



STATE OF ONTARIO'S PROTECTED AREAS

Protected Area Summary

2021

State of Ontario's Protected Areas Indicator Report

Protected Area Summary

This indicator report assesses how much of Ontario is conserved through protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures.

Status



Status: Fair



Trend: No Change

Why it's important

Protected areas are a core component of biodiversity conservation strategies in Ontario and around the world. They serve to permanently protect ecosystems and significant natural and cultural heritage elements within defined regions. Effectively managed protected areas help stem the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services, provide safe habitat for species, maintain ecological processes and provide spaces for people to connect with nature.

We track changes in the protected areas system as a measure of Ontario's contribution to national and international biodiversity targets.

How we monitor

Our protected areas system includes areas of Ontario that are conserved under criteria developed by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and the Pathway to Canada Target 1 initiative.

These areas include:

- provincial protected areas (e.g., provincial parks, conservation reserves, wilderness areas)
- national protected areas (e.g., national parks, national marine conservation areas)
- areas identified as dedicated protected areas under the *Far North Act, 2010* by joint First Nation-Ontario planning teams
- privately protected areas (e.g., qualifying areas managed by land trusts, conservation authorities, universities, municipalities)

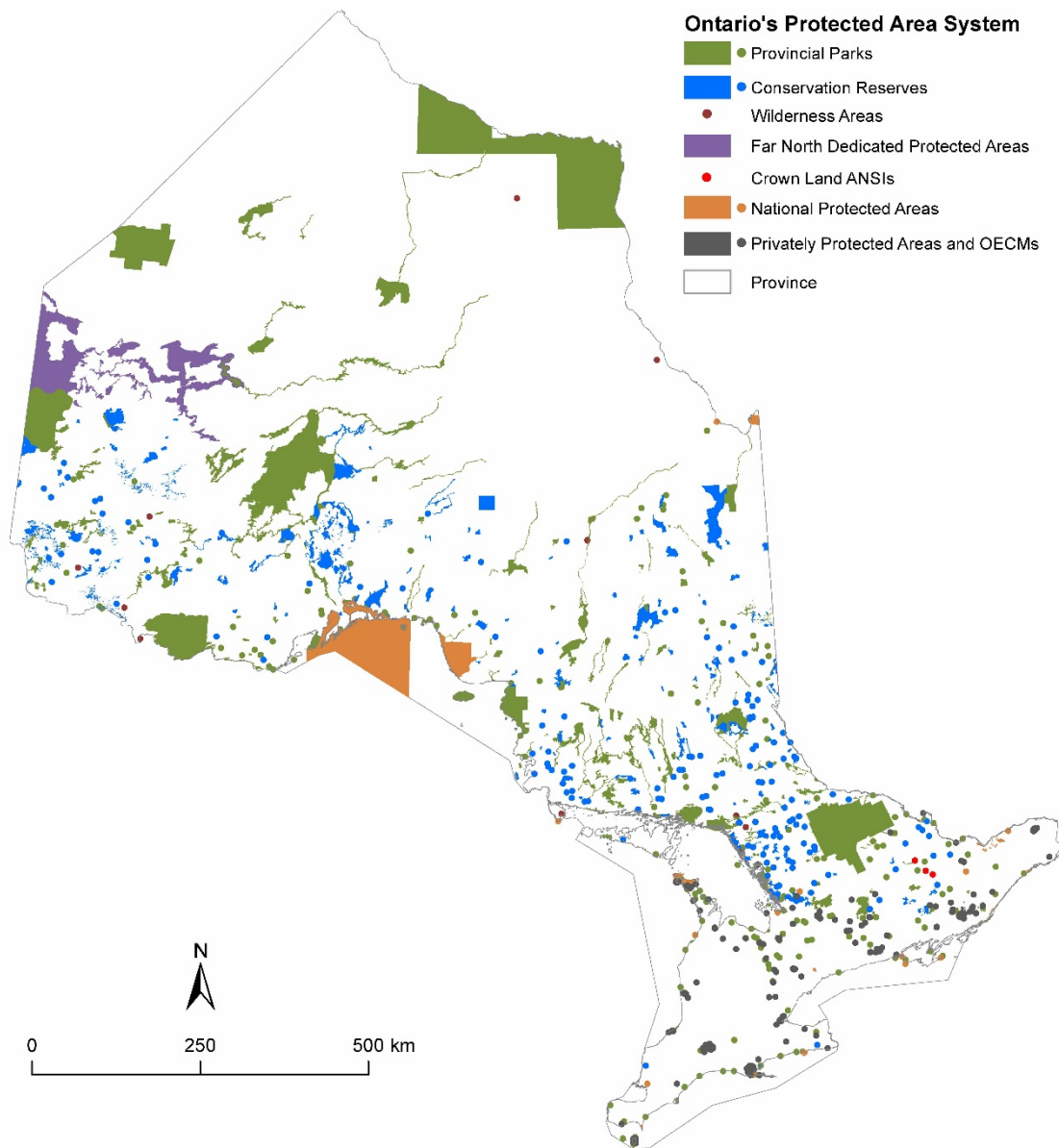
They also include other effective area-based conservation measures. These are areas not typically recognized as protected areas, but they are governed and managed in ways that conserve biodiversity for the long-term.

We monitor the number of protected areas in Ontario, their type and size as well as the percentage of the province that is protected.

State of Ontario's Protected Areas Indicator Report

Results

Map of Ontario's protected area system



Alt text: Map showing the protected area system in Ontario including the location and type of protected areas.

