

THE PROTECTION OF CONSERVATION AREAS FROM THE PERSPEKTIVE OF ISLAMIC TEACHINGS AND ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

Milda Apriliana

Universitas Islam Negeri Alauddin Makassar, Gowa.

Mildaapriliana28@gmail.com

ABSTRACT; *The increasing concern over environmental degradation highlights the urgent need to strengthen the protection of conservation areas as vital parts of the ecosystem. This article aims to examine how Islamic perspectives and Indonesia's national legal framework address and regulate the protection of conservation areas. This study uses a qualitative approach through literature analysis of Islamic legal sources and national regulations, particularly Law No. 5 of 1990 and Law No. 32 of 2009. The findings reveal that Islam regards environmental preservation as a moral and spiritual responsibility of humans as stewards (khalifah) on Earth. Meanwhile, national law provides a technical and formal regulatory framework. Integrating religious values with positive legal instruments serves as an effective strategy for promoting sustainable conservation area protection. Case studies of religious-based community participation demonstrate that spiritual approaches contribute to enhancing ecological awareness at the grassroots level.*

Keywords: Conservation, Environment; Islam; Environmental Law; Area Protection

INTRODUCTION

The ongoing environmental crisis has become a global concern with profound consequences for the survival of humans and other living beings. Issues such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and ecosystem degradation clearly reflect the adverse impacts of environmentally irresponsible human activities. One strategic approach to mitigating these problems is by strengthening the protection of conservation areas, including national parks, protected forests, wildlife reserves, and other ecologically significant regions.

As highlighted in the previous discussion, conservation areas not only maintain ecological balance but also ensure the sustainability of biological natural resources. In the Indonesian context, this role is formally reinforced through Law No. 5 of 1990 concerning the Conservation of Living Natural Resources and Their Ecosystems.¹ This law emphasizes the importance of integrated and sustainable conservation efforts.

In addition, Law Number 32 of 2009 concerning Environmental Protection and Management provides an additional legal foundation that strengthens the position of conservation areas as part of the national environmental protection strategy. This law adopts key principles such as the precautionary principle, public participation, and the shared responsibility of the state and society in safeguarding the environment.²

1 Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 5 Tahun 1990 tentang Konservasi Sumber Daya Alam Hayati dan Ekosistemnya, *Lembaran Negara Republik Indonesia Tahun 1990 Nomor 49*

2 Kementerian Lingkungan Hidup dan Kehutanan (KLHK), *Laporan Status Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia Tahun 2020* (Jakarta: KLHK, 2020),

https://perpustakaan.menlhk.go.id/cadmin/uploads/1660266669_d6a273da85.pdf.

Although various legal instruments regulating environmental protection and conservation areas have been established, their implementation in the field still faces significant challenges. Conservation areas remain threatened by destructive human activities such as illegal encroachment, logging, land conversion for commercial purposes, and industrial practices that ignore sustainability principles. This situation reflects a clear gap between the ideal regulations on paper and the actual management of the environment in various regions, resulting in serious consequences for ecological sustainability and community livelihoods.³ A similar condition also occurs in the agrarian sector, where although the Basic Agrarian Law (UUPA) Number 5 of 1960 has become a comprehensive legal foundation, its implementation still encounters obstacles in ensuring legal certainty and social justice. The imbalance between legal certainty and social justice in land management, coupled with overlapping regulations and weak protection of indigenous peoples' rights, highlights a wide gap between ideal legal norms and the realities of implementation in the field. Both conditions affirm that without responsive and inclusive legal reform, in both environmental and agrarian sectors, ecological sustainability and social justice will remain under threat.⁴

In the cultural and spiritual context of Indonesian society, which is predominantly Muslim, environmental conservation efforts should take into account religious values as ethical and normative foundations. Islam, as a holistic religion, not only regulates ritual aspects and the vertical relationship between humans and God (*ḥabl min Allāh*), but also emphasizes the importance of horizontal relationships between humans, other living beings, and the natural world (*ḥabl min al-‘ālam*). Therefore, Islamic principles such as *tawāzun* (balance), *khalīfah* (the responsibility of humans as stewards of the Earth), and *amānah* (trust to safeguard God's creation) can serve as a foundation for developing conservation strategies that are not only legally formal but also deeply rooted in the moral and spiritual consciousness of the community. The concept of *rahmatan li al-‘ālamīn* promoted by Islam encompasses compassion for all of creation, including nature.⁵

The Qur'an explicitly emphasizes the importance of maintaining environmental balance. In Surah Ar-Rahman, verses 7–9, Allah commands humankind to uphold the balance (*mīzān*) and not to transgress the limits.⁶

Environmental destruction is even described as a consequence of human actions in Surah Ar-Rum, verse 41. This indicates that the protection of nature holds a profound spiritual dimension within Islamic teachings.

