

ACCESS TO DATA ON KEY BIODIVERSITY AREAS

What are Key Biodiversity Areas?

Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) are 'sites contributing significantly to the global persistence of biodiversity'. Over 15,000 KBAs have been identified in virtually all countries worldwide and in terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems. There are many gaps however, especially for non-bird taxa, and efforts are underway through nationally led initiatives around the world to fill these gaps and identify the comprehensive baseline set of KBAs.

What data exist on Key Biodiversity Areas?

Data on KBAs are held in the World Database of Key Biodiversity Areas, which is managed by [BirdLife International](#) on behalf of the [KBA Partnership](#), comprising 13 of the world's leading conservation organisations. For each KBA, the database holds information on its name, location, spatial boundaries, size, coverage by protected areas, importance for biodiversity (e.g. the identify and populations of species of conservation concern for which the site has been identified as significant), habitats, threats, and actions, among others.

How can data on Key Biodiversity Areas be accessed?

Data on KBAs are presented on the KBA website at www.keybiodiversityareas.org. This website is being developed to improve and increase the information that is made available. For the subset of c.13,000 KBAs that also qualify as Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas, detailed site factsheets are available for each one on the [BirdLife International Data Zone](#), while further information on the subset of c.850 KBAs qualifying as Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE) sites is available on the [AZE website](#). Summaries of the number, distribution, biodiversity importance, condition and protected area coverage of KBAs in each country are available in 'Country Profiles' (alongside summaries of each country's protected areas and species) freely available in the [Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool](#). These are particularly useful for Governments, including for compiling national reports and national biodiversity strategies and action plans for the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis*, VU) in Masai Mara, Kenya © Robin Moore



How can data on Key Biodiversity Areas be downloaded?

KBA data downloads are freely available under standard [Terms and Conditions](#). To request the tabular or spatial data, simply fill in your name, organisation, email and purpose for which you wish to obtain the data in the online form [here](#). Hundreds of data requests are processed per year, with the data freely provided (subject to standard [Terms and Conditions](#)) to governments, non-governmental organisations, academics and the general public for a range of different purposes.

What about commercial use of data on Key Biodiversity Areas?

KBA data are also available through the [Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool \(IBAT\)](#). This tool allows any user to view and interrogate KBA data alongside information from the [World Database on Protected Areas](#) and the [IUCN Red List of Threatened Species](#). IBAT is a subscription-based service. Access to the first subscription level is free, with the higher-level, paid subscriptions and Pay As You Go options providing added-value services such as a World Bank Group risk report. IBAT subscribers include the International Olympic Committee, the World Bank Group, Shell, General Motors, and the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership, among many others.

Can I repost or redistribute data on Key Biodiversity Areas?

Both reposting (e.g. presenting KBA boundaries on third party websites) and redistribution (e.g. making KBA datasets downloadable from third party websites) are not permitted under the KBA Terms and Conditions. However, the KBA Partnership are happy to consider issuing Waivers to permit reposting of KBA boundaries on third party websites in the form of medium-resolution GeoTIFFs, with a link to direct users to the [KBA website](#) if they wish to obtain high resolution shapefiles or a geodatabase. The reasons for this are given below.

Why are there any terms and conditions on commercial use, reposting and redistribution?

In an ideal world, datasets like the KBA data would be treated as a global public good and would be sustainably financed accordingly. However, at present, the KBA data are made available under [Terms and Conditions](#) that were negotiated as part of the KBA Partnership Agreement, and the thousands of individuals and organisations working to generate and maintain KBA data at national levels make them available through the [World Database on Key Biodiversity Areas](#) on this understanding. The KBA Terms and conditions contain clauses about reposting, redistribution and commercial use for two broad reasons:

Firstly, given that KBAs play an important role in a number of decision-making contexts, the KBA Partnership is concerned that only the latest, most accurate and most comprehensive KBA data are provided to end-users. To avoid the risk of multiple and outdated versions being made available, redistribution of the KBA data on third party websites is not permitted, while reposting is managed through issuing Waivers to the Terms and conditions where appropriate.

Secondly, [one recent study](#) estimated that ongoing maintenance costs for the KBA dataset approach US\$1 million annually, and an additional US\$21 million is required to reach baseline coverage. The US\$100 million invested in generating the data to date has come largely from philanthropic sources. The KBA Partnership is keen that sustainable funding mechanisms are developed to ensure that this global public tool can be updated regularly and made available to everyone. One method that has been developed is to provide tailor-made analyses to companies through the [Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool](#). A charge is made for commercial use to access these analyses, which is generally at a lower rate than it would cost to hire a consultant to make the same analyses.