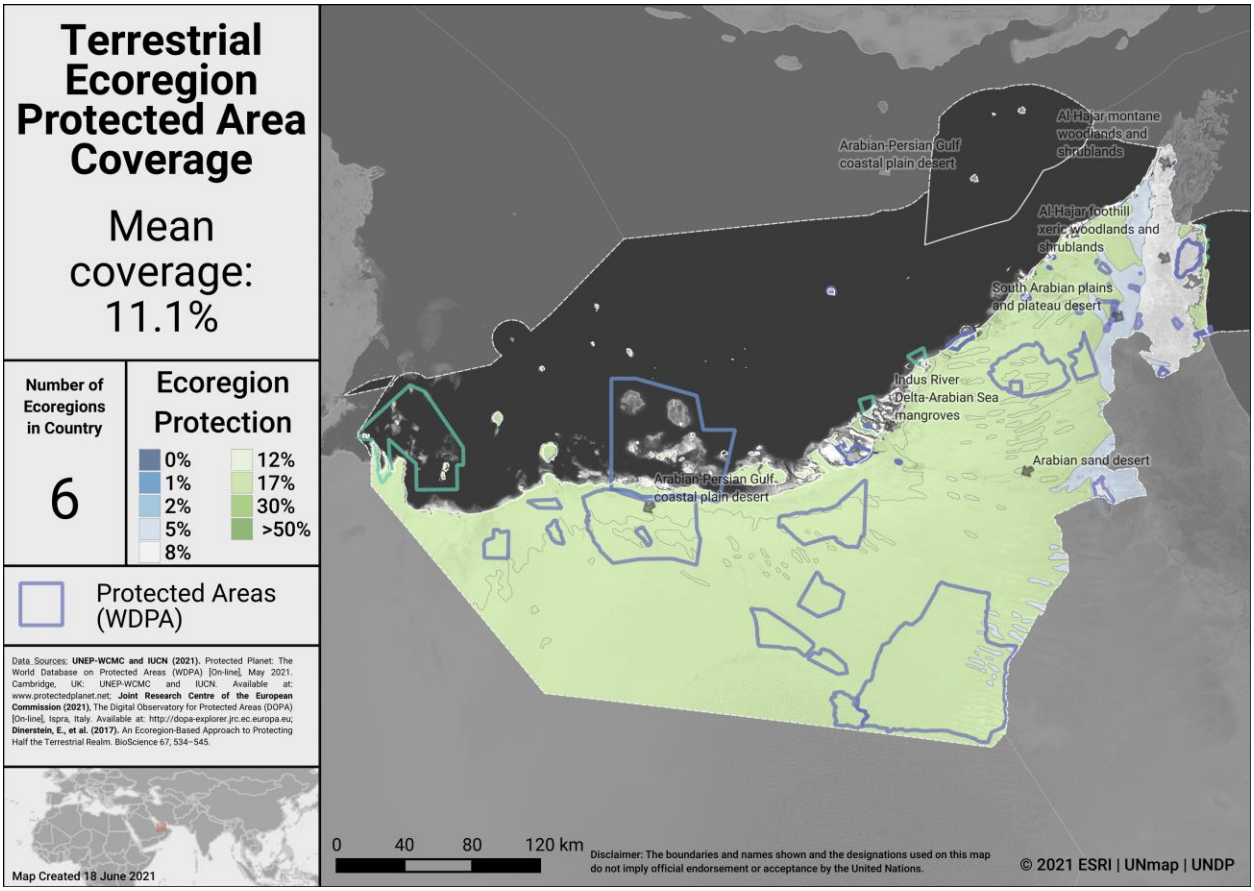
- 5 ecoregions have at least some coverage from PAs and OECMs.
- 2 ecoregions have at least 17% protected within the country.
- The average coverage of terrestrial ecoregions is 11.1%.

