What is Critical Habitat Protection?

The Critical Habitat Protection indicator for the 2014 EPI measures the percentage of the key sites recognized by the Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE) that are located in protected areas.

The Alliance for Zero Extinction, a joint initiative of biodiversity conservation organizations from around the world, aims to prevent extinctions by identifying and safeguarding key sites, each of which is the last remaining refuge of one or more Endangered or Critically Endangered species.

What Qualifies as an AZE Site?

An AZE site should only be designated if it is the sole area where an EN or CR species occurs, contains the overwhelmingly significant known resident population (>95%) of the EN or CR species, or contains the overwhelmingly significant known population (>95%) for one life history segment (e.g., breeding or wintering) of the EN or CR species. The area must have a definable boundary within which the character of habitats, biological communities, and/or management issues have more in common with each other than they do with those in adjacent areas.

The AZE last updated its site list, totaling 587 sites and 920 species in 2010. The 2014 EPI uses the 2005 AZE sites to give countries time to establish protected areas and other conservation actions to protect these endangered species.

AZE scientists working in collaboration with an international network of experts identified 595 sites that must be effectively protected to prevent the extinction of 794 of the world’s most threatened species. Many sites contain more than one AZE “trigger species.”

How do we know?

The AZE 2005 sites and AZE 2010 sites are used to create a percentage, within a 1-km radius of a protected area, of the number of sites that fall within the protected area. If an AZE site is entirely within a protected area, we give its status as ‘protected.’

Environmental Performance Index

References