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ also set an example in environmental preservation, notably through the implementation of the *ḥimā* concept designated areas set aside as protected zones for specific animals and plants. Substantively, this concept closely resembles modern conservation areas.⁷ In numerous hadith narrations, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ showed great concern for environmental sustainability, including encouragement to plant trees and strong

3 Fachruddin M. Mangunjaya, *Etika Lingkungan Hidup dalam Islam* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2005), 42.

4 Eril Boli and Muh Nur Hidayat M, "Agrarian Law Reform in Indonesia : Between Legal Certainty and Social Justice," *Indonesian Civil Law Review (ICLR)* 1, no. 1 (2025): 53–68, <https://ejournal.mgpublishing.co.id/index.php/iclr/article/view/5/6>.

5 M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al-Misbah*, Vol. 1 (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002), 101.

6 Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Manusia dan Alam: Krisis Ekologi dan Tanggung Jawab Manusia Modern*, terj. (Bandung: Mizan, 1996), 15–20.

7 Zuhairi Misrawi. *Al-Qur'an untuk Lingkungan Hidup*. Jakarta: The Wahid Institute, 2010.

prohibitions against acts of environmental destruction.⁸ Even in extreme situations such as warfare, the Prophet ﷺ emphasized environmental ethics by prohibiting the cutting down of trees without valid reason, the destruction of crops, and the pollution of water sources. One hadith states, “*If the Day of Judgment comes while one of you is holding a date palm seedling, and if he is able to plant it before it takes place, then let him plant it*” (Narrated by Ahmad). This hadith illustrates the profound importance of environmental preservation even in the most critical of circumstances. Such ecological consciousness reflects the Islamic teaching that encourages humans to maintain harmony with nature as an integral part of their devotion and servitude to Allah SWT.

The obligation to protect the environment in Islam is further reinforced by the designation of humans as *khalīfah* (stewards) on Earth, as stated in Surah AlBaqarah, verse 30. In this role, humans bear a moral responsibility to care for, preserve, and avoid excessive exploitation of nature. Unrestrained exploitation of the environment constitutes a betrayal of the trust (*amānah*) entrusted by Allah SWT. Thus, the Islamic perspective provides a strong normative and ethical foundation for the protection of conservation areas. When these Islamic values are integrated with the existing national legal framework, a more holistic approach to environmental preservation can be achieved. The synergy between legal and spiritual approaches has the potential to enhance public awareness and commitment to conservation efforts.⁹

Despite the existence of legal instruments and the recognition of Islamic ethical foundations, there remains a significant gap in scholarly studies that systematically connect the principles of Islamic environmental ethics with the implementation of Indonesian environmental law in the protection of conservation areas. This gap reflects the need for an integrative analysis that bridges normative, legal, and practical dimensions.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the alignment between Islamic ethical principles and Indonesian environmental law in the protection of conservation areas, with the objective of formulating a more integrative and holistic framework for sustainable environmental governance.

Theoretically, this study employs the perspective of Islamic environmental ethics and legal pluralism as analytical frameworks. Islamic environmental ethics highlight concepts such as *khalīfah*, *amānah*, and *tawāzun*, while legal pluralism provides a lens to understand the interaction between state law and religious values in environmental governance.

Based on the above explanation, it is important to further examine how Islamic values align with the provisions of environmental law, particularly in the context of conservation area protection. This study is expected to offer both theoretical and practical contributions in fostering synergy between religious law and state law in the effort to protect the environment in a sustainable manner.

Research Methods

This research employs a normative qualitative approach using the library research method. The normative approach is applied to examine legal documents and religious texts related to the protection of conservation areas, both from the perspective of Islamic teachings and national legislation. Primary data is drawn from relevant Qur’anic verses, hadiths, and statutory laws

⁸ Fachruddin M. Mangunjaya, *Etika Lingkungan Hidup dalam Islam* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2005), 42.

