



## **New Report and Partnership Highlight Need for Action on Asia's Protected Areas**

**Sydney, Australia, November 18, 2014:** Asia's protected areas were in the spotlight today at the IUCN World Parks Congress in Sydney, with the release of the first-ever Asia Protected Planet report - which highlights the urgent need for countries to accelerate their work on protected areas - and the official launch of the Asia Protected Areas Partnership.

The Asia Protected Planet report, authored by UNEP's World Conservation Monitoring Centre in partnership with IUCN and in collaboration with many other organizations, provides an in-depth assessment of the current state of protected areas in 24 Asian countries. The report reveals that the region is falling well short of achieving the various elements of the 2020 Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 on protected areas agreed in 2010 by the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The report shows that, while there has been significant progress over the past four years, only a handful of Asian countries will have at least 17% of their terrestrial area and inland waters covered by protected areas by 2020. According to the report, terrestrial protected areas covered 13.9% of the Asian region as of August 2014.

Protection of marine habitats is critically low, with just 1.8% of the seas within national jurisdiction (0-200 nautical miles) covered by protected areas and most marine ecoregions under-represented. For marine and coastal areas between 12 and 200 nautical miles, only 0.04% is currently under protected area management. Another important concern is the fact that the current protected area network does not include the most important areas for biodiversity, with just 16% of Important Bird Areas and Alliance for Zero Extinction sites completely covered. The report also found that there are major conservation challenges to overcome in the region. These include addressing urgent threats such as deforestation and illegal poaching, as well as assessing and improving protected area management effectiveness.

Against this backdrop, the announcement of a new partnership focusing on Asia's protected areas was particularly welcome news. The Asia Protected Areas Partnership will bring countries together to promote best practices, share lessons learned and develop innovative solutions to the region's conservation challenges. The partnership was initiated at the first-ever Asia Parks Congress held in Sendai Japan in November 2013, and is co-chaired by the Government of Japan as the first country co-chair and IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature.

"The Asia Protected Areas Partnership is a response to so many of the themes and challenges we have been discussing here at World Parks Congress – the need to recognize the important role that protected areas will play in sustainable development, the need to ensure effective and diverse governance mechanisms for these protected areas, and to work across borders in a collaborative and transparent way. I am very optimistic that the launch today will be the start of a new era in protected area management in Asia," said IUCN President Zhang Xinsheng.

Government agencies from five Asian countries have formally joined the partnership, namely Bangladesh, Japan, Nepal, Republic of Korea and Viet Nam; many other countries have provided expressions of interest, including Bhutan, Indonesia, Malaysia and China.

"It is clear from the findings of the Asia Protected Planet report that we need to take quick action to ensure that we are effectively protecting Asia's rich natural and cultural heritage before it is too late," said IUCN Asia Regional

Director Aban Marker Kabraji. "I am very pleased that so many countries have already committed to their participation in this important partnership, and look forward to welcoming more countries as full members, as we work to make this a partnership which is truly representative of the diversity of our region."

The development of the Asia Protected Areas Partnership is being generously supported by the Ministry of the Environment Japan and the Nagao Natural Environment Foundation. The production of the Asia Protected Planet report received the generous support of the Ministry of the Environment Japan and the Keidanren Nature Conservation Fund.

#### **About IUCN**

IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature, is the world's oldest and largest global environmental organization, with more than 1,200 government and NGO Members and almost 11,000 volunteer experts in some 160 countries. IUCN helps the world find pragmatic solutions to our most pressing environment and development challenges. IUCN's work focuses on valuing and conserving nature, ensuring effective and equitable governance of its use, and deploying nature-based solutions to global challenges in climate, food and development. IUCN supports scientific research, manages field projects all over the world, and brings governments, NGOs, the UN and companies together to develop policy, laws and best practice. [www.iucn.org](http://www.iucn.org)

#### **For more information:**

**Jane Lawton, Head, Asia Communications**

Local Mobile : +61 (0)401066353 [jane.lawton@iucn.org](mailto:jane.lawton@iucn.org)

**Scott Perkin, Head, Natural Resources Group, IUCN Asia**

Local Mobile: +61 (0)416552484 [scott.perkin@iucn.org](mailto:scott.perkin@iucn.org)

#### **Notes to Editors:**

The full text of the Asia Protected Planet report is available online at

<http://wcmc.io/AsiaProtectedPlanetReport2014>

The report assessed progress towards the achievement of elements of Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 in 24 selected countries in East Asia, South Asia and South-east Asia: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, Indonesia, Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Viet Nam.