

Protected & Conserved Areas

What is a Protected Area?

A protected area is a clearly defined and recognised geographic space that aims to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values.

Conservation of nature is the primary objective, but there can also be additional reasons the area is protected such as food security.

Examples of Protected Areas

- Suvarrow
- Takutea
- Marae Moana island marine protected areas (50 nautical miles from each island)

What is a Conserved Area?

A conserved or managed area can be somewhere that does not fall within the definition of a protected area, but still plays an important role in environmental stewardship. Conserved or managed areas can be designated for any purpose, where positive and sustained biodiversity conservation outcomes occur regardless of the main management objectives.

75%

of worldwide land areas have been significantly altered by human actions

66%

of marine areas have been significantly altered by human actions globally

1,000,000+

species are at risk of extinction

What are some examples of Conserved Areas?

- Raui
- Takitumu Conservation Area
- Takuvaine Water Catchment Managed Area

Why are Protected Areas important?

Protected areas are important to ensure that essential parts of nature are protected for future generations and to sustain our ways of living and livelihoods.

A recent global report found that:

- 75% of land areas and 66% of marine areas have been significantly altered by human actions;
- Nearly 1 million species are at risk of extinction, more than ever before in human history.

If we take care of nature, nature takes care of us. Our clean air, waters and soils, plus pollinating insects, animals and forests all help to protect our food and water security. Our general happiness, wellbeing and enjoyment are key outcomes of a healthy environment. Healthy environments will also be more resilient to climate change.

Who is responsible for managing Protected and Conserved Areas?

- The designated management committee of the area (i.e. landowners).
- NES provides a supporting and regulatory role. The Environment Act 2003 established NES with the mandate to provide for the protection, conservation, and management of the environment in a sustainable manner.

What can I do to support Protected Areas?

- Play your part to support the areas by:
- Respecting protected areas and the rules that apply there;
- No littering within the respective areas;
- Volunteer in clean-up programmes;
- Increase/spread awareness about the area;
- Participate in surveys;
- Report any activities that are not allowed in the area.

What International Conventions apply to Protected Areas?

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) calls to protect 30% of land and marine areas globally as either protected or conserved areas by 2030 under the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

These international goals may be difficult for us in the Cook Islands due to our limited land area, but it's still important to play our part and do what we can.

This is indicated nationally under our National Sustainable Development Agenda (NSDA) 2020+, which aims for 25% of land to be protected by 2031 under Goal 11.2.

Who can I contact to get more information?



+682 21256



resources@cookislands.gov.ck

