# Regulations of the PRC on Nature Reserves

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## Contents

Table of Contents . . . . . 1

Chapter I — General Provisions . . . . . 1

Chapter II — Establishment of Nature Reserves . . . . . 3

Chapter III — Protection and Administration of Nature Reserves . . . . . 5

Chapter IV — Legal Liability . . . . . 8

Chapter V — Supplementary Provisions . . . . . 10

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### Table of Contents

- Chapter I — General Provisions
- Chapter II — Establishment of Nature Reserves
- Chapter III — Protection and Administration of Nature Reserves
- Chapter IV — Legal Liability
- Chapter V — Supplementary Provisions

## Chapter I — General Provisions

Article 1 — These Regulations are formulated for the purpose of advancing the building of nature reserves to a high quality, strengthening the protection and administration of nature reserves, comprehensively promoting ecological civilization and the building of a Beautiful China, and accelerating the modernization of harmonious coexistence between humanity and nature.

Article 2 — These Regulations apply to the establishment of nature reserves, and to the protection and administration of nature reserves and related activities, within the territory of the People's Republic of China and other sea areas under its jurisdiction.

For the purposes of these Regulations, “nature reserve” means a specific land or marine area established with the approval of the State Council or of the people's government of a province, autonomous region, or municipality directly under the Central Government, primarily for the protection of typical natural ecosystems, natural areas of concentration of rare and endangered wild animal and plant species, and natural relics of special significance, with a view to realizing scientific protection and rational utilization of natural resources.



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Article 3 — The building of nature reserves shall implement the guidelines, policies, decisions, and arrangements of the Party and the State, put into practice the notion that lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets, adhere to the people-centered development philosophy, give priority to ecological protection while coordinating protection and development, act in light of local conditions and highlight distinctive features, and establish a mechanism of government-led, multi-party participation and social sharing, so as to realize the unity of ecological protection, green development, and improvement of people's wellbeing.

Article 4 — The State Council and the local people's governments at or above the county level where nature reserves are located shall strengthen overall planning and coordination of nature reserve building, improve policy measures supporting nature reserve building, and incorporate nature reserve building into relevant plans for national economic and social development.

Article 5 — The State shall establish a diversified funding guarantee system for nature reserves. Local people's governments at or above the county level shall include the funds necessary for nature reserve administration work in their budgets at the corresponding level in accordance with the principle of dividing fiscal powers and expenditure responsibilities. The State encourages support for nature reserve building through the establishment of funds, donations, financial assistance, and other means.

Article 6 — The forestry and grassland competent department under the State Council shall be responsible for the supervision and administration of nature reserves nationwide. The natural resources, ecological environment, water administration, agriculture and rural affairs, transport, and other relevant departments under the State Council shall, within the scope of their respective duties, be responsible for the relevant supervision and administration of nature reserves.

The forestry and grassland competent departments of local people's governments at or above the county level shall be responsible for the supervision and administration of nature reserves within their respective administrative regions. Other relevant departments of local people's governments at or above the county level shall, within the scope of their respective duties, be responsible for the relevant supervision and administration of nature reserves.

The various nature reserve administration bodies established in accordance with provisions shall, in accordance with these Regulations and their prescribed duties, be responsible for the protection and administration of their respective nature reserves.

Article 7 — The forestry and grassland competent department under the State Council and relevant departments shall, in accordance with their duties, establish and improve the system of technical specifications and standards relating to nature reserves, and organize in accordance with law the formulation and timely revision of technical specifications and standards relating to nature reserves.

Article 8 — The State encourages and supports scientific and technological research, development, application, and popularization relating to nature reserves, strengthens the cultivation of professional personnel relating to nature reserves, and reinforces the supporting role of scientific and technological innovation in nature reserve building.

Article 9 — The forestry and grassland competent department under the State Council and relevant departments, local people's governments at or above the county level where nature reserves are located and their relevant departments, and nature reserve administration bodies shall organize and carry out publicity and education activities on nature reserve protection in various forms. News media shall carry out public-interest publicity on nature reserve protection and exercise supervision by public opinion in accordance with law.

Article 10 — The State shall, through multiple means, support and promote international exchange and cooperation in the field of nature reserves.



