

IUCN WORLD HERITAGE OUTLOOK ASSESSING 271 NATURAL SITES OF THE WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION

November 2025

The [IUCN World Heritage Outlook 4](#) has been launched at the IUCN World Conservation Congress held in October 2025 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

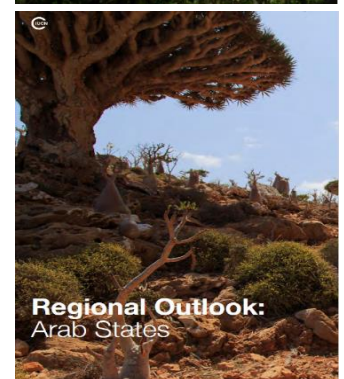
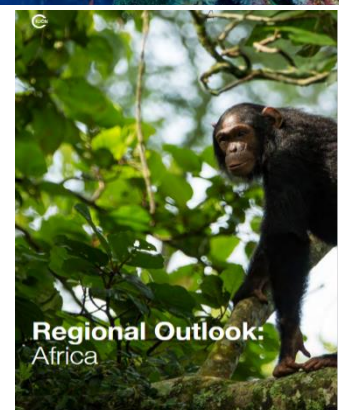
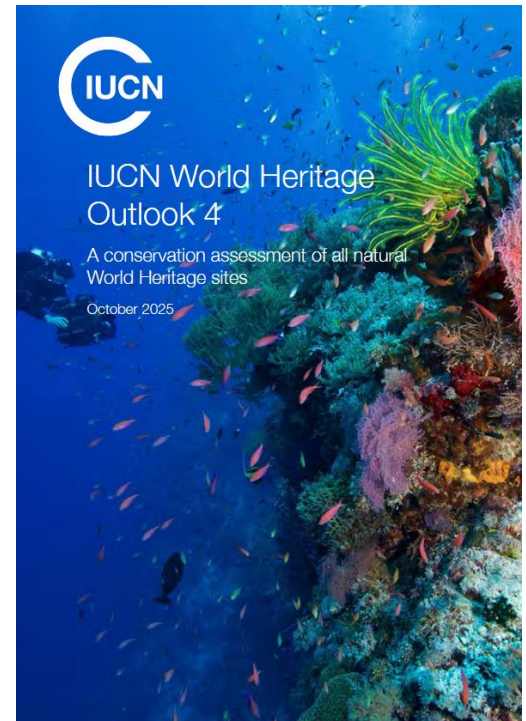
The [IUCN World Heritage Outlook 4](#) assesses 271 natural and mixed World Heritage sites. Complementing the official monitoring processes under the World Heritage Convention, the World Heritage Outlook offers the most in-depth analyses of threats facing natural World Heritage around the world and their protection and management status. It is based on the knowledge of hundreds of experts, site managers and partners and presents the main results for 2025, but also some longer-term trends based on the four data sets now available. It also identifies the actions needed to support sites that are facing threats, to improve their conservation outlook.

Since its launch in 2014, based on expert knowledge, IUCN's World Heritage Outlook is designed to track the state of conservation of all natural World Heritage sites over time. Implemented by the IUCN World Heritage Team and IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), it aims to provide reliable, transparent and independent information on the present situation and future prospects of natural World Heritage through Conservation Outlook Assessments. The World Heritage Outlook also highlights the benefits that World Heritage sites provide to people, and projects supporting these exceptional places. It offers an early warning system helping to identify threats and take the necessary actions to achieve excellence in the conservation of our world's natural wonders.

The IUCN World Heritage Outlook's main goal is to help improve the conservation of natural World Heritage sites and strengthen the World Heritage Convention through transparency and a proactive approach. Its objectives are to:

- Track the state of conservation of all World Heritage sites inscribed for their natural values over time and raise awareness of their importance.
- Recognise well-managed sites for their conservation efforts and encourage the transfer of good management practices between sites.
- Identify the most pressing conservation issues affecting World Heritage sites inscribed for their natural values and the actions needed to remedy those issues.
- Understand and communicate the benefits of World Heritage sites for local and global communities, for example in providing livelihoods and sustaining healthy ecosystems, at a time of fast-moving environmental, economic and humanitarian crises.

UNESCO World Heritage sites enjoy the highest level of international recognition under the 1972 World Heritage Convention. These are places of such exceptional value that their protection transcends national boundaries, cultures and generations. Natural World Heritage sites therefore serve as a litmus test for how effectively the global community can safeguard nature in pursuit of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF) targets by 2030.



There are 271 World Heritage sites with natural Outstanding Universal Value as of 2024: 231 classified as natural sites and 40 mixed sites classified as both natural and cultural.

Together, they account for 22% of all 1223 World Heritage properties listed, protecting over 470 million hectares of land and sea. Natural World Heritage sites account for around 8% of the total surface area covered by all 280,000+ terrestrial and marine protected areas worldwide including 18 transboundary sites, and 15 sites on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

115 countries have an area designated as a natural or mixed World Heritage site: 47 sites in Africa; 9 sites in Arab States; 85 sites in Asia and the Pacific; 83 sites in Europe and North America; 47 sites in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Until the IUCN World Heritage Outlook was developed, less than half of all natural sites – those affected by serious conservation issues – were regularly tracked through joint reactive monitoring by UNESCO and IUCN, in its role as Advisory Body on natural World Heritage. The IUCN World Heritage Outlook complements the Convention's statutory monitoring mechanisms by providing an independent, global, snapshot evaluation of all natural and mixed World Heritage sites - in 2014, 2017, 2020 and now 2025. Produced by IUCN, it supports World Heritage site managers and management authorities, governments, NGOs, scientific institutions and Indigenous Peoples' Organisations.

In the Foreword of the Outlook the UCN Director General highlights that “This report is more than a health check. It is a guide for action. It shows us how to strengthen protection, involve Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and ensure that natural World Heritage continues to benefit both people and planet. It highlights how we can make better decisions through strong policies, smart investments and shared responsibility, to safeguard these irreplaceable places. The findings in IUCN World Heritage Outlook 4 remind us both of what is at stake and of what is possible when we act together.”

To know more

[News on IUCN World Conservation Congress 2025](#)

[World Heritage Outlook 4 in IUCN website](#)

[IUCN World Heritage Outlook pdf](#)

[World Heritage Outlook presentation in IUCN website](#)

[World Heritage Outlook in unesco.org website](#)

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