

This thesis deals with the origin and development of protected areas, conservation organisations and systems of protected area management categories. It focuses on the 1994 system and its modification in 2008. The categories are defined and compared. Development of the number and area of protected areas and national parks in the world is studied, and also pros and weaknesses of the system of protected area management categories. The main objective is to create a database of national parks in the world, which includes the 3,227 areas, having an area of over 5,000,000 square kilometers. Part of the thesis is also an analysis of national parks according to continents.