United Arab Emirates has 2 **marine** ecoregions and 1 **pelagic province**. Out of these:

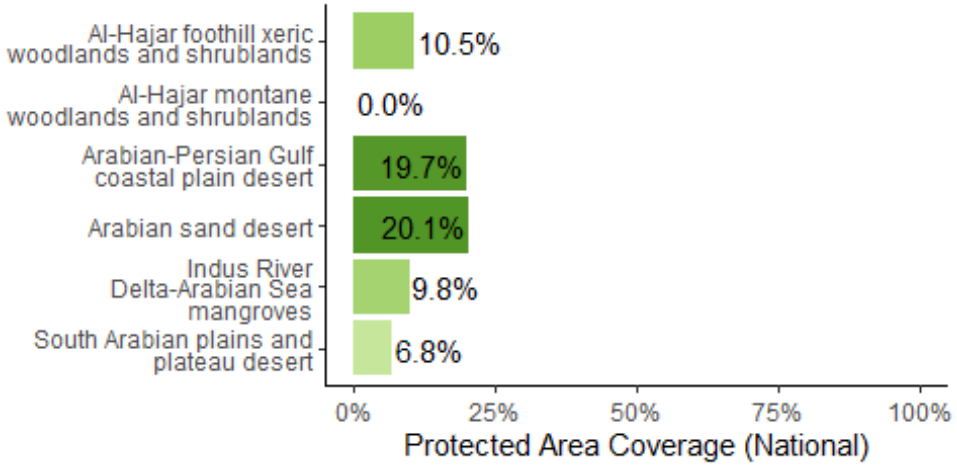
- 2 marine ecoregions and 0 pelagic provinces have at least some coverage from reported PAs and OECMs.
- 1 marine ecoregion has at least 10% protected within United Arab Emirates' exclusive economic zone (EEZ).
- The average coverage of marine ecoregions is 5.9% and the coverage of the 1 pelagic province is 0.0%.

A full list of terrestrial ecoregions in United Arab Emirates is available in Annex I.

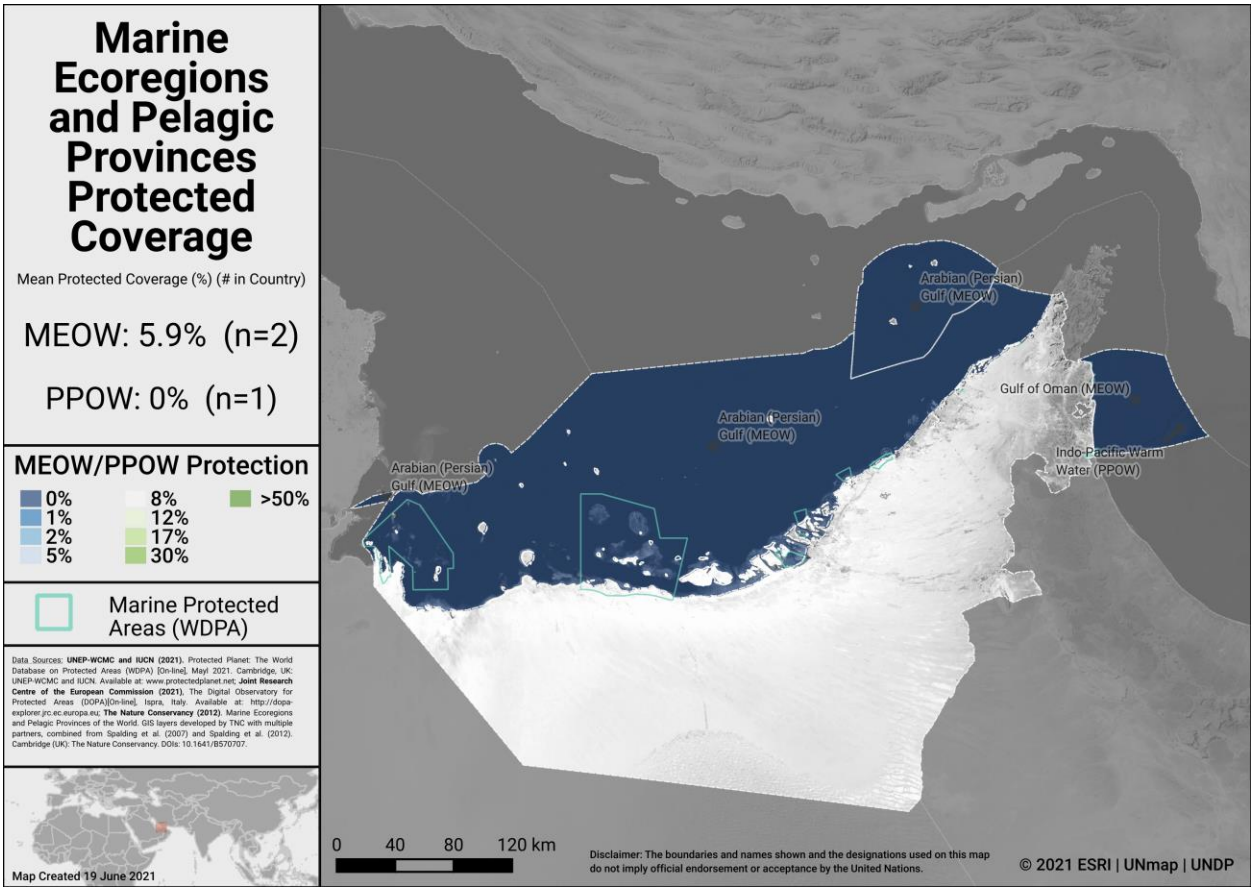
United Arab Emirates is currently working on a national Habitat mapping project to enhance ecological representativeness.