⁹ Effendy, Bahtiar. *Islam dan Negara*. Jakarta: Paramadina, 2002.

<https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/bitstream/123456789/32843/1/ISLAM%20DAN%20NEGARA.pdf>

such as Law No. 5 of 1990 and Law No. 32 of 2009. Meanwhile, secondary data is sourced from tafsir books, literature on Islamic environmental jurisprudence, academic journals, and institutional reports.¹⁰

The data collection technique is carried out through document analysis, which involves examining textual content to interpret the normative values of Islam and the provisions of positive law related to environmental protection. This analysis employs both content analysis and comparative approaches to identify points of convergence between Islamic teachings and Indonesia's environmental legal policies. Data validity is maintained through source triangulation by comparing various authoritative references from both legal and theological perspectives.¹¹ This method is chosen because it is well-suited for explaining moral and normative concepts that are not quantitative in nature but require a deep understanding of both the texts and their contexts.

Discussion

Islamic Perspective on Conservation Area

This section is the most important section of your article. Contains the results of the object of study and should be clear and concise¹².written with time new Roman font 12 pt

In Islamic teachings, environmental preservation including the protection of conservation areas is part of the spiritual and social responsibility of humans as *khalīfah* (stewards or leaders) on Earth. Allah has appointed humankind as *khalīfah* to manage and protect His creation with balance and justice, as stated in Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 30. In this role, humans are not granted absolute authority over nature, but are entrusted with its care as a divine *amānah* (trust) from the Creator. Islamic environmental ethics are reinforced by the prohibition of spreading corruption (*fasād*) on Earth. Allah says:

قَالَ إِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنظَرِينَ

Translation:

"Do not cause corruption on the earth after it has been set in order..."
(*Qur'an, Surah Al-A'raf* [7]: 56)¹³

This verse clearly warns against destructive behavior that disturbs the ecological balance and integrity of the Earth. The directive to avoid *fasād* is a recurring theme in the Qur'an, affirming that environmental harm is not only a physical violation but also a moral and spiritual transgression. Hence, environmental conservation in Islam is not merely an ecological concern, but a fundamental part of fulfilling one's duty as a servant and trustee of God.

This verse emphasizes that ecological stability and balance are integral parts of Allah's perfect system of creation and must not be disrupted by human hands. Such balance reflects the divine order of the universe, in which every creature and element of nature has its own function and role in maintaining the harmony of creation. In Surah Ar-Rahman, verses 7–8, Allah states "And He has raised the heaven and established the balance, so that you do not transgress within the balance." (*Qur'an, Surah Ar-Rahman* [55]: 7–8)

This verse affirms that the establishment of balance (*al-mīzān*) is a universal principle embedded in the creation of the cosmos, and that humans are commanded to uphold it, not violate it. Therefore, any form of excessive exploitation of natural resources, environmental

10 Soekanto, Soerjono. *Pengantar Penelitian Hukum*. Jakarta: UI Press, 1986.

<https://digilib.uinkhas.ac.id/12273/1/Buku%20Pengantar%20Metodologi%20Penelitian%20HukumNur%20Soli%20kin%20%281%29%20%281%29.pdf>

11 Lexy J. Moleong, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif* (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2017),

<https://digilib.ub.ac.id/opac/detail-opac?id=140634>.

¹² quote using footnote

¹³ QS. Al-A'raf, 7:56.

pollution, or actions that damage ecosystems constitutes a violation of the Divine decree that governs the order and sustainability of life on Earth. Environmental stewardship, from the Islamic perspective, is thus both a moral and theological imperative.

In practice, since the time of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, Islam has introduced conservation concepts rooted in social justice and ecosystem protection through the systems of *ḥimā* and *ḥarīm*. *Ḥimā* refers to designated protected areas where the use of certain natural resources such as grazing lands or forests is restricted for the collective benefit, particularly for the welfare of livestock and wildlife. Meanwhile, *ḥarīm* denotes buffer zones surrounding vital resources such as springs, rivers, or other ecologically sensitive areas, which are safeguarded from arbitrary exploitation. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ himself established several areas as *ḥimā*, one of which was near Madinah, intended for public interest and environmental protection. These early conservation practices demonstrate that Islam offers a practical and principled framework for sustainable resource management that aligns ecological responsibility with communal welfare.¹⁴

