

CREATING AND MANAGING

PARKS
TO SAVE
WILDLIFE

a call to action



Are we moving toward a world without wildlife?

Humans have transformed our planet and eliminated wild animals and plants in the process. More than 300 terrestrial animal species have been driven to extinction since the year 1500, and a recent study shows that we've caused the total number of surviving vertebrates to decline by half since 1970.

As species are lost and animal numbers and ranges collapse, ecosystems unravel and the vital services they provide to people wither.



Well-Managed Parks Protect Biodiversity

Parks are our best strategy for turning the tide. Covering only 13 percent of the land on Earth and 3 percent of the world's oceans, parks harbor 83 percent of all threatened bird, mammal, and amphibian species. When well-managed, parks help wildlife to persist at ecologically functional densities, not only saving iconic species but preserving ecosystem function and services. In Central Africa, for example, forests patrolled by park guards have seven times as many elephants as unprotected ones, and billions of people globally receive fresh water from protected forests.



Parks in Peril

Unfortunately, most parks are not well-managed. Most suffer from a lack of funding, infrastructure, skilled and motivated staff, and political will, as well as from corruption and poor leadership. Too many are ransacked by commercial poachers and wildlife traffickers. As a result, during the past quarter century, parks across Africa have lost 59 percent of their large mammal numbers, and the picture is similarly bleak throughout Asia and Latin America.

More Parks, More Money, Better Management

Part of the solution must be new parks, as promised by the world's governments through the Aichi Targets: 17 percent terrestrial coverage and 10 percent marine coverage globally. These must focus on Key Biodiversity Areas—Earth's remaining intact biodiverse ecosystems, and species and habitats underrepresented in current parks. But creating parks—and managing them—takes money and political will, and the world's existing parks are chronically underfunded and poorly supported.

A Bigger Role for Civil Society

Civil society can help. Parks were once considered the responsibility only of governments, but today communities, conservation organizations, and individuals provide vital technical support and even manage or co-manage parks.

Innovations include:

Public-Private Partnerships

Where governments and communities are supportive, sustained success can be realized through partnerships to manage parks as nonprofit businesses.

SMARTer Park Management

A new open source software system—Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool, or SMART—can track where park guards go, what they see, and what they do. Guards use this information to plan patrols, and managers and funders monitor effectiveness in real time.

Targeting Effort

Aerial surveillance and intelligence from local communities about poachers and trafficking networks are key to targeting patrol effort.

Benefit Sharing

No park will succeed in the long run without support from communities and government. That's why it is key to maximize and equitably distribute benefits from parks—through tourism and employment opportunities, conservation enterprises, payments for reduced deforestation, and sustainable use of natural resources. Valuing these benefits and minimizing the costs of parks and wildlife to local communities is vital.

Measuring Progress

Good management requires accurate, honest, and open measures of success and failure. Five key measures are: the population size and range of key species, habitat intactness, intensity of threats, well-being of local communities, and quality of park governance.

Future Funding

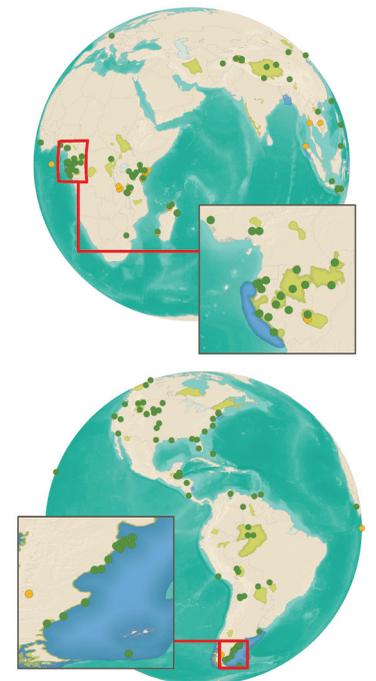
Parks will only survive, especially in developing countries, if private and public assistance increases now. But new funding mechanisms can deliver longer-term support—including environmentally-sensitive tourism, payments for reduced CO² emissions from deforestation, funding from companies to offset their impacts on biodiversity, and protected area trust funds.

Conservation Action

WCS believes in the power of parks. We've been working for more than 100 years to save wildlife and wild places around the world and have assisted governments and communities to create, expand, or propose 245 parks, from Kruger, South Africa in the 1920s to Wakhan, Afghanistan in 2014. Today WCS manages, co-manages, or provides assistance to managers of parks across more of the globe than any other single NGO. We focus on the **Best of the Wild**—parks at the core of the world's last intact landscapes and seascapes—places that have the greatest chance of preserving species and natural ecosystems in the face of global change, such as the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and Changtang National Nature Reserve. Building on sound scientific and cultural understanding and strong local partnerships, we help governments and communities conserve landscapes that harbor half of all bird, mammal, and amphibian species. We leverage our local knowledge to address global conservation issues—climate change, livelihoods and natural resource governance, extractive industries, wildlife trafficking, and the relationship between wildlife, human, and livestock health.

Parks Created, Expanded, or Proposed with WCS Assistance 1907–2014

WCS Seascape
WCS Landscape
Created or expanded park
Proposed park



A Call to Action: The World Parks Congress

The 2014 World Parks Congress is an opportunity for the world to renew its commitment to parks. WCS urges that we achieve the following objectives.

- - Meet the Aichi Targets, including global park coverage of 17 percent of land area and 10 percent of the seas.
- - Prioritize large intact ecosystems with high biodiversity—the Best of the Wild.
- - Maintain biodiversity conservation as a core objective of parks (and the core objective of IUCN category I & II protected areas).
- - Increase funding and political commitment to enable parks, terrestrial and marine, to be effectively managed.
- - Scientifically measure and openly report success and failure of parks to protect their biodiversity.
- - Continue to engage civil society at all levels on park creation and management.



Building Partnerships

Everything we achieve is through partnerships, and the World Parks Congress provides an opportunity to strengthen old ones and build new ones. WCS staff from across the globe are attending the Congress, presenting in all streams and cross-cutting themes. Whether you represent a stakeholder community, a nation-state, civil society, a potential funder, employee, or the press, we invite you to explore how we can work together.

To learn more and see the schedule of WCS presentations at the World Parks Congress, visit: wpc.wcs.org

Follow developments at the Congress on Twitter:
@TheWCS **#WorldParksCongress**

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Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)

MISSION: WCS saves wildlife and wild places worldwide through science, conservation action, education, and inspiring people to value nature.

VISION: WCS envisions a world where wildlife thrives in healthy lands and seas, valued by societies that embrace and benefit from the diversity and integrity of life on earth.

To achieve our mission, WCS, based at the Bronx Zoo, harnesses the power of its Global Conservation Program in more than 60 nations, in all the world's oceans, and its five wildlife parks in New York City, visited by four million people annually. WCS combines its expertise in the field, zoos, and aquarium to achieve its conservation mission.

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