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## Chapter II — Establishment of Nature Reserves

Article 11 — The establishment of a nature reserve shall satisfy one of the following conditions:

(1) a typical natural geographical area, a natural ecosystem area, or an area of a similar natural ecosystem that has been damaged but can be restored through protection and restoration;

(2) a natural area of concentration of rare and endangered wild animal and plant species;

(3) sea areas, coasts, islands, wetlands, inland waters, forests, grasslands, and deserts of special protection value;

(4) natural relics such as geological sections and geological structures of major scientific and cultural value, areas of concentration of paleontological fossils, geomorphological landscapes, and relics of geological disasters;

(5) other natural areas requiring special protection.

When establishing a nature reserve, the opinions of relevant parties shall be fully heard, and the relationship with local economic and social development and with residents' production and living shall be properly handled.

Article 12 — Nature reserves shall be divided into national nature reserves and provincial nature reserves. Nature reserves that are of typical significance domestically and internationally, have major international influence in science, or have special scientific research value, as well as nature reserves involving national maritime rights and interests, shall be listed as national nature reserves. Other nature reserves shall be listed as provincial nature reserves.

Article 13 — Where it is proposed to establish a national nature reserve, an application shall be submitted by the people's government of the province, autonomous region, or municipality directly under the Central Government where the proposed nature reserve is located, or by a relevant department under the State Council; after the forestry and grassland competent department under the State Council, together with relevant departments, organizes evaluation, an approval proposal shall be submitted and reported to the State Council for approval.

Where it is proposed to establish a provincial nature reserve, an application shall be submitted by the people's government of the districted city or county where the proposed nature reserve is located; after the forestry and grassland competent department of the people's government of the province, autonomous region, or municipality directly under the Central Government, together with relevant departments, organizes evaluation, an approval proposal shall be submitted and reported to the people's government of the province, autonomous region, or municipality directly under the Central Government for approval, with a copy sent to the forestry and grassland competent department under the State Council and relevant departments.

Where a proposed nature reserve spans two or more administrative regions, unless the application is submitted by a relevant department under the State Council, the application shall be submitted after the people's governments of the relevant administrative regions reach agreement through consultation, and shall be examined and approved in accordance with the procedures specified in paragraph 1 or paragraph 2 of this Article.

Article 14 — A national nature reserve shall be named by adding “National Nature Reserve” to the name of the place where it is located; a provincial nature reserve shall be named by adding “Provincial Nature Reserve” to the name of the place where it is located. Where a nature reserve has special protected objects, the name of the special protected object may be added after the name of the place where it is located.

Article 15 — The delimitation of the area of a nature reserve shall give overall consideration to the integrity of the distribution area of protected objects such as natural ecosystems, the feasibility of administration, and



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the needs of surrounding economic and social development, adhere to seeking truth from facts and being scientific and reasonable, and be carried out after full investigation and scientific demonstration. Nature parks and other nature protected areas shall no longer be retained within the area of a nature reserve.

Where a nature reserve falls entirely within the area of a national park, it shall no longer be retained; where it falls partially within such area, the part not included shall, after scientific assessment and approval in accordance with prescribed procedures, be integrated or revoked.

Article 16 — A nature reserve shall be divided into a core protection zone and a general control zone, subject to zone-based control.

The following areas of a nature reserve shall be designated as the core protection zone:

(1) areas where natural ecosystems are completely preserved or are ecologically fragile and require recuperation;

(2) key distribution areas of rare and endangered wild animal and plant species, as well as important nodes of ecological corridors;

(3) areas of concentration of important natural relics;

(4) other areas requiring key protection.

Areas other than the core protection zone shall be designated as the general control zone.

Article 17 — After the establishment of a nature reserve, the people's government of the province, autonomous region, or municipality directly under the Central Government where the nature reserve is located shall, in accordance with relevant provisions, promptly organize the completion of boundary demarcation of the nature reserve; for a nature reserve involving national maritime rights and interests, boundary demarcation shall be organized and completed by the relevant department under the State Council.

A nature reserve administration body shall, according to the needs of protection and administration, promptly set up boundary markers of the nature reserve, such as boundary tablets and boundary posts, electronic signs, or electronic fences. It is prohibited to damage, deface, obscure, or remove or move without authorization the boundary markers of a nature reserve.

