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## 8.6 Eswatini

### Protected and conserved areas in Eswatini<sup>49</sup>

Eswatini has 14 protected areas covering 738 km<sup>2</sup> of land (UNEP-WCMC & IUCN (2019g)).

The country's protected area estate has increased in a span of one year, from 3.9% in 2017 to 4.26% in 2018. Eswatini's protected area estate is comprised of very small and vulnerable protected areas poorly distributed across ecosystems. There is, thus, a need to expand the protected area estate, while strengthening protected area management competencies. This in turn will require the participation of a broad range of stakeholders, including private landholders, local communities and the tourism industry.

### Transboundary protected and conserved areas

Eswatini includes part of the Lubombo transboundary conservation area.

### Policy context

A comprehensive report on legislation and policy related to protected area management, governance, and equity was undertaken by the BIOPAMA programme. It identified 10 relevant laws and policies in Eswatini (Tessema, 2019).

### Key species<sup>50</sup>

For a small country, Eswatini has a rich floral and faunal diversity. Of the over 3,500 plant species that have been recorded, 12 are endemic. 89 species of vertebrates and 305 species of plants are listed in National Red Lists. 813 species of vertebrates have been recorded, with just one endemic, the major rock gecko (*Afroedura major*).

### Pressures and threats<sup>51</sup>

The main pressures behind the country's changing biodiversity include habitat loss and habitat change for increasing agriculture and for urbanisation and settlements, as well as wildfires, and invasive species. 80% of Eswatini is infested with at least one invasive plant species. Unsustainable harvesting of plant and animal species for medicinal purposes is a major threat to many species. Likewise, unsustainable harvesting of trees for charcoal production has had a major impact on habitat for many bird and mammal species.

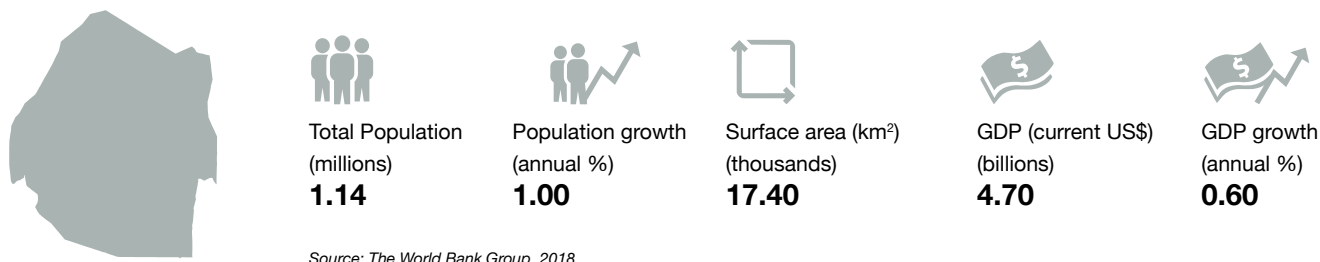
Climate change is an emerging pressure in Eswatini, likely to disrupt natural ecosystems across Eswatini. Indirect threats include economic, demographic, social-political, and cultural pressures. With over 40% of the population below the age of 25, it is anticipated that the population will double in the near future.

49 The section draws on information contained in Eswatini's Sixth National Report to the CBD (Kingdom of Eswatini, 2019).

50 The section draws on information contained in Eswatini's Fifth National Report to the CBD and its Second NBSAP (Eswatini Environment Authority, 2014; 2016).

51 The section draws on information contained in Eswatini's Fifth National Report to the CBD (Eswatini Environment Authority, 2014).

**Figure 8.11 Eswatini Summary**

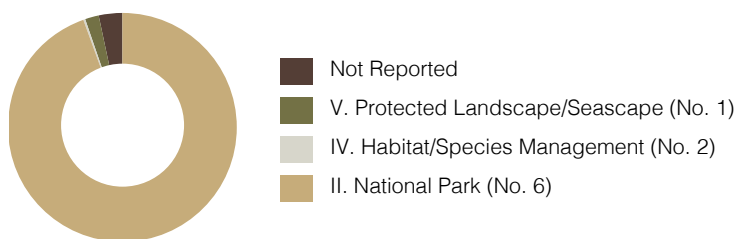


**Area Protected:**

**14 protected areas** covering **738 km<sup>2</sup>** of land

Source: UNEP-WCMC & IUCN, (2019g)

**Protected and conserved areas in Eswatini in IUCN Management Categories**



Source: UNEP-WCMC & IUCN (2019g).



**Rich floral and faunal diversity**



**3 500 plant species**  
**12 are endemic**



**813 species of vertebrates**

**Coverage of protected areas in Eswatini**

Type of protected area	Area protected or conserved*	Area protected or conserved**
Terrestrial and inland water	4.26%	3.90%

\* WDPA dataset

\*\* From National Report on Biodiversity

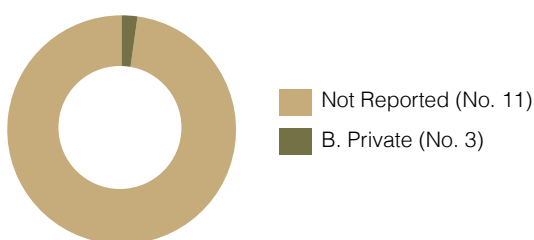
Source: Eswatini Environment Authority (2014); UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2019g).

**National designations of protected and conserved areas in Eswatini**

National designation	No.	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )
National Park	1	217
Nature Reserve	10	520

Source: UNEP-WCMC & IUCN (2019g).

**Protected and conserved areas in Eswatini in IUCN Governance Types**



Source: UNEP-WCMC & IUCN (2019g).

**Protected and conserved areas designated as global sites of importance in Eswatini**

Global designation	No. of sites
Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites)	3

Source: Ramsar (2019); UNESCO (2019a, 2019b)

**Priority areas for conservation**



**3 sites**  
Important Bird & Biodiversity Areas



**3 sites**  
Key Biodiversity Areas

Source: BirdLife International (2019b, 2019c).

**Figure 8.12 Eswatini protected areas**



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