

Vanuatu's Key Biodiversity Areas: Santo Mountain Chain

Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs)

Sites qualify as global KBAs if they meet one or more of 11 criteria, clustered into five categories: threatened biodiversity; geographically restricted biodiversity; ecological integrity; biological processes; and, irreplaceability. The KBA criteria can be applied to species and ecosystems in terrestrial, inland water and marine environments, and must be confirmed by the KBA Secretariat. Vanuatu has 27 KBAs in total.

Threatened Species

Vanuatu has a total of 138 species that have been identified as threatened or near threatened on the IUCN Red List. The Threatened Species Project has received funding from CEPF to work with 27 of the threatened species. Thirteen of these 27 threatened species are found on Santo Mountain Chain. They include:

Endemic

- Santo Mountain Starling
- Vanuatu Flying Fox
- Santo Kauri
- Vanuatu Megapode
- Vanuatu Imperial Pigeon
- Voutmele Palm

Found only in Vanuatu and one other country

- Fijian Blossom Bat
- Fijian Mastiff Bat
- Royal Parrotfinch
- Palm Lorikeet
- Santa Cruz Ground-dove

Widely distributed

- Moluccan Ironwood
- Polynesian Sheath-tailed Bat



Santo Kauri
Source: Threatened conifers of the world. Image by Farjon & Gardner.

Note: This map is of north western Santo Island where the Santo Mountain Chain occurs (dark coloured ridge down the centre).

Why is this Site Special?

In Vanuatu, the CEPF has chosen six priority sites out of the 27 KBAs, including the Santo Mountain Chain. The Santo Mountain Chain comprises the five highest mountain peaks of Vanuatu and runs along the western side of the island. The site includes the Vatthe Conservation Area at the northern coast of Santo. The high elevations of these mountains and the dense forests make this area home to many birds, plants, aquatic creatures and reptiles, some of which are endemic to the island (found nowhere else in the world).



Santo Island, Vanuatu.
Source: Google Maps