Article 18 — The names, areas, and control zones of national nature reserves and provincial nature reserves shall be approved and replied to by the State Council and by the people's government of the province, autonomous region, or municipality directly under the Central Government where they are located, respectively, at the time of approval of their establishment, and shall be published in accordance with law by the forestry and grassland competent department under the State Council and by the forestry and grassland competent department of the people's government of the province, autonomous region, or municipality directly under the Central Government where they are located, respectively.

The forestry and grassland competent department under the State Council and the forestry and grassland competent departments of the people's governments of provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities directly under the Central Government shall share with relevant departments information such as the areas of nature reserves and the coordinates of control zones.

Article 19 — Where the environment for the survival of the main protected objects of a nature reserve undergoes major changes and it is truly necessary to adjust the area of the nature reserve, the adjustment shall, in accordance with the procedures for establishing a nature reserve, be subject to the approval of the people's government that originally approved the establishment of the nature reserve. A change of the name of a nature reserve shall be handled in accordance with the aforesaid procedures.



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Adjustments to the control zones of a national nature reserve or a provincial nature reserve shall be approved after evaluation organized by the forestry and grassland competent department under the State Council or by the forestry and grassland competent department of the people's government of the province, autonomous region, or municipality directly under the Central Government where it is located, respectively, together with relevant departments at the same level.

After the establishment of a nature reserve, it shall not in principle be revoked; where it loses its protection value due to special circumstances, it may be revoked with the approval of the people's government that originally approved its establishment.

## Chapter III — Protection and Administration of Nature Reserves

Article 20 — The State shall adhere to the integrated protection of mountains, rivers, forests, farmlands, lakes, grasslands, and deserts, and shall, in accordance with the characteristics and inherent laws of natural ecosystems, carry out holistic protection, systematic restoration, and comprehensive governance of nature reserves.

Article 21 — A nature reserve administration body shall, on the basis of comprehensive scientific investigation and special surveys, organize the formulation, as needed, of relevant plans for the nature reserve under its administration (hereinafter referred to as nature reserve plans), specifying matters such as the objectives and tasks of protection and administration, protected objects, administration requirements, and protection measures, and making arrangements for the production and living activities of existing residents. When organizing the formulation of a nature reserve plan, the opinions of relevant parties shall be broadly heard and thoroughly demonstrated.

A national nature reserve plan shall, after examination and consent by the forestry and grassland competent department of the people's government of the province, autonomous region, or municipality directly under the Central Government where it is located, be reported to the forestry and grassland competent department under the State Council for approval and implementation; a plan for a nature reserve involving national maritime rights and interests shall, after examination and consent by the relevant department under the State Council, be reported to the forestry and grassland competent department under the State Council for approval and implementation. A provincial nature reserve plan shall be reported to the forestry and grassland competent department of the people's government of the province, autonomous region, or municipality directly under the Central Government where it is located for approval and implementation. Before a plan is examined and approved, the opinions of relevant departments at the same level shall be solicited.

A nature reserve plan shall be coordinated with the plan for national economic and social development, the overall territorial space plan, and other relevant plans, shall be incorporated into the territorial space planning implementation supervision information system, and shall be subject to unified supervision. A nature reserve plan shall be made public in accordance with law.

Article 22 — A nature reserve administration body shall, in accordance with laws, regulations, relevant provisions of the State, and the nature reserve plan, improve and perfect the rules and systems for the protection and administration of the nature reserve, and strengthen the routine protection and administration of the nature reserve.

Units and individuals within the area of a nature reserve, as well as persons entering the nature reserve, shall abide by laws, regulations, and the rules and systems for the protection and administration of the nature reserve, and accept the administration of the nature reserve administration body.

Article 23 — Natural resources within the area of a nature reserve shall be subject to rights confirmation and registration in accordance with the relevant provisions of the State on the confirmation and registration of rights to natural resources, and the nature reserve shall be treated as an independent registration unit in such confirmation and registration.



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Article 24 — The State shall strengthen the building of the nature reserve monitoring network system, give full play to the role of various monitoring stations, and, by means of information technology, strengthen the integrated analysis, sharing, and comprehensive application of monitoring data, so as to fully grasp the composition, distribution, and dynamic changes of natural ecosystems, the state of biodiversity, the quality of the ecological environment, and the disturbance of human activities, and to promptly assess and give early warning of ecological risks.

