



# A Clear View

How protected areas work in Ireland and  
the United Kingdom

## England

### ***A place called England***

England is **not flag or empire**, it is not money, it is not blood,  
It's limestone gorge and granite fell, it's Wealden clay and Severn mud,  
It's blackbird singing from the may tree, lark ascending through the scales,  
Robin watching from your spade, and English earth beneath your nails.

*From a song by Maggie Holland (1949- )*



One touch of nature makes the  
whole world kin

William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

*Quoted by John Muir (1838-1914) 'father of the national parks movement',  
in Our National Parks, 1901*

## Ireland

### ***Windharp (for Patrick Collins)***

The sounds of Ireland,  
that restless whispering  
you never get away  
from, seeping out of  
low bushes and grass,  
**heatherbells and fern,**  
wrinkling bog pools,  
scraping tree branches,  
light hunting cloud,  
sound hounding sight,  
a hand ceaselessly  
combing and stroking  
the landscape, till  
the valley gleams  
like the pile upon  
a mountain pony's coat.

*John Montague (1929 -)*

## Northern Ireland

### ***The Peninsula***

When you have nothing more to say, just drive  
For a day all around the peninsula.

The sky is tall as over a runway,  
The land without marks, so you will not arrive

But pass through, though always skirting landfall.  
At dusk, horizons drink down sea and hill,  
The ploughed field swallows the whitewashed gable  
And you're in the dark again. Now recall

The glazed foreshore and silhouetted log,  
That rock where breakers shredded into rags,  
The leggy birds stilted on their own legs,  
Islands riding themselves out into the fog,

And drive back home, still with nothing to say  
Except that now you will uncode all landscapes  
By this: **things founded clean** on their own shapes,  
Water and ground in their extremity.

*Seamus Heaney (1939- )*

## Scotland

### ***Landscape and I***

Landscape and I get on together well  
Though I'm the talkative one, still he can tell  
His symptoms of being to me, the way a shell  
Murmurs of oceans.

Loch Rannoch lapses dimpling in the sun.  
Its hieroglyphs of light fade one by one  
But recreate themselves, their message done,  
**For ever and ever.**

*Norman MacCaig (1910-1996)*

## Wales

### ***Y mynydd a minnau***

Un enaid oedd i'n dau — tragywydd —  
Y mynydd a minnau;  
**Efo'n hen a myfi'n iau** — ganrifoedd,  
Uwch ael ei diroedd a'i uchelderau.

### ***The mountain and me***

Our souls were as one — eternal —  
The mountain and me;  
The ancient and the young — centuries,  
Hovering over the hills.

*T. H. Parry Williams (1887-1975)*

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Below: People and place: the village of Burnham Overy Staithe nestles close to wild saltmarsh in the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, England



Opposite page: A shared love: children play with ‘sand eel’ streamers at an event to celebrate biodiversity



# Welcome

Loving places is part of being human. Across the world, people put this love into action to take care of special landscapes.

Nowadays we are coming to understand that this relationship between people and place is two-way. Places look after the people that look after them. Our protected areas show this care in action — and how sustainable living can work.

Different countries have different ways of protecting landscapes. But these ways are all rooted in this same deep urge — to connect with the past, enjoy and be part of nature in the present and conserve this living relationship into the future.

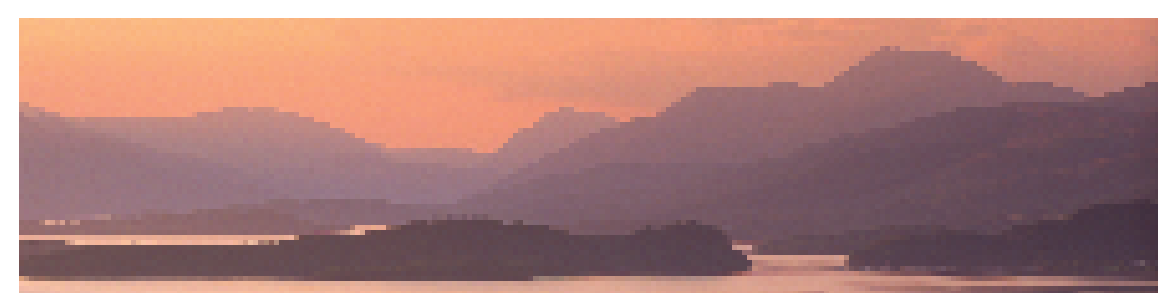
The 2006 Europarc Conference in Oxford, England, brings together people who look after outstanding landscapes all over Europe. It is a living example of these many kinds of care with a common purpose.

Europarc Atlantic Isles has produced this guide to celebrate our shared effort, and to provide you with a clear view of our approach to the places that we love. It explains how the special places of England, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales are conserved, enhanced, understood and enjoyed.

It examines how the history and organisation of these areas has grown in different ways in each country. Above all, we are aiming to convey some of the delight of working with these exciting, stimulating and challenging places. I hope you enjoy it.

