

# National parks throughout the world

By Encyclopaedia Britannica, adapted by Newsela staff on 09.18.17

Word Count **686**

Level **830L**



Yellowstone National Park was the world's first national park. It became a national park in 1872. That is more than 100 years ago! Photo from: National Park Service.

A national park is an area set aside by a country's government. Sometimes the government already owns the land. In other cases the government tries to purchase lands it wishes to make into a park. Many national parks are created to preserve the natural environment. Most of the landscapes, plants and animals in a national park are kept in their natural state. Some parks protect areas where important events in history occurred.

Some national parks do not allow visitors. In others, visitors must follow rules to keep the plants and animals from being hurt.

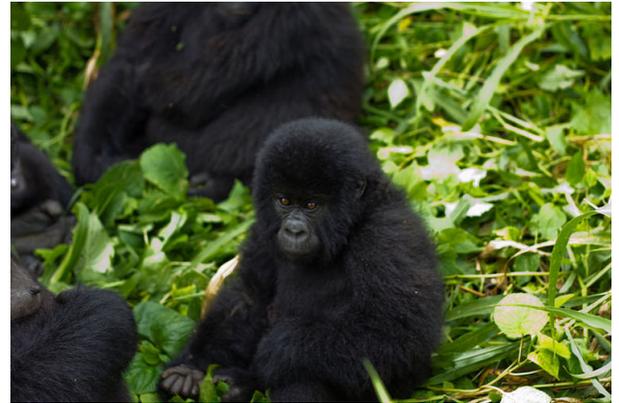
The world's first national park was Yellowstone National Park. It was established in the U.S. state of Wyoming in 1872. Many other parks have been established since then in the United States and around the world. In 1962 the first World Conference on National Parks brought together people from more than 60 nations. Many international groups have helped develop national parks around the world.

## Africa

Many national parks in Africa were created to protect animal life. Virunga National Park is one of these parks. It lies in the Virunga Mountains in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is Africa's oldest national park. Virunga protects mountain gorillas, okapis, elephants, lions and many kinds of rare birds.

Serengeti National Park in Tanzania is home to huge herds of animals. They include creatures such as wildebeests, gazelles and zebras. It is the only place in Africa where giant animal migrations still take place.

Kruger National Park is the largest national park in South Africa. It is home to lions, elephants and rhinoceroses. Kruger also preserves many archaeological treasures that are thousands of years old.



## Asia

Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park is in Japan. The centerpiece of the park is Mount Fuji, one of the most beautiful places in the country.

Keoladeo Ghana National Park is a bird sanctuary in India. It is home to more than 360 different kinds of birds. Also in India, the Bandhavgarh National Park has many Bengal tigers.

## Australia

Australia has more than 500 national parks. Royal National Park was established in 1879, making it the second national park in the world.

National parks are important to the Australian Aboriginal peoples because land is sacred to them. National parks protect native plants, animals and important Aboriginal sites. These sites include ancient rock engravings and artwork. They show how Aboriginal people lived in the past.



## Europe

In Great Britain there are 15 areas set aside as national parks. Cairngorms National Park in Scotland is the largest national park in Great Britain. It is home to some of Britain's threatened animals.

Snowdonia National Park is on the west coast of Wales. It is home to Mount Snowdon. At 3,560 feet, it is the highest mountain in Wales and England. Legend says that King Arthur fought a battle on Mount Snowdon, where he killed the giant Rhita Gawr.

Olympus National Park is located in Greece. The park is home to Mount Olympus, the tallest mountain in the country. It is associated with the 12 main gods of Greek mythology.

## North America

The United States has many parks with breathtaking scenery. Grand Canyon National Park in Arizona is one of the most famous. Yosemite National Park in California is also a popular tourist destination.

Canada set up its first national park in 1885. The park preserves the mineral hot



springs on the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains. Like the United States, Canada has many historical parks. They mark places such as military forts and trading posts.

### **South America**

The Torres del Paine National Park in Chile is one of the most famous national parks in South America. It is one of the most untouched places on the planet. Venezuela's Canaima National Park includes Angel Falls, the world's highest waterfalls.

## Quiz

1 Read the introduction [paragraphs 1-3].

Which sentence from the section shows HOW the government protects national parks?

- (A) In other cases the government tries to purchase lands it wishes to make into a park
- (B) Many national parks are created to preserve the natural environment.
- (C) In others, visitors must follow rules to keep the plants and animals from being hurt.
- (D) Many international groups have helped develop national parks around the world.

2 Read the selection below from the section "Australia."

*National parks are important to the Australian Aboriginal peoples because land is sacred to them. National parks protect native plants, animals and important Aboriginal sites. These sites include ancient rock engravings and artwork. They show how Aboriginal people lived in the past.*

Which of the following is the MOST accurate explanation of this paragraph?

- (A) Australian Aboriginal people communicate using art and rock engravings.
- (B) The main goal of national parks in Australia is to keep Aboriginal peoples safe.
- (C) National parks are important for protecting human history as well as the environment.
- (D) Protecting the environment is not an important part of creating parks in Australia.

3 Which of the following are two MAIN ideas from the article?

- (A) National parks help protect nature; there are many unique national parks around the world.
- (B) African national parks have many special animals; many countries have national parks with beautiful scenery.
- (C) Many national parks protect historical places; parks in the United States are popular with tourists.
- (D) National parks protect animals and plants; many unique animals live in national parks in Africa.

4 Which sentence from the article would be MOST important to include in a summary of the article?

- (A) Many national parks in Africa were created to protect animal life.
- (B) Also in India, the Bandhavgarh National Park has many Bengal tigers.
- (C) The park is home to Mount Olympus, the tallest mountain in the country.
- (D) Yosemite National Park in California is also a popular tourist destination.