Article 25 — Restoration of damaged natural ecosystems, connection of ecological corridors, and restoration of important habitats within the area of a nature reserve shall adhere to the principle of giving priority to natural restoration; where it is truly necessary to carry out artificial restoration activities such as population regulation and tree species renewal, the opinions of relevant parties shall be fully heard, a scientific and reasonable restoration plan shall be formulated in accordance with relevant provisions, and the plan shall be implemented in accordance with law.

A nature reserve administration body shall take measures to strengthen the prevention of and response to the invasion of alien species, safeguard ecosystem security, and improve the quality of the ecosystem.

Article 26 — Except for the following activities, human activities shall be prohibited in the core protection zone of a nature reserve:

(1) activities such as investigation and monitoring, ecological restoration, and management, protection and patrolling carried out for the protection of the nature reserve, scientific research observation, basic surveying and mapping, protection of cultural relics and other cultural heritage, disaster prevention and mitigation, and emergency rescue, as well as activities that are truly necessary for state organs to perform their law enforcement duties in accordance with law;

(2) necessary production and living activities of existing residents, as well as the operation, maintenance, and renovation of existing important infrastructure that truly needs to be retained and cannot be avoided;

(3) construction of linear infrastructure that is necessary and unavoidable and passes underground, underwater, or through the air in an ecologically harmless manner;

(4) activities that are truly necessary for safeguarding national security or implementing major national strategies, as well as construction of major national projects that cannot be avoided;

(5) other activities provided for by laws or administrative regulations or approved by the State Council.

Article 27 — Only the following human activities may be carried out in the general control zone of a nature reserve:

(1) activities permitted in the core protection zone;

(2) construction, operation, and maintenance of important infrastructure that conforms to the territorial space plan and cannot be avoided;

(3) investigation and excavation of paleontological fossils, basic geological surveys, prospective surveys of strategic mineral resources, and exploration of strategic mineral resources within the prescribed scope;

(4) rewilding and breeding of rare and endangered wild animals and plants, and non-destructive specimen collection activities;

(5) forest management activities such as tending and tree species renewal of artificial commercial forests consistent with the protection objectives of the nature reserve;

(6) public service activities such as science popularization and publicity, ecological tourism, education, culture, and sports;

(7) other activities provided for by laws or administrative regulations or approved by the State Council.



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Article 28 — For nature reserves in the following circumstances, differentiated control measures may be implemented after scientific demonstration, on the premise of ensuring the safety of the main protected objects and not impairing ecological functions:

(1) for a nature reserve whose main protected objects are natural relics, necessary protection, display, and exhibition facilities may be built in the core protection zone, and investigation and excavation of paleontological fossils as well as appropriate public service activities such as science popularization and publicity, ecological tourism, education, culture, and sports may be carried out;

(2) for a nature reserve whose main protected objects are located underground, the above-ground part of its core protection zone may be protected and administered as a general control zone;

(3) for a nature reserve whose natural ecological processes and the survival and reproduction of whose main protected objects follow an evident seasonal pattern, differentiated seasonal control measures may be implemented.

Article 29 — The production and living activities of existing residents within the area of a nature reserve shall be carried out on the premise of not exceeding the existing scale and intensity of utilization and of reasonably improving production and living conditions. Where, based on the needs of protection and administration, it is truly necessary for existing residents within the area of a nature reserve to relocate, the relevant local people's government shall make proper arrangements for their resettlement.

Article 30 — Without approval, foreigners shall not engage in specimen collection and other activities within the area of a nature reserve.

Article 31 — Where activities specified in Article 26, Article 27, or Article 28 of these Regulations are carried out in a nature reserve and relevant formalities are required to be handled in accordance with law, the relevant units and individuals shall handle them in accordance with law; where the construction of facilities is involved, the consent of the forestry and grassland competent department under the State Council or of the forestry and grassland competent department of the people's government of the province, autonomous region, or municipality directly under the Central Government where the nature reserve is located shall also be obtained, except for the necessary production and living activities of existing residents, the operation and maintenance activities of existing linear infrastructure, and facilities built by the nature reserve administration body in accordance with the nature reserve plan for management, protection and patrolling, scientific research observation, science popularization and publicity, disaster prevention and mitigation, and other purposes.