  
**Martin Lane**  
Chairman, Europarc Atlantic Isles  
Director, Cotswolds Conservation Board







‘Not flag or empire’

England’s protected landscapes are, quite simply, its people’s favourite places. From the delightful Isles of Scilly in the far south west to the mystical Northumberland Coast in the north east, they cover a huge range of areas.



A shared pleasure: sea and landscape — Foreland Point from Wind Hill, Exmoor National Park

Most famous, and first to be protected, were the dramatic uplands like the Peak and Lake Districts. Dales and moors followed, and latterly a wetland and a forest. In the near future the long-awaited designation of the South Downs is planned.

Valued for their rich nature, from wild ponies to rare butterflies, they are also places where people live and work. All have been shaped in some way by humans, from the dry stone walls that criss-cross the Dales to the lakes of the Broads — originally dug for peat.

People take pride in these areas both locally and nationally. The organisations that manage them work in many areas, from conservation and recreation to the provision of affordable housing and essential social facilities, from community enhancement schemes to rural development initiatives.

Historically national parks have tended to be north and west, in more upland and remote areas, while areas of outstanding natural beauty cluster to the south and east, in the softer, more intensively farmed landscapes.

National parks started as ‘joint committees’ and became stand alone organisations within the local government system. Areas of outstanding natural beauty work through local authorities, with conservation boards recently providing the option of an independent management body modelled on national park authorities.

Acting as co-ordinators, enablers and innovators, both bodies operate in partnership with others to a common purpose — to conserve and enhance these places so they stay special.

From the past to the present

People have lived in the UK and Ireland’s protected areas for more than 5,000 years.

Industrialisation and urbanisation in the 19th century led to a new appreciation of the countryside. ‘Wild’ places that had been seen as uncivilised and dangerous were increasingly valued.

This appreciation gave rise to the desires both to protect the areas and enable people to enjoy them. These twin purposes are a constant theme - with variations - through their history.

*This timeline is an overview — read on for more detail in each section*

*Previous page:* ‘National property’: Loch Lomond and the Trossachs, Scotland’s first national park

*Below:* Mass movement: demonstrating for access to the Peak District in the 1930s, England

*Bottom:* Ongoing project: Scotland plans a new coastal and marine national park

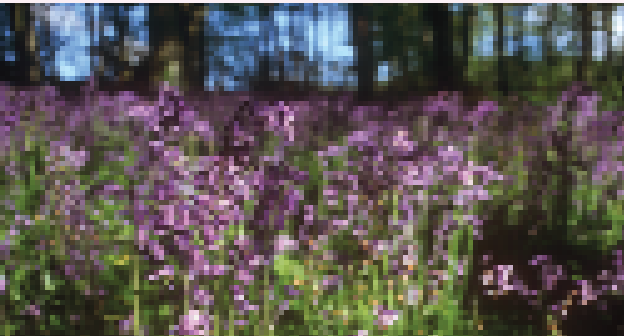


1872	USA: <b>world’s first national park</b> - Yellowstone — designated
1932	UK: growing number of <b>clashes</b> as people access the countryside, culminating in ‘mass trespass’ by public in Peak District
1932	Ireland: nucleus of first Irish national park - Killarney — bequeathed to the state; Bourn Vincent Memorial Act passed
1945	UK: Government report by <b>John Dower proposes protected areas</b> in England and Wales, combining the protection of wildlife, landscapes and the historic buildings with access and recreation
1949	UK: <b>"the most exciting Act of the post-war Parliament"</b> - National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act enables designation of national parks and areas of outstanding natural beauty in England and Wales
1951	UK: <b>first national park</b> established — the Peak District — followed over the next six years by nine more national parks in England and Wales
1954	Ireland: State Property Act forms basis for national parks
1956	UK: <b>First area of outstanding natural beauty designated</b> — the Gower Peninsula, Wales
1965	Northern Ireland: Amenity Lands Act creates first AONBs
1974	UK: ‘Sandford Principle’ established by National Park Policies Review Committee - when the two purposes of national parks are in conflict the protection of wildlife and landscape should take precedence
1980	Ireland: Connemara National Park established
1981	Ireland: Killarney National Park designated UNESCO Biosphere Reserve
1981	Scotland: <b>National scenic area</b> designation created — 40 areas identified
1985	Northern Ireland: Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands Order provides framework for AONBs and national parks
1986	Ireland: Glenveagh National Park established
1986	Scotland: <b>first regional parks</b> established in the Pentland and Lomond Hills
1988	UK: Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Authority created by a special act of parliament
1991	Ireland: Wicklow Mountains National Park established
1991	Ireland: The Burren National Park established
1995	UK: Environment Act revises purposes of national parks in England and Wales
1998	Ireland: Ballycroy National Park established
2000	UK: Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CRoW) improved access to open country in national parks and wider countryside, and gave AONBs more protection and stature in England and Wales
2000	Scotland: The National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000
2002	Scotland: Loch Lomond and the Trossachs designated as <b>Scotland’s first national park</b>
2003	Scotland: Cairngorms National Park designated
2004	England and Wales: Conservation Boards in Chilterns and Cotswolds established
2005	England: New Forest National Park designated
2006	Scotland: Report on establishing <b>coastal and marine national parks</b> ; proposals to strengthen national scenic areas

History

The story of protected landscapes in England and Wales — for they share their history — begins with a government inquiry into creating national parks in 1929. Pressure was coming from the increasing desire of urban populations to access the countryside.