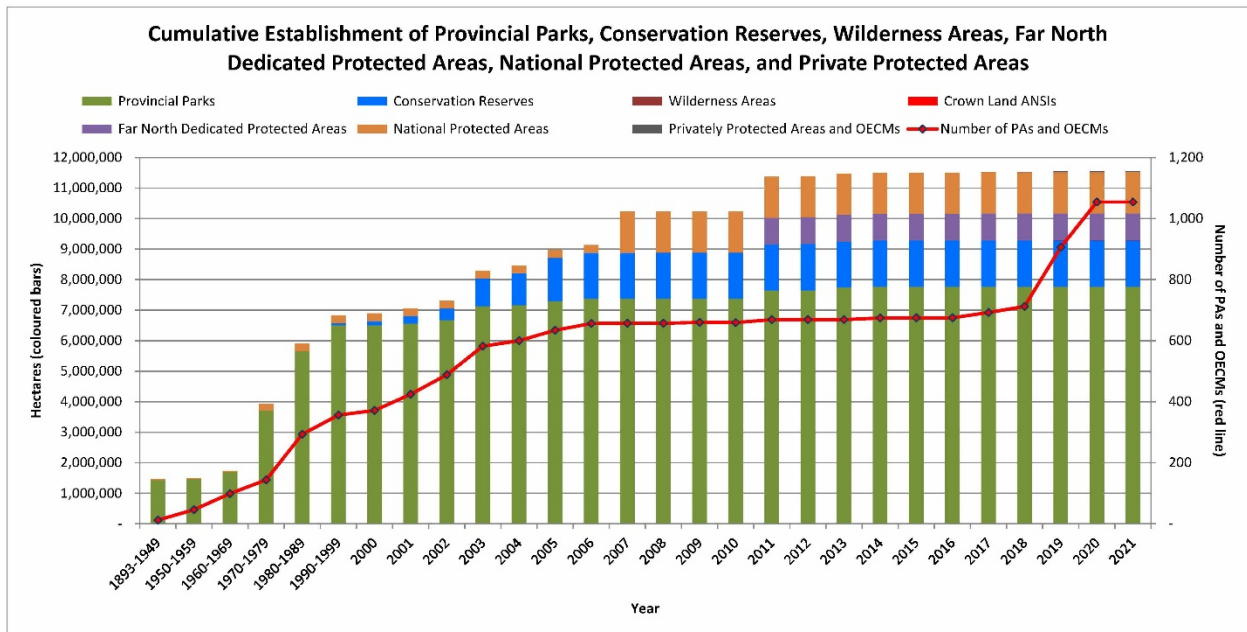
In Ontario, 10.72 per cent of the province is conserved through protected areas or other effective area-based conservation measures, covering a total area of approximately 11.6 million hectares of land and water.

This includes:

- 335 regulated provincial parks
- 295 regulated conservation reserves
- 5 regulated, dedicated protected areas in the Far North of Ontario
- 4 non-regulated, dedicated protected areas in the Far North of Ontario
- 11 wilderness areas
- 3 areas of natural and scientific interest
- 42 national protected areas
- 356 privately protected areas
- 3 other effective area-based conservation measures sites

State of Ontario's Protected Areas Indicator Report

Growth of the Protected Area System in Ontario



Alt text: Chart showing the growth in the number of hectares protected and number of protected areas making up the protected area system in Ontario.

The first provincial park in Ontario (Algonquin Provincial Park) was established in 1893. This helped to create a world class protected area system in Ontario.

Since that time, we have added parks, conservation reserves and other protected areas to expand the park system. Since 2011 we have added:

- 12 new provincial parks (totalling over 360,000 hectares) and one new conservation reserve (totalling over 17,000 hectares)
- Almost 27,000 hectares to existing provincial parks and conservation reserves

In addition, one national urban park, 356 privately protected areas and three other effective area-based conservation measures have also been added since 2011.

Provincial parks make up most of the protected areas by size (67 per cent) with conservation reserves (13 per cent) being the next biggest type of protected area.

Summary of Protected Areas in Ontario (2021)

Provincial Protected Areas	# of Areas	Hectares	% of Ontario
Regulated Provincial Park	335	7,421,847	6.884%
Regulated Conservation Reserve	295	1,515,687	1.406%
Dedicated Protected Area – Regulated under PPCRA	5	349,481	0.324%
Dedicated Protected Area – Non-regulated	4	879,970	0.816%
Wilderness Area	11	838	0.001%
Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (Crown Land)	3	3,948	0.004%
Total Provincial Protected Areas	653	10,171,771	9.434%

State of Ontario's Protected Areas Indicator Report

National Protected Areas	# of Areas	Hectares	% of Ontario
National Park	5	205,570	0.191%
National Urban Park	1	4,551	0.004%
National Marine Park	1	11,350	0.011%
National Marine Conservation Area	1	1,088,000	1.009%
National Wildlife Area	10	5,414	0.005%
Migratory Bird Sanctuary	8	31,880	0.030%
Total National Capital Commission Area	16	8,242	0.008%
Total National Protected Areas	42	1,355,008	1.257%

Privately Protected Areas	# of Areas	Hectares	% of Ontario
Total Privately Protected Areas	356	28,666	0.027%

Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measure (OECM)	# of Areas	Hectares	% of Ontario
Total Private OECM	3	3,837	0.004%

Cumulative Totals	# of Areas	Hectares	% of Ontario
Total area of province		107,817,392	
Total Protected Areas and OECMs in Ontario	1054	11,559,282	10.721%

Indicator last updated

April 2021

Data source(s)

Land Information Ontario (LIO)

Related links

[Ontario's parks and protected areas](#)

[Ontario Parks](#)