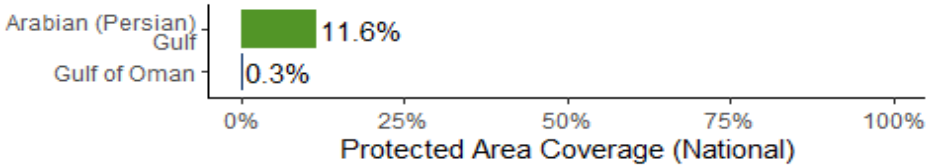
Terrestrial ecoregions in United Arab Emirates



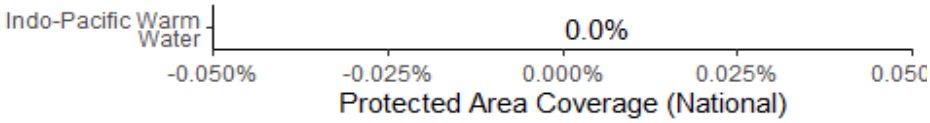
Terrestrial ecoregions of the World (TEOW) in United Arab Emirates



Marine ecoregions and pelagic provinces



Marine Ecoregions of the World (MEOW) in United Arab Emirates



Pelagic Provinces of the World (PPOW) in United Arab Emirates

Opportunities for action

There is opportunity for United Arab Emirates to increase protection in terrestrial and marine ecoregions and pelagic provinces that have lower levels of coverage by PAs or OECMs. Ecoregions which currently have no coverage by PAs or OECMs are key areas for action. There is also opportunity to continue implementation of the national habitat mapping project, and to utilize the results to enhance ecological representativeness.

AREAS IMPORTANT FOR BIODIVERSITY

Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs)

Protected area and OECM coverage of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) provide one proxy for assessing the conservation of areas important for biodiversity at national, regional and global scales. KBAs are sites that make significant contributions to the global persistence of biodiversity (IUCN, 2016). The KBA concept builds on four decades of efforts to identify important sites for biodiversity, including Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas, Alliance for Zero Extinction sites, and KBAs identified through Hotspot ecosystem profiles supported by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund. Incorporating these sites, the dataset of internationally significant KBAs includes Global KBAs (sites shown to meet one or more of 11 criteria in the Global Standard for the Identification of KBAs, clustered into five categories: threatened biodiversity; geographically restricted biodiversity; ecological integrity; biological processes; and irreplaceability), Regional KBAs (sites identified using pre-existing criteria and thresholds, that do not meet the Global KBA criteria based on existing information), and KBAs whose Global/Regional status is Not yet determined, but which will be assessed against the global KBA criteria within 8-12 years. Regional KBAs are often of critical international policy relevance (e.g., in EU legislation and under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands), and many are likely to qualify as Global KBAs in future once assessed for their biodiversity importance for other taxonomic groups and ecosystems. To date, nearly 16,000 KBAs have identified globally, and information on each of these is presented in the World Database of Key Biodiversity Areas: www.keybiodiversityareas.org.

United Arab Emirates has **14** Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs).