Protests followed, including the famous ‘mass trespass’ in the Peak District. Through the 1930s the movement gathered force, and continued even through the war years. Finally, in 1949 a law was passed: the National Park and Access to the Countryside Act, which gave the job of designating national parks and areas of outstanding natural beauty (AONB) in England and Wales to the National Parks Commission (later becoming the Countryside Commission in 1968, the Countryside Agency in 1999 and from October 2006 Natural England). Responsibility in Wales from 1990 rested with the Countryside Council for Wales (see Welsh section).



Natural beauty protected: bluebells in springtime

National parks are extensive tracts of the countryside designated for their natural beauty and opportunities for open-air recreation, given strong protection under legislation and the planning system for the conservation and enhancement of their special qualities.

There are currently nine in England, created between 1951 and 2005 - and one proposed for the South Downs. The first to be created was the Peak District, the most recent the New Forest. (Space does not allow a full list of England’s protected areas; they are all featured on the map on page 4.)

The Broads Authority was established under its own act of parliament, the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act 1988, giving a status similar to that of a national park but also meeting the requirement for a navigation function.

There are 36 areas of outstanding natural beauty in England. These areas have a stunning variety of landscapes; from islands to coasts; from a harbour to a forest; from heaths to vales.

The first was the Quantock Hills in 1956; the most recent the Tamar Valley in 1995. They are designated for their ‘natural beauty’. Many also fulfil a recreational role but, unlike national parks, this is not a designation criteria. There are also several regional parks in England, which vary in purpose, including the Lee Valley, part of which will be involved in hosting the 2012 Olympics ■

Management and governance

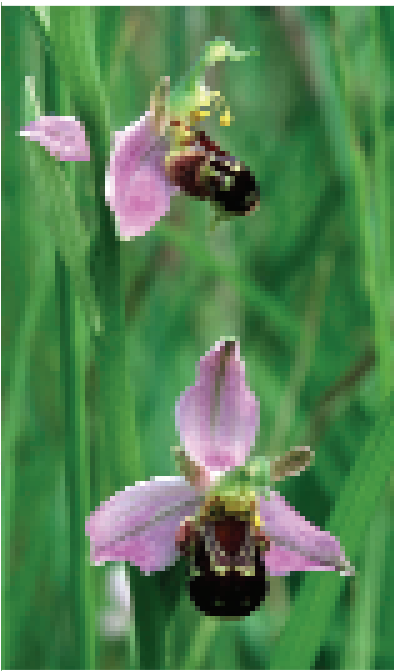
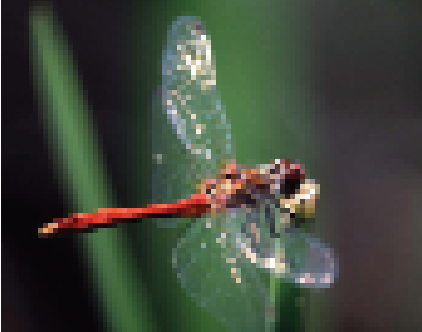
The vast majority of land in England’s protected landscapes is under private ownership but some is owned and managed by public bodies.

As well as the key Act of 1949, other laws have shaped them, including the 1972 Local Government Act which made national parks independent planning authorities and the 1995 Environment Act which revised and introduced a duty on other public bodies to have regard to the purposes which are:

- to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage;
- to promote opportunities for the public understanding and enjoyment of their special qualities.

1	2
3	4
5	6
7	8

- 1 Ruddy darter dragonfly
- 2 Hurlers stone circle, Bodmin Moor, Dartmoor National Park
- 3 Hickling Broad, Broads National Park
- 4 Enjoying the special qualities of the Broads
- 5 Bee orchid
- 6 The ‘salt cellar’ — a gritstone tor, Peak District National Park
- 7 Ponies on Bodmin Moor, Cornwall Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- 8 ‘Cotswold lion’ sheep, Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty





If there is a conflict between the two, conservation takes precedence (the ‘Sandford Principle’ established in 1974). In carrying out these two main responsibilities, the national park authorities have a duty to seek to foster the social and economic well-being of local communities. Authorities are expected to co-operate with other organisations to fulfil this requirement.

Each national park is managed by its own authority, with a remit covering the purposes. The Broads Authority shares those purposes and in addition must protect the interests of navigation (boating).

From 1974 each national park authority has had to prepare a plan, and update it every five years, to state how it manages the area and resources needed.

Funding is provided by the government, in part based on a formula developed with the Countryside Agency and agreed with the park authorities to reflect the special needs of each area.

The management of areas of outstanding natural beauty has developed more recently, also under the guidance of the Countryside Agency. Planning and development control in them falls to their local authorities, which set up joint advisory committees to bring together local authorities and amenity groups, farming and other interests, and often ‘host’ staff units.

