

# Evaluating the impacts of protected areas on human well-being across the developing world

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## Abstract

Protected areas (PAs) are fundamental for biodiversity conservation, yet their impacts on nearby residents are contested. We synthesized environmental and socioeconomic conditions of >87,000 children in >60,000 households situated either near or far from >600 PAs within 34 developing countries. We used quasi-experimental hierarchical regression to isolate the impact of living near a PA on several aspects of human well-being. Households near PAs with tourism also had higher wealth levels (by 17%) and a lower likelihood of poverty (by 16%) than similar households living far from PAs. Children under 5 years old living near multiple-use PAs with tourism also had higher height-for-age scores (by 10%) and were less likely to be stunted (by 13%) than similar children living far from PAs. For the largest and most comprehensive socioeconomic-environmental dataset yet assembled, we found no evidence of negative PA impacts and consistent statistical evidence to suggest PAs can positively affect human well-being.

Read the article in [Science Advances](#) [1].

## Associated Project:

[Evaluating relationships among human health & welfare, ecological condition & natural resource governance](#) [2]

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