# What are KBAs and where to find more information about them?

**What are KBAs?**

Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) are defined as 'sites of significance for the global persistence of biodiversity'. They can be identified for species, ecosystems and sites of outstanding ecological integrity. They are defined by 11 quantitative criteria which relate to the global population size or extent of a species or ecosystem. Using quantitative criteria allows comparisons between countries and regions because KBAs are the same wherever they are identified (unlike many other species-focused site-identification approaches). Effectively they identify sites that can be managed to conserve a globally significant proportion of one or more species population(s) or a globally significant extent of an ecosystem. As such they identify sites that are globally significant. How they are managed is not prescribed. They can be used to guide protected area expansion and also where Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) might be established, and could be privately managed or managed by local communities or indigenous peoples.

**How to get more information about them**

The KBA criteria were developed and tested with input from the global conservation community over a period of more than 5 years and published as an IUCN Standard in 2016 (available in English, French and Spanish at this link). This Global Standard for the Identification of KBAs gives the criteria and basis for identification of KBAs. Guidance on how to apply the criteria is also provided, giving more extensive details on the application of the criteria with examples (See guidance in English, French and Spanish).  There is also guidance on how to propose KBAs for review, validation and publishing in the World Database of KBAs.

The criteria are summarised in a fact sheet available on the KBA Website (here). In general though they are applied as follows:

*Species:*

1. Threatened species – Criterion A1 – different thresholds for VU (1% of global population usually) and CR/EN (0.5% of global population usually) species
2. Geographically Restricted species – Criterion B1 – need 10% of the global population at a site
3. Co-occurrence of Restricted-range species – Criterion B2 – need 1% of at least 2 restricted range species in a taxonomic group
4. Geographically restricted assemblages of species – Criterion B3 – applied to ecoregion or bioregion-restricted assemblages
5. Aggregations of species – Criterion D1 – At least 1% of global population in aggregation (may be for breeding, migration etc)
6. Sites that are refugia in times of stress – Criterion D2 -at least 10% of the global population uses site
7. Sites important for larvae/propagation – Criterion D3 – produces larvae/juveniles that maintain at least 10% of global population
8. Irreplaceable sites – Criterion E – based on a complementarity-based assessment of species

Proportion of the global population can be assessed using various assessment parameters: mature individuals, Area of Occupancy, Extent of Suitable Habitat, Range, Localities and genetic diversity.

*Ecosystems:*

1. Threatened ecosystems – Criterion A2 – different thresholds for CR/EN (5% of global ecosystem extent) and VU (10% of global ecosystem extent)
2. Geographically restricted ecosystems – Criterion B4 – At least 20% of global ecosystem extent at site
3. Sites of outstanding ecological integrity – Criterion C. Applied to each ecoregion with a maximum of 2 sites per ecoregion.

**Data Access:**

More information about KBAs is available from the KBA Website which includes information on what KBAs are, how they are used, as well as tools to help apply the criteria. The website also provides a link to access the World Database of KBAs, where you can register and then query the data. A dashboard also allows users to obtain simple summaries of the data (use the filter (funnel shape) at top left to subset the data). The GIS data can also be requested from the website here – we ask users to request the data so we can monitor use of the data over time.

**Training materials**:

Online training courses to teach users how to apply the criteria area available in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese. These contain 8 modules with some practical exercises and an optional test at the end. They usually take about 10 hours to complete but can be returned to and continued if not taken all at once.

There are also some webinars at a KBA Community YouTube site, but given these are 1-1.5 hours long we would suggest you only look at these once you have worked through other material.

**Finding out more:**

There is a KBA Community that anyone interested in KBAs can sign up to. A newsletter is circulated every 3-4 months to update members on what is happening and a google groups listserve is available to ask questions.

For specific questions contact Andy Plumptre (aplumptre@keybiodiversityareas.org).