The statutory purpose of these areas is to conserve and enhance natural beauty. Policies must take account of this, and it should also be

reflected by local authorities in their development plans and development control decisions.

The government confirmed in 2000 that national parks and areas of outstanding natural beauty have the same status. The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 clarified the role of areas of outstanding natural beauty. It strengthened their conservation and management role, required local authorities to prepare and publish a management plan and review it every five years, and introduced a duty for other public bodies to have regard to their purposes.

To focus governance, the act also gave larger and more complex areas of outstanding natural beauty the possibility of becoming independent conservation boards. Conservation boards have an additional purpose to increase public understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the area, and should seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities (as with national park authorities). The first two, in the Cotswolds and the Chilterns, were created in 2004.

Government funding for AONBs is provided via the Countryside Agency, with contributions from local authorities. In addition, both designations have access to a sustainable development fund from government, to directly support projects which promote sustainable development, partnership and social inclusion; and help provide a sustainably managed countryside, improved environment and integrated delivery of rural services ■

Top: Buttermere with High Crag in background, Lake District National Park

National parks in England

How many?	How many sq km in total?	How much of the country do they cover?	What are they for?	What is their international status? (IUCN category)
9	10,502	8%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conservation</li><li>• Recreation</li><li>• Promoting understanding and enjoyment</li><li>• Helping economic and social well-being</li></ul>	V

Areas of outstanding natural beauty in England

36	19,595	15%	Conservation of natural beauty; conservation boards also should increase understanding and enjoyment, and help economic and social well-being	V
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England: Population: 50 million Area: 130,281 square kilometres

‘Heatherbells and fern’

Ireland’s exceptional natural range is treasured in its national parks. Mountains, bogs, heaths, grasslands and woodlands are home to a rich and rare tapestry of fascinating species.



Botanic delights: the ancient limestone beds of the Burren National Park are home to a unique range of plants

On Killarney’s mountains roams a herd of Red Deer that has existed for 4,000 years. The park also boasts the most extensive areas of natural woodland in Ireland, from oakwoods to wet woodlands to a unique yew wood, where the mild oceanic climate permits luxuriant growth of mosses and filmy ferns.

Deep in the Connemara boglands, sundews, butterworts and other insectivorous plants trap and digest insects to feed themselves nutrients otherwise in short supply.

In the Burren, botanically one of the most important regions in Western Europe, plants normally found in widely separate parts of the continent grow side by side on a sequence of massive beds of carboniferous limestone. This ancient landscape was formed from the accumulated remains of marine plants and

animals in a warm, shallow sea which existed in the area about 320 million years ago.

Although they are not inhabited by humans, our influence is deeply interwoven in these parks, both historically and today. Above Glenveagh’s turreted castle surrounded by exotic plants soar Golden Eagles — reintroduced from here into Donegal. The lakes and woodlands of the Wicklow Mountains attract large numbers of visitors from nearby Dublin and further afield.

Initially created by gifts to the country from individuals, the set of national parks has been added to by the state. The newest is Ballycroy National Park, County Mayo, established in 1998, with its internationally important blanket bogs.



History

Ireland’s first national park was established in 1932 in the south west of the country. The nucleus of Killarney National Park is the 4,000 hectare Bourn Vincent Memorial Park, bequeathed to the State in 1932 by Mr and Mrs W. Bowers Bourn and their son-in-law Senator Arthur Vincent. Since then land has been added through acquisitions and bequests, notably from the McShain estate; the park now measures some 10,300 hectares. In 1981, it was designated by UNESCO as a biosphere reserve.



Clara Bog, County Offaly: a nature reserve and one of the last remaining intact peat bogs

In 1975 large areas of land in County Donegal, in the north-west, were purchased by the state for the creation of Glenveagh National Park. In 1981, Mr McIlhenny presented Glenveagh Castle and Gardens to the nation, adding greatly to the amenities of the national park. Further land acquisitions have since brought the park to almost 17,000 hectares.

Connemara National Park in Galway, on the west coast, covers some 2,957 hectares of scenic mountains, expanses of bogs, heaths, grasslands and woodlands, and was established and opened to the public in 1980. Much of the present park lands formed part of the Kylemore Abbey Estate and the Letterfrack Industrial School, the remainder having been owned by private individuals. The southern part of the Park was at one time owned by Richard (Humanity Dick) Martin who helped to form the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals during the early 19th century.

Wicklow Mountains National Park, just south of Dublin, was established in 1991 and at present has a total area of some 18,000

hectares. Significant conservation areas within the Park include the Glendalough Oakwoods and the Lugnaquilla and Liffey Head Bog complexes.

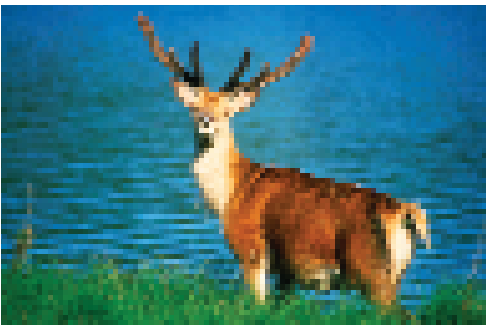
The Burren National Park, County Clare, was established in 1991 as Ireland’s fifth national park. Situated on the south-eastern edge of the Burren where the limestone hills fall away to lowlands covered by glacial-drift soils, it has a present area of 1,150 hectares. However, it shares ownership with private individuals of a substantial further area.