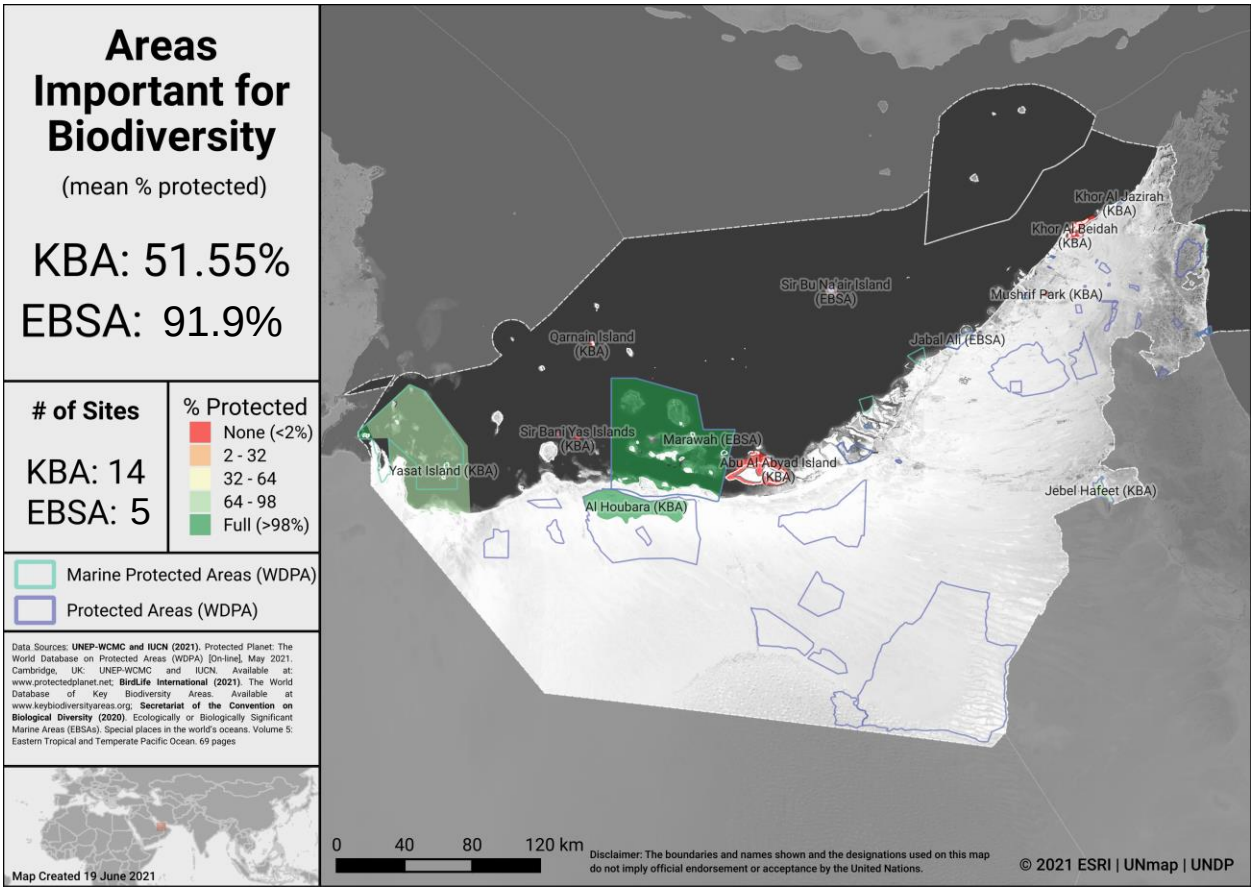
- Mean percent coverage of all KBAs by PAs and OECMs in United Arab Emirates is **51.5%**.
- **6** KBAs have full (>98%) coverage by PAs and OECMs.
- **2** KBAs have partial coverage by PAs and OECMs.
- **6** KBAs have no (<2%) coverage by PAs and OECMs.

The United Arab Emirates is in the midst of conducting a national KBA project, once the project is finalized all information will be shared accordingly.