Conservation in Islam is not merely a matter of ecological ethics; it is also a form of theological consciousness that nature represents *āyāt kauniyyah* signs of Allah's power and majesty. According to Seyyed Hossein Nasr (1996), in the Islamic cosmological view, nature is not simply a resource to be exploited, but a manifestation of divine beauty and will that deserves reverence, just as sacred places of worship are revered. Therefore, harming the environment is not only a physical transgression but also a spiritual violation that damages the relationship between humans and their Creator.¹⁵

Within the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* (the objectives of Islamic law), environmental protection including the preservation of conservation areas can be linked to the protection of life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*), wealth (*ḥifẓ al-māl*), and progeny (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*). Conservation areas serve to sustain life, prevent ecological disasters, and safeguard natural resources that are essential for the survival and well-being of both present and future generations. This alignment shows that environmental conservation is not only compatible with Islamic legal objectives but also essential for fulfilling them.¹⁶ Ecologically, these areas function as the last stronghold for biodiversity, maintaining ecosystem balance, and serving as a life-support system for humanity in the long term. From a sharia perspective, the preservation of nature and all its contents is a direct manifestation of the human responsibility as *khalīfah* (steward) on Earth, who is commanded to protect and not damage Allah's creation. Therefore, the preservation of conservation areas is not merely an ecological obligation, but also a moral and religious trust (*amānah*) within the teachings of Islam.

Present time, Islamic values related to conservation are increasingly relevant in light of various global environmental challenges such as deforestation, water crises, pollution, and climate change. In 2015, a group of Muslim scholars and intellectuals issued the *Islamic Declaration on Global Climate Change*, emphasizing that the climate crisis constitutes a violation of the principles of *tawḥīd* (divine unity), *mīzān* (balance), and *khalīfah* (human stewardship over the Earth). The declaration calls upon Muslims to return to the principles of sustainability, ecological justice, and environmentally responsible living.¹⁷

¹⁴ Richard C. Foltz, *Animals in Islamic Tradition and Muslim Cultures* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006), 84.

¹⁵ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Manusia dan Alam: Krisis Ekologi dan Tanggung Jawab Manusia Modern*, terj. (Bandung: Mizan, 1996), 15–20.

¹⁶ Mangunjaya, *Etika Lingkungan Hidup dalam Islam*, 42.

¹⁷ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Manusia dan Alam: Krisis Ekologi dan Tanggung Jawab Manusia Modern*, terj. (Bandung: Mizan, 1996), 15–20.

The concept of conservation in Islam is not limited to the physical protection of nature, but also encompasses educational and transformational dimensions aimed at shaping the collective consciousness of the Muslim community. Educating the public to develop environmental awareness is considered a religious responsibility, as preserving Allah's creation is a form of worship and a manifestation of honoring the trust of stewardship (*khalīfah*). In this context, scholars, educators, and religious counselors play a strategic role as agents of change who can convey Islamic ecological messages through various means such as *da'wah* by speech (*da'wah bil-lisān*), by action (*da'wah bil-hāl*), formal and non-formal education, and policy advocacy grounded in the values of ecological justice. Through these approaches, Islamic values can be transformed into moral awareness and ecological attitudes that are embedded in the daily behavior of Muslims.¹⁸

Moreover, integrating Islamic principles into the management of conservation areas provides a strong spiritual foundation for a sustainable environmental movement. Core principles such as *tawhīd* (divine unity), *khalīfah* (human stewardship as God's representative), *amānah* (responsibility), and *maṣlahah* (public benefit) serve as ethical and normative frameworks guiding humans to act justly toward nature.¹⁹ Conservation in Islam also reflects deep appreciation for biodiversity and the integrity of ecosystems, which are regarded as *āyāt kauniyyah* signs of Allah's power that must be contemplated and preserved.

Thus, the Islamic perspective on conservation is not limited to the physical preservation of the environment; it also encompasses the strengthening of spirituality, the development of ethical character, and the affirmation of social responsibility in maintaining the balance of creation. Within this framework, conservation areas are not merely ecological spaces they also symbolize the fulfillment of humanity's trust as *khalīfah* on Earth and represent the endeavor to carry out the mission of being *rahmatan lil 'ālamīn*, a mercy to all creation.

