

OP 10: Biodiversity

1-2 points available

Rationale

This credit recognizes institutions that have a biodiversity management strategy designed to identify vulnerable ecosystems and species on campus and prevent, manage, and/or remediate damage to natural habitats and sensitive areas. Identifying and protecting the integrity of natural ecosystems can enhance the surrounding environment and improve the quality of campus and community life.

Applicability

This credit applies to all institutions with managed grounds comprising one or more percent of the total area of the campus.

Criteria

Institution has conducted an assessment to identify:

- *Endangered and vulnerable species* (including migratory species) with habitats on land owned or managed by the institution;
AND/OR
- *Areas of biodiversity importance* on land owned or managed by the institution.

The institution has plans or programs in place to protect or positively affect the species, habitats, and/or ecosystems identified.

Assessments conducted and programs adopted by other entities (e.g., government, university system, or NGO) may count for this credit as long as the assessments and programs apply to and are followed by the institution.

Scoring

This credit is weighted more heavily for institutions that own or manage land that includes or is adjacent to any of the following:

- Legally *protected areas* (e.g., IUCN Category I-VI)
- Internationally recognized areas (e.g., World Heritage, Ramsar, Natura 2000)
- Priority sites for biodiversity (e.g., Key Biodiversity Areas, Alliance for Zero Extinction sites)
- Regions of conservation importance (e.g., Endemic Bird Areas, Biodiversity Hotspots, High Biodiversity Wilderness Areas)

2 points are available for this credit if the institution owns or manages land that includes or is adjacent to any of the above. 1 point is available for this credit for all other institutions. Please note that users do not have to calculate the number of points available themselves; points available will be calculated automatically when the relevant information is reported in the online Reporting Tool.

An institution earns the maximum points available for this credit by identifying endangered and vulnerable species AND areas of biodiversity importance. Plans or programs to protect or positively affect any species, habitats, and/or ecosystems identified are required to earn any points for the credit. Partial points are available for institutions that conduct an assessment to identify endangered and vulnerable species OR areas of biodiversity importance, but not both. For example, an institution that has identified areas of biodiversity importance, but not endangered and vulnerable species earns half of the points available for this credit.

Reporting Fields

Required

- ☐ Does the institution own or manage land that includes or is adjacent to legally protected areas, internationally recognized areas, priority sites for biodiversity, or regions of conservation importance?
If yes, provide:
 - A brief description of the legally protected areas, internationally recognized areas, priority sites for biodiversity, and/or regions of conservation importance
 - ☐ Has the institution conducted an assessment to identify endangered and vulnerable species (including migratory species) with habitats on land owned or managed by the institution?
If yes, provide:
 - A list of endangered and vulnerable species with habitats on land owned or managed by the institution, by level of extinction risk (Critically endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable, Near threatened, Least concern)
 - ☐ Has the institution conducted an assessment to identify areas of biodiversity importance on land owned or managed by the institution?
If yes, provide:
 - A brief description of areas of biodiversity importance on land owned or managed by the institution
- If yes to either of the above, provide:
- The methodologies used to identify endangered and vulnerable species and/or areas of biodiversity importance and any ongoing assessment and monitoring mechanisms
 - A brief description of the scope of the assessment(s) (Include any areas within the institutional boundary that were excluded.)
 - A brief description of the plans or programs in place to protect or positively affect identified species, habitats, and/or ecosystems

Optional

- ☐ Estimated percentage of areas of biodiversity importance that are also *protected areas* (0-100)
- ☐ Website URL where information about the institution's biodiversity initiatives is available
- ☐ Additional documentation to support the submission (upload)
- ☐ Data source(s) and notes about the submission
- ☐ Contact information for a responsible party (an employee who can respond to questions regarding the data once it is submitted and available to the public)

Measurement

Timeframe

Report on current programs and the most recent assessment(s) completed or updated within the three years prior to the anticipated date of submission.

Sampling and Data Standards

An institution may identify habitats and/or areas of biodiversity importance using any methodology developed by academics, a government body, or an NGO. Publicly accessible examples include the [Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool \(IBAT\) for Research & Conservation Planning](#) and the U.S. [Information, Planning, and Conservation \(IPaC\)](#) decision support system.

As a best practice, an institution should include in its assessment(s) all land that is owned or managed by the institution, but it is not required. Any areas within the STARS institutional boundary that are excluded from the assessment(s), however, should be documented in the appropriate reporting field.

Standards and Terms

Areas of biodiversity importance

Consistent with UNEP-WCMC, areas of biodiversity importance include ecosystems and habitat types that have unique or significant value to plant and/or animal species, are at risk of disappearing or being degraded, and/or are of cultural significance. The nomenclature used to describe such areas varies by context and may include, for example, environmentally sensitive areas, local biodiversity sites, and other biodiversity designations developed by governments, academics, or NGOs in order to identify areas of biodiversity importance or areas where biodiversity is threatened, as a means to focus attention and resources on their conservation.

Endangered and vulnerable species

Endangered and vulnerable species include, at minimum, [International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources \(IUCN\) Red List](#) and national conservation list species at the following levels of extinction risk: Critically endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable, Near threatened, Least concern.

Protected areas

Consistent with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN):

A protected area is a clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values. (IUCN Definition 2008)

Protected areas include areas managed mainly for:

- I. Strict protection [Ia) Strict nature reserve and Ib) Wilderness area]
- II. Ecosystem conservation and protection (i.e., National park)
- III. Conservation of natural features (i.e., Natural monument)
- IV. Conservation through active management (i.e., Habitat/species management area)
- V. Landscape/seascape conservation and recreation (i.e., Protected landscape/seascape)
- VI. Sustainable use of natural resources (i.e., Managed resource protected area)