

Forms of nature protection

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Characteristics of forms of nature protection in Poland

The act on the Protection of Nature distinguishes the following forms of environmental protection:

1. national parks;
2. nature reserves;
3. landscape parks;
4. protected landscape area;
5. Natura 2000 areas;
6. nature monuments;
7. documentation sites;
8. ecological areas;
9. landscape-nature complexes;
10. plants, animals and fungi species protection.

Each of the forms plays a different role in the Polish system of nature protection and they serve various purposes. That is why they are subject to different protection regimes and scopes of limitations in utilization. Summing up, the forms of environmental protection comprise a large and diverse set of measures established on the basis of the development of scientific background for environmental protection and its long practice, which enables environmental protection to be properly exercised.

List of nature conservation forms in Poland

No.	Nature conservation form	Number of sites
1.	National parks	23
2.	Nature reserves	1494
3.	Landscape parks	122
4.	Protected landscape areas	402
5.	Natura 2000 areas	145 special protection sites (birds) (PLB) 849 special sites of conservation (PLH)
6.	Monuments of nature	30925
7.	Documentation sites	175
8.	Ecological areas	7602
9.	Landscape-nature complexes	256
10.	Plants, animals and fungi species protection	715 plants species 322 Fungi species 799 animals species

Data in points 1-9 - Source: Central Register of the Forms of Nature Protection, crfop.gdos.gov.pl (July 6th, 2017); Data in points 10 - Source: General Directorate for Environmental Protection (January 2015) - Data refer to native species;

Characteristics of forms of nature protection in Poland:

● National Parks

They cover the area of particular environmental, scientific, social, cultural and educational values with total surface area no less than 1,000 ha where all environmental elements and landscape values are under protection. National parks are established in order to preserve biodiversity, resources, objects, elements of inanimate nature and landscape values as well as to restore resources and environmental elements to their proper state. Moreover, they serve to reconstruct distorted natural habitats, plants, animals and fungi habitats.

● Nature Reserves

They cover the areas preserved in their natural or slightly changed state, ecosystems, refuges and natural habitats, plants, animals and fungi habitats as well as elements of inanimate nature having particular environmental, scientific, cultural and landscape values.

[The request for authorization to derogate from the prohibitions Nature Reserve](#)

● Landscape Parks

They cover the areas protected on the account of particular environmental, scientific, cultural and landscape values serving to preserve, popularize these values in the conditions of sustainable development.

● Protected Landscape Area

They cover the areas protected on the account of distinctive landscapes, diverse ecosystems and the valuable areas which possess possibility to meet the needs connected with tourism and leisure or play the role of wildlife corridors.

● Natura 2000 areas

Natura 2000 is an international, world-unique enterprise concerned with the protection of European biodiversity. The aim of the programme is to have ca. 200 most valuable and endangered species under protection within the properly planned framework of European Ecological Network Natura 2000, known as *Natura 2000 Network* in order to provide them with constant and proper protection. The uniqueness of the project lies in the fact that the member states comprise Natura 2000 Network on the basis of identical provisions stated in the law and European Union guidelines, manage the application of similar programmes and are jointly concerned with the proper financial means and its promotion.

● Nature monuments

These are individual objects of animate and inanimate nature or their groups which have particular environmental, scientific, cultural, historical or landscape values and present unusual individual features among other objects, e.g. high trees, domestic or foreign species of shrubs, source, waterfalls, rising springs, rocks, ravines, erratic blocks or caves. In the built-up areas, if it does not pose any threat to human and possessions, trees which nature monuments are protected until they naturally break.

- **Documentation sites**

These are not visible on the surface or easily distinguishable, important for scientific and didactic purposes areas where geological formations, accumulation of fossil or mineral objects, caves, rock shelters with alluviums and fragments of operating or closed surface and underground excavations can be found. Documentation sites include also areas where remnants of fossil plants and animals can be found.

- **Ecological areas**

These are the remnants of ecosystems important for preserving biodiversity which need to be taken under protection - natural water bodies, field and forest ponds, lumps of trees and shrubs, swamps, peat-bogs, dunes, patches of wastelands, old river beds, outcrops, escarpments, gravel banks, natural habitats and sites of rare or protected species of plants, animals and fungi, their refuges and breeding grounds or seasonal stay grounds.

- **Landscape-nature complexes**

These are fragments of natural and cultural landscape deserving protection on account of their scenic or aesthetic values.

- **Plants, animals and fungi species protection**

Species protection aims at enabling the survival and the favourable conservation status of wild animals, plants and fungi species and their habitats and refuges as well as preserving the species and genetic diversity. The wildlife under this protection can be found within the borders of Poland and other EU member states and belongs to the group of species which are endemic, vulnerable, endangered and protected under current regulations set out by international agreements signed by the Republic of Poland. In order to protect plants or fungi sites and refuges protected under species protection or animals refuges, breeding grounds and regular habitats under the species protection it is possible to establish protection zones. [More about plants, animals and fungi species protection](#)

Red books and endangered species' lists

In order to protect biological diversity, red books and lists of endangered species have been drawn up. The list of endangered species was first published in 1963 by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). [IUCN Red Lists](#) are published annually and are a good source of information on the quantities of endangered species as well as their degree of hazard.

The Polish Red Book of Animals

It is a record of endangered animal species which can be found in Poland, created using the Red List of Threatened Species as a model. It includes the list of endangered species with their detailed descriptions and maps of their location. It also determines the degree of the extinction of a species, rarity of its existence and used and proposed conservation forms.

The Polish Red Book of Animals is developed by the Institute of Environmental Protection of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Krakow, in collaboration with dozens of scientists from all over Poland. The last edition of the Red Book of Vertebrates is from 2001, and the [Red Book of Invertebrates](#) is from 2004.

Polish Red Book of Plants

Similarly to the Red Book of Animals, it contains the list of endangered plant species, with a description of their biology, occurrence and means of protection. Information included in it illustrates both the degree of threat to flora, as well as the status of the discernment of this phenomenon. The Red Book of Plants has been developed by the Institute of Botany and the Institute of Environmental Protection of the Polish Academy of Sciences. The last edition is from 2014. The Red Book of Polish Carpathians (2008) has also been published. It describes risks to vascular plants.

Red Lists of Polish Animals, Plants and Fungi

The Red Lists of endangered species include animals, plants and fungi. They contain a full register of endangered species, along with their classification into the appropriate category of threat, however, unlike the Red Books, they do not cover individual species. The latest edition of the Red list of plants and fungi of Poland, published by the Institute of Botany of the Polish Academy of Sciences, is from 2006.

Central Register of Nature Conservation Forms

Keeping the Central Register of Nature Conservation Forms results from the art. 113 par. 1 of the Nature Conservation Act of 16 April 2004 (Journal of Laws No. 151, item 1220, as amended) and falls in the competence of General Director of Environmental Protection. The Register, which is a data base of nature conservation forms, is currently being updated on the basis of data from the registers kept by regional directors of environmental protection and other authorities responsible for environmental protection.

[Data base of Central Register of Nature Conservation Forms](#)