Ballycroy National Park, County Mayo is the country’s newest national park and was established in 1998. The area contains some of the most important blanket bog in Europe.

The basic designation for wildlife in Ireland is the natural heritage area (NHA). In 1995 proposals for over 1,100 were published, but it was not until December 2000 that powers were introduced for the statutory process of their designation and protection. Many have overlapping designations of special areas of conservation (SAC) and/or special protection areas (SPA), but there are currently 802 proposed which are not SAC/SPA. They cover an area of about 113,000 hectares. These will be reviewed, and other sites surveyed, during the course of the designation process. Some of the proposed NHAs are tiny, such as a roosting place for rare bats. Others are large - a blanket bog or a lake, for example ■

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- 1 to 3  
Unique Irish bogs contain a wide variety of vegetation and habitats, including Butterwort
- 4 Glenveagh National Park
- 5 Killarney, Ireland’s first national park
- 6 Wild red deer
- 7 Glenveagh Castle
- 8 Killarney’s rare woodland habitats





Management and governance

Ireland’s six national parks are ‘category two’ protected areas, fully owned and managed by the state for the purposes of conservation and conservation-sensitive visitor use.

Primary responsibility for them rests with the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. Within the minister’s department the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) handles their day-to-day operation.

NPWS manages the Irish state’s nature conservation responsibilities under national and European law, and is charged with the conservation of a range of ecosystems and populations of flora and fauna in Ireland including through SACs, SPAs and natural heritage areas (NHAs). Consultation with interested parties is an integral element of the designation process.

The process of formal designation of NHAs has now commenced. In December 2002 the process of protecting the first batch of natural heritage areas began. To date 75 raised bogs and 73 blanket bogs have been designated. Under the Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000 NHAs will be legally protected from damage from the date they are formally proposed.

Management plans are being prepared for each of Ireland’s national parks, setting out the objectives for each park over a five-year period, in consultation with liaison bodies that represent the views of all stakeholders, including farmers, conservation interests, commercial interests, state bodies and visitors. To date two plans have been prepared, for Killarney and Wicklow Mountains.



Conserving wildness: Glenveagh National Park

National parks in Ireland

How many?	How many sq km in total?	How much of the country do they cover?	What are they for?	What is their international status? (IUCN category)
6	612	1%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conservation</li><li>• Conservation - sensitive visitor use</li></ul>	II

Ireland: Population: 4 million Area: 70,282 square kilometres

Funding is provided centrally by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government’s National Parks and Wildlife Service. Expenditure divides almost equally between current and capital items. Current expenditure includes staff costs, running costs, maintenance and utilities; capital expenditure includes the construction of visitor facilities, removal of invasive species, land acquisition and species reintroduction. Significant expenditure is also undertaken in research and monitoring.

Access is free of charge, although a modest fee applies in the case of certain visitor facilities such as guided tours and audio-visual presentations. Other sources of revenue include publications, refreshment facilities and licence revenue from commercial operations such as boating.

Ireland does not have specific national parks legislation at present although it is intended that this legislation will be considered in the coming years. Currently they are managed under the Bourn Vincent Memorial Park Act 1932 (part of Killarney National Park) and the State Property Act, 1954. Most of the land is designated SAC under the EU Habitats Directive, transposed into Irish Law in 1997.

Ireland’s national parks are operated in accordance with important legislation on nature conservation: the Wildlife Act, 1976, the Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000 and the European Union (Natural Habitats) Regulations, S.I. 94/1997.

The Wildlife Act, 1976 provides a strong legislative base for nature conservation. The species protection provisions, including those regulating hunting, were quite comprehensive, to the extent, for example, that they largely foresaw similar aspects of the EU Birds and Habitats Directives.

Nature conservation legislation was substantially enlarged and improved by the Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000 and the European Union (Natural Habitats) Regulations ■

‘Things founded clean’

Northern Ireland’s extraordinary landscapes have been close to the hearts of its people for centuries. Today its treasures, from mountains to loughs, await discovery by yet many more from beyond its boundaries.



Ancient integrity: the Giant’s Causeway is a World Heritage Site and part of the Causeway Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Most famous is the Causeway Coast. Here incredible rock formations are made all the more impressive by small harbours, fisheries and farms delicately poised on the storm-torn coastline.

Antrim offers dramatic contrasts: gentle bays are separated by blunt headlands; exposed moorland gives way to sheltered valleys; wide open expanses to enclosed farmland.

In contrast are the peaceful riverbank scenery, meadows, woods and pastoral land of the Lagan Valley near Belfast, with rich history ranging from ancient monuments to reminders of more recent linen production.