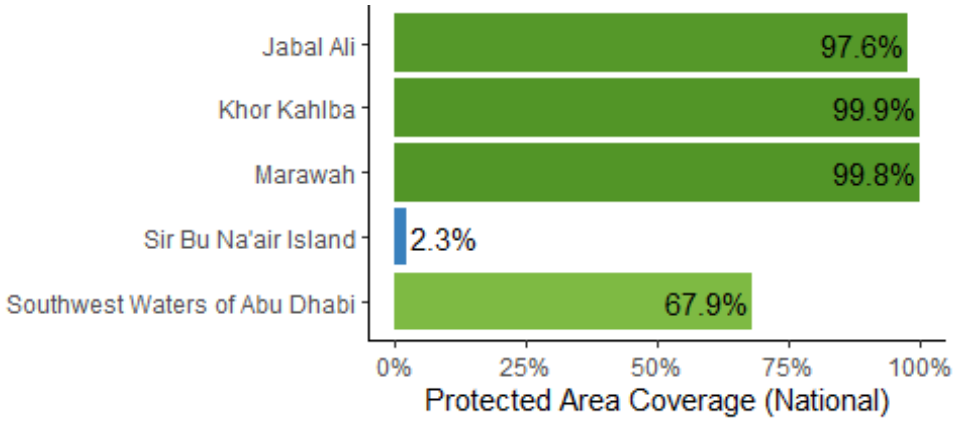
Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs)

Other important areas for biodiversity may also include Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs), which were identified following the scientific criteria adopted at COP-9 (Decision IX/20; see more at: https://www.cbd.int/ebsa/). Sites that meet the EBSA criteria may require enhanced conservation and management measures; this could be achieved through means including MPAs, OECMs, marine spatial planning, and impact assessment.

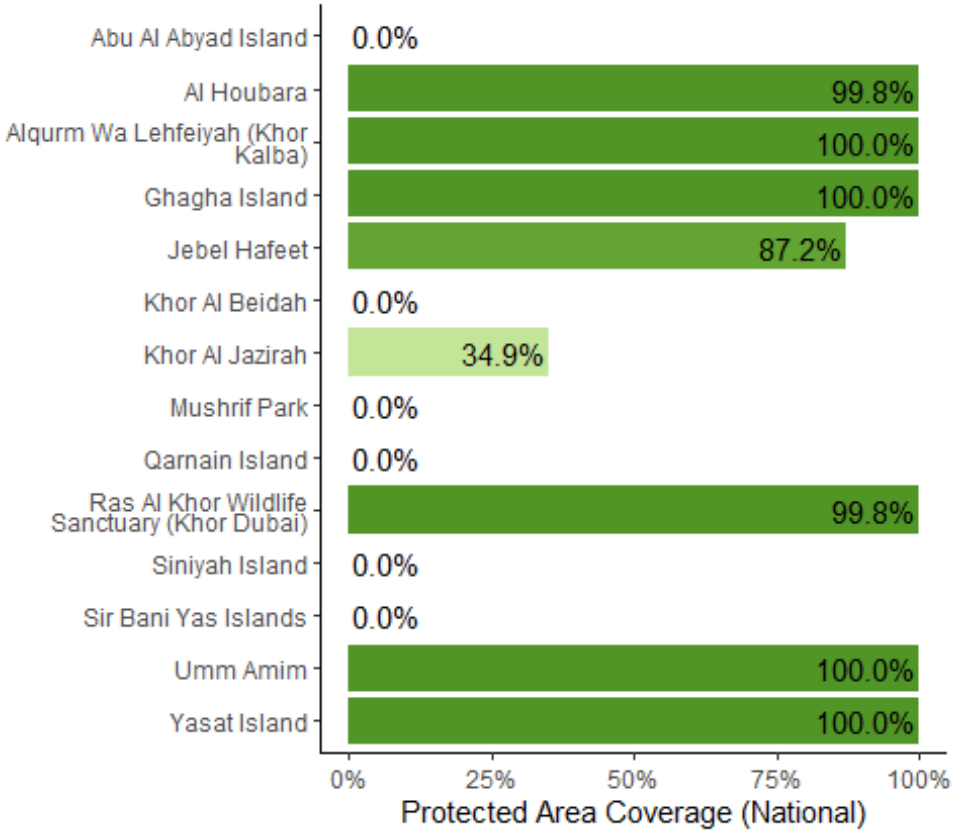
There are 5 EBSAs with some portion of their extent within United Arab Emirates' EEZ, all of which have at least partial coverage from PAs and OECMs (3 have >97% coverage).



Areas Important for Biodiversity in United Arab Emirates



Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs) in United Arab Emirates



Key Biodiversity Area Coverage (KBA) in United Arab Emirates

Opportunities for action

There is opportunity for United Arab Emirates to increase protection of KBAs that have lower levels of coverage by PAs and OECMs; priority could be given to those with no current coverage. There is also opportunity to continue implementation of the national KBA assessment.