Units and individuals that carry out investigation and monitoring, scientific research observation, or specimen collection in a nature reserve shall, in accordance with the requirements of the nature reserve administration body, submit the results of the relevant activities.

Where activities specified in Article 26, Article 27, or Article 28 of these Regulations are carried out in a nature reserve, necessary measures shall be taken to avoid or reduce adverse impacts on natural ecosystems, ecological corridors, important habitats, and natural and human landscapes. A nature reserve administration body shall, in light of actual circumstances and needs, specify the boundaries and intensity of the relevant activities to be carried out and the protective measures that shall be taken.

Article 32 — A nature reserve administration body shall establish a routine patrolling system, reasonably allocate patrolling personnel and patrolling equipment, and strengthen the building of patrolling stations. Patrolling personnel shall observe and record the state of the habitats of the main protected objects and changes therein, and shall dissuade and stop acts in violation of the provisions on the protection and administration of the nature reserve and report them promptly.

Article 33 — A nature reserve administration body shall formulate an emergency response plan for emergencies in the nature reserve, strengthen coordination and cooperation with the relevant departments



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of the local people's government, do a good job of disaster prevention and mitigation, safety management, and emergency support, and enhance its emergency support capacity.

Article 34 — A nature reserve administration body shall, on the premise of ensuring ecological protection, improve the public service system of the nature reserve and enhance its public service functions. Appropriate areas may be delimited in the general control zone of a nature reserve, and necessary auxiliary facilities and equipment may be set up, to provide support for carrying out public service activities such as relevant scientific research, science popularization and publicity, ecological tourism, education, culture, and sports.

A nature reserve administration body shall strengthen the management of and services for visitors to the nature reserve, reasonably determine visitor capacity, specify norms of visitor conduct, provide necessary accessible services in accordance with the relevant provisions of the State, and improve mechanisms for visitor safety guarantees and emergency rescue. Projects such as sightseeing and tourism inconsistent with the protection objectives shall not be set up within the area of a nature reserve.

Article 35 — The forestry and grassland competent departments of local people's governments at or above the county level, the natural resources, ecological environment, water administration, agriculture and rural affairs, and other relevant departments, and nature reserve administration bodies shall, in accordance with their duties, strengthen the supervision and inspection of the protection of nature reserves and investigate and deal with illegal acts in accordance with law.

Coast guard authorities shall, in accordance with the provisions of the Coast Guard Law of the People's Republic of China, supervise and inspect, within the scope of their duties, the protection of the seaward side of the coastline within the area of a nature reserve, and investigate and deal with illegal acts in accordance with law.

Supervision and inspection personnel carrying out supervision and inspection shall proactively present their law enforcement credentials. The units and individuals under inspection shall cooperate and shall not refuse or obstruct. Public security organs may, as needed, set up work stations in nature reserves to carry out ecological policing work. Where relevant state organs perform their statutory duties in a nature reserve in accordance with law, the nature reserve administration body shall provide necessary facilitation.

Article 36 — With respect to acts in violation of the provisions on the protection and administration of a nature reserve, any unit or individual shall have the right to report them to the nature reserve administration body or the relevant departments, and the nature reserve administration body and the relevant departments that receive the report shall handle it promptly in accordance with law.

Article 37 — A nature reserve administration body shall promptly disclose in accordance with law information on its nature reserve protection and administration work, and consciously accept social supervision and supervision by public opinion.

## Chapter IV — Legal Liability

Article 38 — Where staff members of nature reserve administration bodies, of local people's governments at or above the county level and their relevant departments, or of relevant departments under the State Council abuse their powers, neglect their duties, or engage in malpractices for personal gain in nature reserve protection and administration work, they shall be given sanctions in accordance with law.

Article 39 — Whoever damages, defaces, obscures, or removes or moves without authorization the boundary markers of a nature reserve shall be ordered by the nature reserve administration body to stop the illegal act and take remedial measures, and may be fined not more than 20,000 yuan; where losses are caused, liability for compensation shall be borne in accordance with law.



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Where units and individuals that carry out investigation and monitoring, scientific research observation, or specimen collection in a nature reserve fail to submit the results of the relevant activities to the nature reserve administration body, they shall be ordered by the nature reserve administration body to make corrections and may be fined not more than 5,000 yuan.

