

# First Nations-led Indigenous Protected & Conserved Areas (IPCAs)



## What are First Nations-led IPCAs?

First Nations-led IPCAs are First Nations-led, community-driven initiatives that protect our lands and waters for future generations

They are grounded in First Nations law, culture, language, governance, and Knowledge, reflecting our deep and enduring connections to all our relations

They carry forward holistic First Nations practices maintained over millennia and affirm First Nations Inherent Rights and responsibilities

## They share three essential elements:

- 1 Led by First Nations
- 2 Protect lands and waters for future generations
- 3 Elevate First Nations and responsibilities <sup>1</sup>



## Why are IPCAs important to First Nations?

Protect our lands, waters, wildlife, plants, food, and medicines.

Help fight climate change by protecting nature and places that store carbon.

Support community well-being, food security, and local economies.

Uphold First Nations Rights, laws, governance, and jurisdiction.

Create jobs and training opportunities. For example, Guardian programs and tourism.

Strengthen relationships with land, water, and each other.

Support land-based learning, healing, and language revitalization.

## What IPCAs are not

IPCAs are **not** led or determined by Canadian governments.

IPCAs do **not** automatically prohibit fishing.

## Did you know?

There are over 200 First Nations Guardian programs across Turtle Island. Guardians are trained experts who help care for the lands and waters. <sup>2</sup>

Guardian programs created ~1,500 jobs, building strong economies and communities. <sup>2</sup>

Marine IPCAs can help protect First Nations' fishing rights.

<sup>1</sup> Indigenous Circle of Experts. 2018. We Rise Together. [https://www.icce-caec.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/PA234-ICE\\_Report\\_2018\\_Mar\\_22\\_web.pdf](https://www.icce-caec.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/PA234-ICE_Report_2018_Mar_22_web.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Environment Climate Change Canada. 2025. Indigenous Guardians. <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/environmental-funding/indigenous-guardians.html>