AREAS IMPORTANT FOR ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

There is no single indicator identified for assessing the conservation of areas important for ecosystem services. For simplicity, two services with available global datasets are assessed here (carbon and water). In future, other critical ecosystem services could be explored.

Carbon

Data for biomass carbon comes from temporally consistent and harmonized global maps of aboveground biomass and belowground biomass carbon density (at a 300-m spatial resolution); the maps integrate land-cover specific, remotely sensed data, and land-cover specific empirical models (see Spawn et al., 2020 for details on methodology). The Global Soil Organic Carbon Map present an estimation of SOC stock from 0 to 30 cm (see FAO, 2017). Data is also presented from global maps of marine sedimentary carbon stocks (standardized to a 1-meter depth) at a 1-km resolution (see Atwood et al., 2020).

The total carbon stocks, based on the abovementioned sources, is: 1.5 Tg C from aboveground biomass (AGB), with 18.5% in PAs; 6.1 Tg C from below ground biomass (BGB), with 19.1% in PAs; 99.6 Tg C from soil organic carbon (SOC), with 19.4% PAs; and 485.7 Tg C from marine sediment carbon, with 9.0% in PAs.

United Arab Emirates is also in the midst of conducting the National Smart Map of Ecosystem Services; once the project is finalized all relevant data will be shared accordingly.

The United Arab Emirates is currently undertaking a National Blue Carbon Project.[1] The "project aims to understand the carbon storage of these ecosystems, providing a powerful tool to develop comprehensive policies to support the principles of integrated management of ecosystems, and to strengthen institutional and legislative frameworks".

Water

Forests and intact ecosystems support stormwater management and clean water availability, especially for large urban populations. Research that has examined the role of forests for city drinking water supplies shows that of the world's 105 largest cities, more than 30% (33 cities) rely heavily on the local protected forests, which provide ecosystem services that underpin local drinking water availability and quality (Dudley & Stolton, 2003).

Opportunities for action

For carbon, there is opportunity for United Arab Emirates to increase PA and OECM coverage in both marine and terrestrial areas with high carbon stocks. Important marine ecosystems for blue carbon include mangroves, sea grasses, salt marshes and sabkhas.

[1] For further details, see the Decision-maker summary and the Executive summary for the project.

Protecting areas with high carbon stocks secures the benefits of carbon sequestration in the area.

For water, there is opportunity to increase the area of the water catchment under protection by PAs and OECMs, or in cases where there is high levels of protection, focus on effective management for these areas. Protecting the current area of forested land and potentially reforesting would have benefits for improving water security.

There is also opportunity to continue the process of the National Smart Map of Ecosystem Services and Habitats and to implement the results accordingly, as well as to continue progress on the National Blue Carbon Project.

CONNECTIVITY & INTEGRATION

The Protected Connected land indicator (ProtConn; EC-JRC, 2021; Saura et al., 2018) has been proposed for assessing the terrestrial connectivity of PA and OECM networks. To date there is no global indicator for assessing marine connectivity, though some recent developments include proposed guidance for the treatment of connectivity in the planning and management of MPAs (see Lausche et al., 2021).

Protected Connected Land Indicator (Prot-Conn)

As of January 2021, as reported in the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission's Digital Observatory for Protected Areas (DOPA) (JRC, 2021), the coverage of protected-connected lands (a measure of the connectivity of terrestrial protected area networks, assessed using the ProtConn indicator) in United Arab Emirates was 10.8%.

Corridors and integration in the wider landscape

There are currently 2 emirate level networks of protected areas:

- Sheikh Zayed Protected Areas Network in Abu Dhabi covering 19 protected areas,
- The Dubai Protected Area Network which covers 8 protected areas

United Arab Emirates is in the midst of conducting the National Smart Map of Ecosystem Services and Habitats, once the project is finalized all relevant data will be shared accordingly.

Opportunities for action

There is opportunity for a targeted designation of PAs or OECMs in strategic locations for connectivity and to focus on PA and OECM management for enhancing and maintaining connectivity. Improving connectivity increases the effectiveness of PAs and OECMs and reduces the impacts of fragmentation.

As well, a range of suggested steps for enhancing and supporting integration are included in the voluntary guidance on the integration of PAs and OECMs into the wider land- and seascapes and mainstreaming across sectors to contribute, inter alia, to the SDGs (Annex I of COP Decision 14/8).

