

**PROTECTED AREAS, AND IUCN's WORLD COMMISSION ON  
PROTECTED AREAS (WCPA) - HOW CAN THEY HELP IN THE  
CONSERVATION OF FERNS?**

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**ABSTRACT**

There are more than 44,000 protected areas around the world, representing a global investment in *in-situ* conservation of biodiversity. The World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) is a part of IUCN, which leads IUCN's work in this field. This report reviews the history and current situation of WCPA, including protected area categories, identification of problems facing protected areas, and future trends and prospects. The role of protected areas in conservation, the key role of the area manager, research, education for biodiversity, and for fern conservation are discussed. There is much scope for both local co-operation, sharing information, and research, and for institutional co-operation (e.g. between SSC and WCPA).