To the east lies Strangford Lough, an almost landlocked sea, where the tips of drowned hills create a spectacular myriad of islands, while, on shore, the hills roll away. Its neighbour the Lecale Coast is different again: a place of delightful coves between headlands, sandy beaches, and famous colonies of seals.

Famed in song and close to the heart of everyone in Northern Ireland are the Mourne Mountains and their hinterland, one of the most picturesque mountain districts in Ireland.

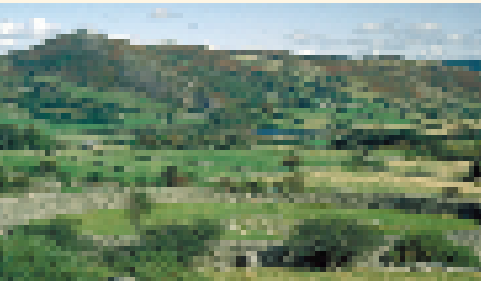
The Ring of Gullion is a unique geological landform, a ring of hills with a mountain - Slieve Gullion — at its heart, and rich associations with Irish legends and myths. Sperrin’s vast moors, penetrated by narrow glens and deep valleys, are also rich in folklore.

At Binevenagh, the severe skyline of the cliffs makes a breathtaking contrast with the outstanding expanse of the fine beach of Magilligan Strand.

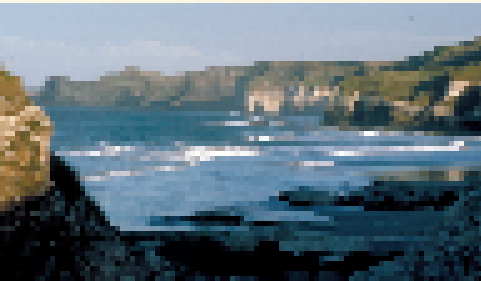
With the development of new legislation to designate national parks here, and an increasing understanding and awareness of the huge value and potential of Northern Ireland’s rich and fascinating landscapes, a time of great opportunity lies ahead.

History

Northern Ireland’s first area of outstanding natural beauty was designated in 1965. The peaceful riverbank scenery of the Lagan Valley (2,072 ha) provides a haven close to the capital Belfast.



Down to the sea: the mountains of Mourne Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Geological marvel: the Causeway Coast

The low and varied shoreline between Strangford Lough and the Mournes, the Lecale Coast, was designated in 1967 (3,108 ha). Its southern tip lies within an extensive sand and dune system at Dundrum Bay. From there to Strangford village, the coastline is a place of delightful coves, dramatic headlands and secluded sandy beaches.

Sperrin (101,006 ha) became the largest protected landscape in Northern Ireland in 1968 and encompasses a largely mountainous area of great geological complexity. It stretches from the Strule Valley in the west to the perimeter of the Lough Neagh lowlands in the east, with the southern Burren area noted for its lakes, sandy eskers and other glacial features.

Strangford Lough, (18,647 ha) was designated in 1972. This ‘inland sea’ is set within a diverse lowland topography, with islands and rolling hills. The lough is of international importance for wintering wildfowl, and the shores, woodland, meadows, streams, marshes, and farmland provide landscape diversity and great nature conservation interest.

Beneath the cluster of fine peaks, cliffs and rock pinnacles, the mountain slopes of Mourne, designated in 1986 (57,012 ha)

descend through moorland, woodland, field and farm before meeting the coast. Slieve Croob lies as a northern outlier to the main massif.

The stunning scenery of the Antrim Coast and Glens (70,600 ha) was designated in 1988. A high undulating plateau is cut by deep glens which open north and eastwards to the sea. Slemish Mountain rises abruptly, its wildness in sharp contrast to the near fields of the Braid Valley below. Rathlin Island, lying offshore to the north, is rich in historical, geological and botanical interest.

