

# Factsheet: THE IPA DATABASE

**What is it?** The Important Plant Areas (IPA) Database is a web-based database that holds information on the location of sites, the species and habitats contained by those sites and information on threats, land-use and management in relation to each site. The database is managed by the IPA Secretariat at Plantlife International.

**Where is it?** On the web at <http://www.plantlifeipa.org>

**Who can use it?** All IPA partners can view all of the data on this database but can only enter and manipulate data that refers to sites in their own country. An 'IPA partner' is an organisation that is currently leading a national IPA project that is recognised by the IPA Secretariat, and has signed a data sharing agreement with Plantlife International. Each partner needs a unique log in to access the site.

## Database development

Currently there are 8 IPA partners and they are all from Central and Eastern European countries. As IPA Projects develop beyond Europe, Plantlife hopes to work with new partners to expand the database so that it can hold information on IPAs from around the World, in the same way that BirdLife International database holds information on Important Bird Areas (IBAs) around the World.

The database has been developed with considerable help from BirdLife International, for which Plantlife is very grateful. The development team have made the IBA and the IPA databases as compatible as possible so that in future it will be easy to compare information on IBAs and IPAs (for example threats to IBAs/IPAs and site overlap), this could prove to be a powerful tool for improving biodiversity conservation.

## Examples of what the IPA database can be used to show:

- No of IPAs protected by specific legislation in a region or country
- Percentage of unprotected IPAs
- Most unprotected threatened habitats and species in a country
- Major threats to IPAs in a country or region
- Factsheets on every IPA in a country
- IPAs with and without management schemes
- Where IPAs and IBAs coincide and where they do not
- Percentage of land covered by IPAs and their location

These are just some examples of information that can be used to prioritise conservation action on the best plant sites around the world; be that direct management, campaigning for policy change or providing information for land managers and sustainable land use planning.



# NEW PARTNERS & THE IPA DATABASE

Currently the database contains essential background data that is specific to the countries of Europe, for the application of the IPA criteria as developed for Europe. The background data needed from new partners will vary depending on whether these partners are from countries within Europe or beyond it. For example, IPA projects beyond Europe will use different criterion A species and Criterion B habitats, these will need to be incorporated into the background data in the database. All this is possible given sufficient resources! The cooperation between countries that is required for the regional development of IPA criteria will be an essential part of this process.

## a) Background data needs from new partners *within* Europe

1. List of sub-national geographical divisions in the country (e.g. Counties, regions or districts)
2. Types of recognised management plans
3. Biogeographic zones present in the country
4. List of nationally recognised protected areas
5. List of nationally occurring criterion A species divided into Ai, Aii, Aiii and Aiv species
6. List of threatened habitats (Habitats Directive and Bern Convention habitats) occurring in the country

## b) Background data needs from new partners *beyond* Europe

First, the following regional (or sub continental) background data will be needed, it will be dependent on discussions between all countries in the region that result in the development of agreed IPA criteria for that region.

- 1) List of **biogeographic zones** in the world region/sub continent. E.g. in Southern Africa this could be White's biome classification (1983), WWF ecoregions or a very large-scale vegetation classification.
- 2) A regionally accepted **habitat /vegetation classification** which will support the application of criterion B. When these do not exist, the Secretariat recommends a pragmatic approach where possible, based on existing classifications.
- 3) List of regionally accepted **threatened habitat or threatened vegetation types** these do not always exist and may be less relevant outside Europe particularly if Criterion B can be applied effectively.
- 4) List of **criterion A species** for the region

Once this information has been agreed and passed to the IPA Secretariat, each IPA partner country in the region must then provide the information listed above under a), as relevant to their world region or sub continent.

