



Protecting the Wild: Parks and Wilderness, the Foundation for Conservation

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Protected natural areas have historically been the primary tool of conservationists to conserve land and wildlife. These parks and reserves are set apart to forever remain in contrast to those places where human activities, technologies, and developments prevail. But even as the biodiversity crisis accelerates, a growing number of voices are suggesting that protected areas are passé. Conservation, they argue, should instead focus on lands managed for human use—working landscapes—and abandon the goal of preventing human-caused extinctions in favor of maintaining ecosystem services to support people. If such arguments take hold, we risk losing support for the unique qualities and values of wild, undeveloped nature.

Protecting the Wild offers a spirited argument for the robust protection of the natural world. In it, experts from five continents reaffirm that parks, wilderness areas, and other reserves are an indispensable—albeit insufficient—means to sustain species, subspecies, key habitats, ecological processes, and evolutionary potential. Using case studies from around the globe, they present evidence that terrestrial and marine protected areas are crucial for biodiversity and human well-being alike, vital to countering anthropogenic extinctions and climate change.

A companion volume to *Keeping the Wild: Against the Domestication of Earth*, *Protecting the Wild* provides a necessary addition to the conversation about the future of conservation in the so-called Anthropocene, one that will be useful for academics, policymakers, and conservation practitioners at all levels, from local land trusts to international NGOs.

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