Article 40 — Whoever carries out in the core protection zone of a nature reserve activities other than those specified in Article 26 of these Regulations shall be ordered by the forestry and grassland, natural resources, ecological environment, water administration, agriculture and rural affairs, and other relevant departments of the people's government at or above the county level, according to the division of duties, to stop the illegal act, shall have illegal gains confiscated, and may be fined not more than 100,000 yuan; where the act involves illegally building facilities or carrying out engineering construction, the offender shall be ordered to demolish them and restore the original state within a prescribed time limit, and shall be fined not less than 100,000 yuan and not more than 1,000,000 yuan; where ecological damage is caused, the offender shall be ordered to carry out restoration within a prescribed time limit or take other remedial measures, and shall be fined not less than 1,000,000 yuan and not more than 5,000,000 yuan.

Article 41 — Whoever carries out in the general control zone of a nature reserve activities other than those specified in Article 27 of these Regulations shall be ordered by the forestry and grassland, natural resources, ecological environment, water administration, agriculture and rural affairs, and other relevant departments of the people's government at or above the county level, according to the division of duties, to stop the illegal act, shall have illegal gains confiscated, and may be fined not more than 50,000 yuan; where the act involves illegally building facilities or carrying out engineering construction, the offender shall be ordered to demolish them and restore the original state within a prescribed time limit, and shall be fined not less than 50,000 yuan and not more than 500,000 yuan; where ecological damage is caused, the offender shall be ordered to carry out restoration within a prescribed time limit or take other remedial measures, and shall be fined not less than 500,000 yuan and not more than 2,000,000 yuan.

Article 42 — Where existing residents within the area of a nature reserve carry out production and living activities in violation of paragraph 1 of Article 29 of these Regulations, they shall be ordered by the nature reserve administration body to make corrections and may, depending on the severity of the circumstances, be fined not more than 2,000 yuan.

Article 43 — Where a person carrying out activities specified in Article 26, Article 27, or Article 28 of these Regulations in the area of a nature reserve fails to take necessary measures to avoid or reduce adverse impacts on natural ecosystems, ecological corridors, important habitats, and natural and human landscapes, the person shall be ordered by the forestry and grassland, natural resources, ecological environment, water administration, agriculture and rural affairs, and other relevant departments of the people's government at or above the county level, according to the division of duties, to make corrections and may be fined not more than 100,000 yuan; where ecological damage is caused, the person shall be ordered to carry out restoration within a prescribed time limit or take other remedial measures, and where the relevant activities are carried out in the core protection zone, shall be fined not less than 100,000 yuan and not more than 500,000 yuan, and where they are carried out in the general control zone, shall be fined not less than 50,000 yuan and not more than 200,000 yuan.

Article 44 — Where the illegal acts specified in Article 40, Article 41, or Article 43 of these Regulations occur on the seaward side of the coastline within the area of a nature reserve, coast guard authorities shall impose penalties within the scope of their duties in accordance with law.

With respect to the illegal acts specified in Article 40, Article 41, or Article 43 of these Regulations, where the amount of a fine provided for in the relevant administrative regulations is higher than that provided for in these Regulations, such provisions shall apply.



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Article 45 — Where units and individuals within the area of a nature reserve, or persons entering the nature reserve, fail to submit to the administration of the nature reserve administration body, the nature reserve administration body shall have the right to dissuade and stop them; where the act constitutes a violation of public order or another act in violation of public security administration, the public security organ shall impose a public security administration penalty in accordance with law.

Article 46 — Whoever, in violation of the provisions of these Regulations, destroys natural resources or pollutes the environment or damages the ecology shall bear civil liability in accordance with law; where the act constitutes a crime, criminal liability shall be pursued in accordance with law.

## Chapter V — Supplementary Provisions

Article 47 — With respect to nature reserves involving national maritime rights and interests, the forestry and grassland competent department under the State Council shall, together with relevant departments, formulate specific administration measures in accordance with these Regulations.

The people's governments of provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities directly under the Central Government may, in accordance with these Regulations, formulate implementation measures.

Article 48 — These Regulations shall come into force on March 15, 2026.

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