**Summary of UK Protected Area site designations**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Protected Area** | **What does it stand for?** | **What does it protect?** | **Level of legislation\*** | **Comments?** |
| **NNR** | National Nature Reserve | Nature reserves (**NNRs**) are land established under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and managed: for the purpose of research and study of flora and fauna or geological and physiographical features; and/or. for the preservation of such special features | National | N=225 (England) |
| **SPA** | Special Protection Areas | **Birds** in UK:   * 1981 Wildlife & Countryside Act * Conservation Regulations 2010 * Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 | National |  |
| **SAC** | Special Areas of Conservation | Annex 1:  Habitats  Annex 2:  Species (not birds) | Europe | <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/habitatsdirective/index_en.htm>  Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 |
| **SSSI** | Site of Special Scientific Interest | Rare species of flora/ fauna  Geological features  Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 | National | Designation by Natural England  <https://naturalengland-defra.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/f10cbb4425154bfda349ccf493487a80/explore?location=52.837148%2C-2.496337%2C7.62>  <https://naturalengland-defra.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/f10cbb4425154bfda349ccf493487a80_0/about> |
| **AONB** | Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty | Landscape  Further guidance (CCP352) which compliments the [National Parks and Access to Countryside Act 1949](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo6/12-13-14/97) – that underpins the AONB designation – goes on to say, “In pursuing the primary purpose of designation, account should be taken of the needs of agriculture, forestry, and other rural industries and of the economic and social needs of local communities. Particular regard should be paid to promoting sustainable forms of social and economic development that in themselves conserve and enhance the environment. Recreation is not an objective of designation, but the demand for recreation should be met so far as this is consistent with the conservation of natural beauty and the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses”. | National | N = 46 |
| **MCZ** | Marine Conservation Zone | https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/marine-conservation-zone-designations-in-england |  | N = 91 (2019 designation) |
| **MPA** | Marine Protection Area | <https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/what-is-protected-in-mpas/>  Marine protected areas (MPAs) are a globally recognised tool that can help support the conservation of marine habitats and species whilst promoting sustainable use. The aim of the UK network of MPAs is to protect the range of marine habitats and species for which MPAs are considered an appropriate conservation tool.  Supporting healthy and resilient ecosystems will increase their ability to respond and adapt to other impacts such as those of global climate change. | National |  |
| **Ramsar** | NA | Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention. | Global | The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (‘Ramsar Convention’ or ‘Wetlands Convention’) was adopted in Ramsar, Iran in February 1971 and came into force in December 1975. It provides the only international mechanism for protecting sites of global importance and is thus of key conservation significance.  The Convention covers all aspects of wetland conservation and ‘wise use’. It has three main 'pillars' of activity:   * the designation of wetlands of international importance as Ramsar Sites; * the promotion of the wise use of all wetlands in the territory of each country; and * international co-operation with other countries to further the wise use of wetlands and their resources. |
| LNR | Local Nature Reserve | Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are a statutory designation made under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 by principal local authorities. Parish and Town Councils can also declare LNRs but they must have the powers to do so delegated to them by a principal local authority. LNRs are for people and wildlife. They are places with wildlife or geological features that are of special interest locally. | Local |  |

**\*Level of legislation: National/European/Global**

## What Natural England does

We’re the government’s adviser for the natural environment in England. We help to protect and restore our natural world.

Natural England is an executive non-departmental public body, sponsored by the [Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs).

We are the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (more commonly known as JNCC), the public body that advises the UK Government and devolved administrations on UK-wide and international nature conservation. Originally established under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, we were reconstituted by the [Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2006/ukpga_20060016_en_1). We are the forum through which the country nature conservation bodies in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland discharge their statutory responsibilities across the UK and internationally.

We are led by the [Joint Committee](https://jncc.gov.uk/about-jncc/who-we-are/joint-committee/), which brings together, under an independent Chair, members from the nature conservation bodies for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and independent members appointed by the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. The day-to-day work of the Committee is undertaken by our support company which is limited by guarantee – the JNCC Support Co.

We provide a shared scientific nature conservation service for the UK. We're the mechanism for the UK Government and devolved administrations to pool their resources to obtain evidence and advice on nature conservation and natural capital. By operating at a UK level we are able to achieve value for money through economies of scale and avoiding duplication of effort.

Across non-government sectors there is increasing awareness of the benefits provided by the natural environment and the importance of preserving these to ensure more sustainable use. We are increasingly looking for opportunities to apply our expertise and advice to support this approach with these sectors, both within the UK and internationally.