GOVERNANCE DIVERSITY

There is a lack of comprehensive global data on governance quality and equity in PAs and OECMs. Here, we provide data on the diversity of governance types for reported PAs and OECMs.

As of May 2021, PAs in United Arab Emirates reported in the WPDA have the following governance types:

- 8.2% are governed by **governments**
  - 0.0% by federal or national ministry or agency
  - 1.6% by sub-national ministry or agency
  - 6.6% by government-delegated management
- 0.0% are under **shared** governance
- 0.0% are under **private** governance
- 0.0% are under **IPLC** governance
  - 0.0% by Indigenous Peoples
  - 0.0% by local communities
- 91.8% **do not** report a governance type

OECMs

As of May 2021, there are **0** OECMs in United Arab Emirates reported in the WD-OECM, therefore there is no data available on OECM governance types.

Privately Protected Areas (PPAs)

There is currently no data available on PPAs for United Arab Emirates (see Gloss et al., 2019, and Stolton et al., 2014 for details) United Arab Emirates.

Territories and areas conserved by Indigenous Peoples and local communities (ICCAs)

There is currently no data available on ICCAs for United Arab Emirates (see Kothari et al., 2012 and the ICCA Registry for further details).

Other Indigenous lands

There is currently no data available on lands managed and/or controlled by Indigenous Peoples in United Arab Emirates (see Garnett et al 2018 for details).

Opportunities for action

Increase efforts to identify the governance types for the 91.8% of sites that do not have their governance type reported. If applicable, explore opportunities for governance types that have lower representation.

There is also opportunity for United Arab Emirates to complete governance and equity assessments, to establish baselines and identify relevant actions for improvement. Examples of existing tools and methodologies include: Governance Assessment for

Protected and Conserved Areas (Franks & Brooker, 2018), Social Assessment of Protected Areas (Franks et al 2018), and Site-level assessment of governance and equity (IIED, 2020). As well, a range of suggested actions are included in the voluntary guidance on effective governance models for management of protected areas, including equity (Annex II of COP Decision 14/8).

PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS

This section provides information on the coverage of PAs and OECMs with completed protected area management effectiveness (PAME) assessments as reported in the global database (GD-PAME). The proportion of terrestrial and marine PAs with completed PAME assessments is also calculated and compared with the 60% target agreed to in COP-10 Decision X/31. Information is also included regarding changes in forest cover nationally within PAs and OECMs.

Protected area management effectiveness (PAME) assessments

United Arab Emirates has 49 protected areas,[2] of which 31 were evaluated using METT (Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool), including 13 marine sites (out of 16) and 18 terrestrial sites (out of 33).

- 76.6% of terrestrial PAs have completed PAME assessments.
- 100% of marine PAs have completed PAME assessments.

The 60% target for completed management effectiveness assessments (per COP Decision X/31) **has** been met for terrestrial PAs and **has** been met for marine PAs.

These 31 PAs have been under the METT process for multiple assessments, with a continuous increase in the average METT score. In 2020, the average METT score PAs in the UAE was 71%.

UAE METT also incorporates other evaluations such as that used for Ramsar sites.

As of May 2021, there are 0 OECMs in United Arab Emirates reported in the WD-OECM and no information available on the management effectiveness of potential OECMs.

Opportunities for action

The 60% target for completed management effectiveness assessments (per COP Decision X/31) **has** been met for terrestrial PAs and **has** been met for marine PAs. Further increasing this percentage, for terrestrial PAs, could be beneficial overall for understanding how well protected areas are being managed.

There is also opportunity to continue implementing the results of completed METT assessments, to improve the quality of management for existing PAs and OECMs (e.g. through adaptive management and information sharing, increasing the number of sites reporting 'sound management') and to increase reporting of biodiversity outcomes in PAs and OECMs.

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[2] As of May 2021, United Arab Emirates has 61 PAs reported in the WDPA [there are 49 individual sites, several of which have multiple destinations (e.g., Ramsar and national PA, etc.); of these PAs, 31 (63%) have management effectiveness evaluations reported in the global database on protected area management effectiveness (GD-PAME).

