

OP 10: Biodiversity

1-2 points available

A. Credit 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.

B. Criteria

Institution conducts one or both of the following:

- An assessment to identify [endangered and vulnerable species](#) (including migratory species) with habitats on institution-owned or -managed land;
And/or
- An assessment to identify [environmentally sensitive areas](#) on institution-owned or -managed land.

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

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

C. Applicability

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

D. 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 available points for conducting an assessment or assessments to identify endangered and vulnerable species and/or environmentally sensitive areas and for having plans or programs in place to protect or positively affect any species, habitats and/or environmentally sensitive areas identified. Partial points are not available for this credit.

E. 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 (e.g., IUCN Category I-VI, World Heritage, Ramsar, Natura 2000, Key Biodiversity Areas, Alliance for Zero Extinction sites, Endemic Bird Areas, Biodiversity Hotspots, High Biodiversity Wilderness Areas)?

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 or assessments to identify endangered and vulnerable species (including migratory species) with habitats on institution-owned or –managed land?
- ☐ Has the institution conducted an assessment or assessments to identify environmentally sensitive areas on institution-owned or –managed land?

If yes to either of the above, provide:

- ☐ The methodologies used to identify endangered and vulnerable species and/or environmentally sensitive areas (including most recent year assessed) and any ongoing assessment and monitoring mechanisms
 - ☐ A brief description of identified species, habitats and/or environmentally sensitive areas
 - ☐ A brief description of plans or programs in place to protect or positively affect identified species, habitats and/or environmentally sensitive areas

Optional

- ☐ The website URL where information about the programs or initiatives is available
- ☐ Additional documentation to support the submission (upload)
- ☐ Data source(s) and notes about the submission
- ☐ Contact information for a responsible party (a staff member, faculty member, or administrator who can respond to questions regarding the data once it is submitted and available to the public)

F. 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

Institutions may identify legally protected areas, internationally recognized areas, priority sites for biodiversity, and regions of conservation importance using the [Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool \(IBAT\) for Research & Conservation Planning](#), the U.S. [Information, Planning, and Conservation \(IPaC\)](#) decision support system, or an equivalent resource or study.

G. Standards and Terms

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.

Environmentally sensitive areas

Consistent with the [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#), environmentally sensitive areas are defined as:

Those land or water areas containing ecosystems, possibly but not necessarily rare, that are sensitive to external stimuli which may disturb their balance, especially in an irreversible direction.

Environmentally sensitive areas include, but are not limited to:

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

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)