Conclusion

The protection of conservation areas is one of the strategic efforts to maintain ecosystem balance and the sustainability of natural resources. From an Islamic perspective, the responsibility for environmental preservation is not merely a social obligation but also a spiritual trust (*amānah*). As *khalīfah* (stewards) on Earth, humans are tasked with safeguarding Allah's creation not destroying it. Values such as ecological justice, the prohibition of *fasād* (destruction), and the principle of public benefit (*maṣlahah*) form the ethical foundation of Islamic environmental thought. Meanwhile, Indonesia's positive legal framework provides a comprehensive set of regulatory instruments to support conservation efforts, as outlined in Law No. 5 of 1990, Law No. 32 of 2009, and their implementing regulations. These laws emphasize preventive approaches, community participation, and strict legal enforcement against violations in conservation areas.

The integration of Islamic teachings with national law is a highly relevant and potentially powerful approach, especially in a Muslim-majority country like Indonesia. Collaboration between the government, religious leaders, and the community can enhance the effectiveness of conservation efforts through an approach that is not only legal-formal, but also spiritual and cultural in nature. Case studies such as *eco-pesantren* and environmental *fatwas* demonstrate that religious values can serve as a moral force in fostering sustainable ecological

¹⁸ Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Sciences (IFEES), *Islamic Declaration on Global Climate Change* (2015), <https://www.ifees.org.uk>.

¹⁹ Mangunjaya, *Etika Lingkungan Hidup dalam Islam*, 42.

awareness. Therefore, the synergy between religion and positive law in the protection of conservation areas is not only normatively significant but also a practical necessity in addressing the increasingly complex challenges of environmental degradation.

References

- Abu Bakar, A. *Islam and Environmental Conservation*. Leicester: Islamic Foundation, 2002.
- Effendy, Bahtiar. *Islam dan Negara*. Jakarta: Paramadina, 2002. <https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/bitstream/123456789/32843/1/islam%20dan%20negara.pdf>.
- Foltz, Richard C. *Animals in Islamic Tradition and Muslim Cultures*. Oxford: Oneworld, 2006.
- Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Sciences (IFEES). *Islamic Declaration on Global Climate Change*. 2015. <https://www.ifees.org.uk>.
- Kementerian Lingkungan Hidup dan Kehutanan (KLHK). *Laporan Status Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia Tahun 2020*. Jakarta: KLHK, 2020. https://perpustakaan.menlhk.go.id/cadmin/uploads/1660266669_d6a273da85.pdf.
- Mangunjaya, Fachruddin M. *Etika Lingkungan Hidup dalam Islam*. Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2005.
- Moleong, Lexy J. *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*. Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2017. <https://digilib.ub.ac.id/opac/detail-opac?id=140634>.
- Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. *Manusia dan Alam: Krisis Ekologi dan Tanggung Jawab Manusia Modern*. Terjemahan. Bandung: Mizan, 1996.
- Nurdin, I. "Hukum Lingkungan dalam Perspektif Islam." *Jurnal Hukum Islam* 17, no. 1 (2019): 85–98.
- Quraish Shihab. *Wawasan Al-Qur'an: Tafsir Maudhu'i atas Berbagai Persoalan Umat*. Bandung: Mizan, 2005. https://ia801303.us.archive.org/31/items/Buku_Bacaan_Waktu_Senggang/wawasan%20al%20quran.pdf.
- Republik Indonesia. *Undang-Undang Nomor 5 Tahun 1990 tentang Konservasi Sumber Daya Alam Hayati dan Ekosistemnya*. https://ksdae.menlhk.go.id/assets/news/peraturan/1.uu_.5-1990_konservasi_sumber_daya_alam_hayati_dan_ekosistemnya.pdf.
- . *Undang-Undang Nomor 32 Tahun 2009 tentang Perlindungan dan Pengelolaan Lingkungan Hidup*. <https://bphn.jdihn.go.id/dokumen/view?id=1439>.
- Soemarwoto, Otto. *Ekologi, Lingkungan Hidup dan Pembangunan*. Jakarta: Djambaan, 2001.
- Soekanto, Soerjono. *Pengantar Penelitian Hukum*. Jakarta: UI Press, 1986. <https://digilib.uinkhas.ac.id/12273/1/Buku%20Pengantar%20Metodologi%20Penelitian%20Hukum-Nur%20Solikin%20%281%29%20%281%29.pdf>.
- Zuhairi Misrawi. *Al-Qur'an untuk Lingkungan Hidup*. Jakarta: The Wahid Institute, 2010.