SECTION II: EXISTING PROTECTED AREA AND OECM COMMITMENTS

PRIORITY ACTIONS FROM 2015-2016 REGIONAL WORKSHOPS

National priority actions for Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 were provided by Parties following a series of regional workshops in 2015 and 2016. The Capacity-building workshop for South, Central and West Asia on achieving Aichi Biodiversity Targets 11 and 12 took place 7 - 10 December 2015 in New Delhi, India. Progress towards the quantitative targets for marine and terrestrial coverage has been assessed based on data reported in the WDPA and WD-OECM as of 2021. For more information, see the workshop report at: https://www.cbd.int/meetings/

The following actions were identified during the workshops:

Terrestrial coverage: To increase the percentage of coverage by the declaration of new PAs as The UAE's NBSAP Target is: by 2021, 12% of the terrestrial area conserved through an effectively managed, ecologically representative network of protected areas, taking into account, as appropriate, connecting areas of particular importance to biodiversity and ecosystem services. [*completed: as of 2019, target is surpassed*].

Marine coverage: To increase the percentage of coverage by the declaration of new PAs, with a target of 14% for marine and coastal protected areas [*see NBSAP target*]

Ecological representation: Review the status of current PAs in the country and in alignment with the new habitat detailed maps in order to increase representation of Habitats in the PA's network.

Areas Important for biodiversity and ecosystem services: Reviewing IBAs of the country and identify KBAs to insure well representation of these sites in the PAs network.

Connectivity:

1) Assess the current network of protected areas and
2) Identify potential physical connectivity between the different sites.

Management effectiveness:

1) To manage our protected areas network in an effective manner by applying the assessments for all protected areas and filling the gaps accordingly
2) Currently assessing 31 protected areas (assessment to be done annually following the adoption of a national indicator for protected areas management in 2014)
3) Include international criteria (UNESCO, RAMSAR) in the management effectiveness toolkit

4) Assess all protected areas.

Governance and Equity: No actions were identified for this element of Target 11.

Integration: Mainstreaming connectivity in land use planning.

OECMs: Integrate the governance structure of PAs in the legal framework of the country.

NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLANS (NBSAPs)

United Arab Emirates has submitted an NBSAP during the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 (most recent NBSAP is available at: https://www.cbd.int/nbsap/search/).

National Target 8 - By 2021, 12% of terrestrial and inland water, and 14% of coastal and marine areas, are conserved through effectively managed and ecologically representative protected area systems and, if necessary, areas important for biodiversity and ecosystems services are connected.

As of 2021, **18%** of terrestrial and inland water areas have been protected (**surpassing the terrestrial target**), only **12%** of the coastal and marine areas have been protected so far (another >1,000 km^2 required to reach target).

OTHER ACTIONS/COMMITMENTS

High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People

United Arab Emirates **has** joined the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People.

The High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People (HAC) is an intergovernmental group, co-chaired by France and Costa Rica [currently including 65 countries and the European Commission]. Its objective is to support the adoption of a target aiming to protect 30% of the planet's land and 30% of its oceans by 2030 (30x30 target), within the future global framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) for the protection of biodiversity, which is to be adopted at the next COP in China this autumn.

Global Ocean Alliance

United Arab Emirates **has** joined the Global Ocean Alliance: 30by30 initiative.

The Global Ocean Alliance 30by30 is a UK led initiative [currently containing 53 countries as signatories]. Its aim is to protect at least 30% of the global ocean as Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) by 2030.

United Arab Emirates' statement at the 2020 UN Biodiversity Summit mentions PAs, OECMs or corridors:

And through this system, we managed to implement a number of SDGs including SDG 14.5 of marine biodiversity as well as a goal 11 of Achi, regarding expansion of protectorate, as we have 49 protected areas representing 15.5% over the total area of UAE.

ANNEX I

FULL LIST OF TERRESTRIAL ECOREGIONS

Ecoregion Name	Area (km^2)	% of Global Ecoregion in Country	% of Country in Ecoregion	Area Protected (km^2)	% Protected in Country
Al-Hajar foothill xeric woodlands and shrublands	3,375.5	7.3	4.8	354.3	10.5
Al-Hajar montane woodlands and shrublands	12.6	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
Arabian-Persian Gulf coastal plain desert	12,535.0	10.3	17.7	2,471.9	19.7
Arabian sand desert	51,814.2	7.3	73.3	10,427.5	20.1
Indus River Delta-Arabian Sea mangroves	161.0	2.7	0.2	15.7	9.8
South Arabian plains and plateau desert	2,948.0	0.8	4.2	199.3	6.8

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