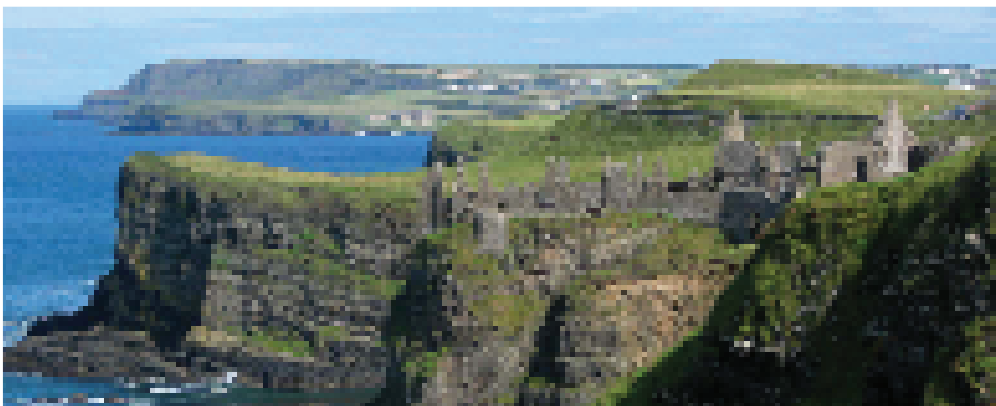
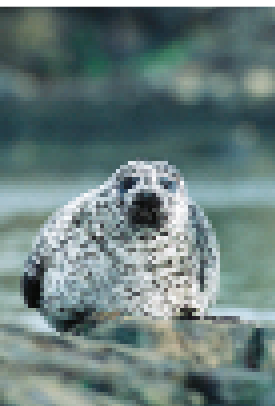
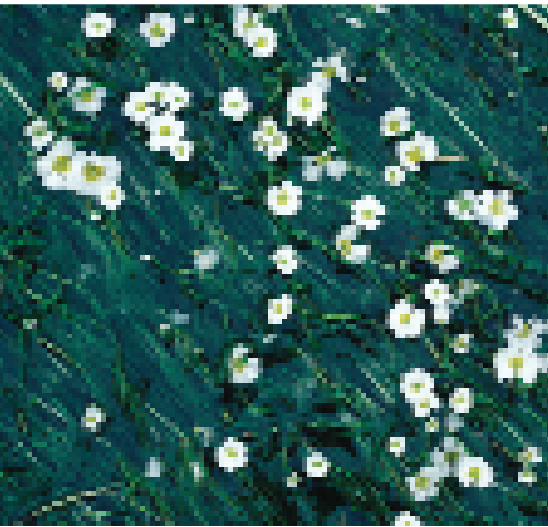
Northern Ireland’s most renowned area internationally, and only World Heritage Site, is the Causeway Coast. Designated in 1989 (4,200 ha), this place of extraordinary beauty encompasses 29 kilometres of dramatic coastline, a rich and fascinating wildlife and a wealth of geological marvels.

The Ring of Gullion, designated in 1991 (15,353 ha) has at its centre the heather clad bulk of Slieve Gullion mountain, with an encircling ring of lower rugged hills. Rich wildlife habitats of heath, bog and woodland contrast with the neatly patterned fields and farms.

The newest area - Binevenagh — was designated in 2006 (14,100 ha). It replaces the earlier North Derry AONB, originally designated in 1966, which was slightly smaller. It includes cliffs, estuary, beach and sand dunes. The steep, round-topped grassland hills and the sandy shoreline are the dominant features, separated from the rocky shore of Donegal by just one kilometre of sea ■

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8	9

- 1 Ring of Gullion
- 2 Mourne’s 12 peaks make up a picturesque mountain region
- 3 Water Crow foot — a protected herb of rivers and streams
- 4 and 5 Mourne provides a wide range of outdoor activities among stunning scenery
- 6 Sperrin’s moors, glens and valleys
- 7 Bottle nosed dolphin
- 8 Common seal
- 9 Causeway Coast, formed by violent geological activity 50 million years ago



Management and governance

The Environment and Heritage Service, an agency within the Department of the Environment, designates protected landscapes in Northern Ireland.

The only designation currently in use to identify areas of high landscape quality is that of area of outstanding natural beauty. This designation has had an unusual history in that it has appeared twice in legislation.

The first was the 1965 Amenity Lands Act. AONBs designated under that act attracted additional, modest planning controls. The current legislative basis - the Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands Order (NI) 1985 - is more oriented towards positive management. It provides that the department may formulate proposals for an AONB or national park to:

- conserve or enhance the natural beauty or amenities of that area;
- conserve wildlife, historic objects or natural phenomena within it;
- promote its enjoyment by the public;
- provide or maintain public access to it.

To facilitate a more pro-active management approach, the Department is committed to implementing its policy to redesignate all AONBs under the 1985 legislation. This has already been achieved for Binevenagh (formally North Derry) and is currently underway for Sperrin, Strangford and Lecale AONBs. The aim is to achieve consensus leading to an integrated approach, where environmental, recreational and community interests are seen as interdependent.



The management process is indirect, as areas are in multiple ownership. The aim is to involve, inform and empower as many people and organisations as possible, working together and creating a common agenda. Management structures such as the Mourne Heritage Trust and Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust have been established to facilitate integrated sustainable management of these special landscapes and work is underway to develop and implement management plans for each AONB.

The first steps are being taken towards developing national parks, with Mourne as candidate due to its scale, value, community participation and tradition of access. The independent Mourne National Park working party was established in October 2004 by the Department of the Environment to undertake public consultation and to advise on key aspects of a potential national park in Mourne. Members have been selected to bring local and wider perspectives to proposals for such a park.

In May 2005 the working party commissioned a study to determine a proposed boundary for the national park. A final report on a boundary proposal was presented to the working party in October 2005.

Public consultation on the proposed boundary for the potential national park is due to start in September 2006, which will be followed by recommendations from the working party to the government ■

Below left: Otter

Below: Binevagh — basalt crags and coastal plain



Areas of outstanding natural beauty in Northern Ireland

How many?	How many sq km in total?	How much of the country do they cover?	What are they for?	What is their international status? (IUCN category)
9	2, 861	17%	Conservation, enjoyment and access	V

Northern Ireland: Population: 1.7 million Area: 13, 576 square kilometres

‘For ever and ever’

The magnificent countryside and coast of Scotland is unequalled in extent and drama in the British Isles. Although coming late to official designation, some of its best landscapes are now protected as national scenic areas and national parks.



