

Nature Reserves

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Nature reserves are important areas for flora, fauna, and other physical and geological features that are protected to preserve their natural character. Most nature reserves are owned and managed by governments; however, some are owned and managed by private organizations or individuals. Approximately 15% of terrestrial and inland water areas are under different levels of protection, ranging from strict nature reserves to multiple land use areas. Nature reserves are set aside for universal human experience and offer social and religious benefits. Sites such as sacred groves and forests in India, Mt. Kailash in Tibet, Tambus in Fiji, and Navajo land in North America are examples of areas protected for religious reasons. In contemporary society, however, national parks are the most common form of nature reserves. These carry within them symbols and meaning for society. This entry discusses nature reserves' design, benefits, sustainability and challenges.