Mighty mountains: Beinn Eighe, Britain’s first national nature reserve, part of Wester Ross National Scenic Area

Closer to the major settlements of the Scottish lowlands, regional parks have also been established to provide recreational opportunities in attractive countryside.

Scotland’s 40 national scenic areas cover a wide range of outstanding landscapes, from the settled countryside and coast of Dumfries and Galloway and the Borders, to the remote islands, coasts and mountains of the north and west of the country such as St Kilda, Foula, Skye and Ben Nevis.

A journey of less than an hour will bring 70 per cent of Scotland’s population to its first national park, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs. Located on the natural and cultural boundary between lowland and highland Scotland, the landscape is a spectacular mix of water, forest and mountain, providing a range of recreational opportunities for all. In Loch

Lomond itself it includes the largest expanse of freshwater in the UK. Some 15,000 live in the park, with tourism and land management the main sources of employment.

Further north is Britain’s largest national park, the Cairngorms: a wild and extensive upland area of mountains, moorlands, sparkling rivers, glens and remnants of Caledonian pine forest. It is also an important recreational area and home to some 23,000 people many of whose livelihoods are based on the outstanding natural heritage of the area and who are closely involved in its management.

In the future, Scotland looks set to achieve a UK first with the creation of a coastal and marine national park currently being planned. New legislative measures to make the national scenic area designation more effective are also proposed.



History

Although the Cairngorms were first mooted for designation in 1931, it was not until 1997 that the government decided to establish Scotland’s first national parks.

Instead in 1951 five areas were designated as ‘national park direction areas’. These were replaced in 1981 by a new designation used only by Scotland — the national scenic area, which recognised areas that have outstanding scenic interest or unsurpassed attractiveness. 40 national scenic areas were established. In the late 1980s, three regional parks were also established to promote and manage recreation over extensive areas of land.

In 2000, the new Scottish Parliament passed enabling legislation for national parks and the designation process for the first two began. Following much consultation and debate, Loch

Lomond & the Trossachs was designated in March 2002 and the Cairngorms in January 2003. The government plans to establish a third in one of Scotland’s outstanding marine and coastal areas.

The new national parks provided a means to begin to manage some of the other long-standing designations in their wider social, economic and ecological context. They cover extensive areas and include a range of designations such as national nature reserves and national scenic areas which are already formally recognised by the IUCN (as category four habitat/species management area and category five protected landscapes respectively).

The parks also include areas covered by national and European designations for the protection and management of biodiversity. Collectively, these designated areas represent some of the key ‘building blocks’ for the development of a park-wide approach to management.

As a family, Scotland’s protected landscapes are of national importance for their wildlife, landscape and the opportunities they provide for outdoor recreation. They are also nearly all ‘lived-in’ landscapes, important for the food, timber, water and energy they provide and also to the communities who live in, and make their living in, them ■



Isle of Harris, Western Isles

Management and governance

Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) is the government body in Scotland which provides advice to government and others on the care, understanding, enjoyment and sustainable use of the natural heritage, including its protected landscapes. It is the main champion of this family, responsible for communicating its roles, and providing a national perspective on its future development.

Different roles and management arrangements apply to each of Scotland’s protected landscapes. A new government body is established to manage each national park. The management of national scenic areas and regional parks mainly rests with local authorities.

Scottish national parks have a wider set of aims than parks elsewhere. Their role in promoting the sustainable social and economic

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1 Cairngorms National Park

2 Dyke dipping

4 Topper on Loch Morlich, Cairngorms National Park

5 Buachaille Etive Mor, a Munro within Ben Nevis and Glencoe National Scenic Area

6 Isle of Harris, Scarista beach

7 Ecologist surveying

8 Walkers

3 and 9 Rum — a haven for birds and animals including deer







development of their local communities while safeguarding the outstanding natural and cultural heritage of the area is explicitly recognised in legislation. Their aims are:

- to conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage;
- to promote the sustainable use of the natural resources of the area;
- to promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public; and
- to promote sustainable social and economic development of the communities of the area.

The purpose of a national park authority is to ensure that these aims are collectively achieved in relation to the national park in a co-ordinated way. In exercising its functions it must seek to accomplish this purpose. If in relation to any matter it appears to the authority that there is conflict between the first aim of national parks (the conservation aim) and any of the others, the authority must give greater weight to the first aim.

One of the key tasks of the park authority is the preparation and implementation of a national park plan for the area. Dedicated staff, powers and resources are available to develop and take forward this plan – currently the two parks have a collective annual budget of nearly £10 million and employ over 150 staff.

Local involvement in the designation, management and governance of the park is seen as critical. In Scotland’s first two national

parks 20 per cent of the governing board of the authority is directly elected by people who are on the electoral roll for the area. Of the remainder, local authorities and Scottish ministers each select 50 per cent. The park authorities are also required to establish one or more advisory groups to involve key interests and organisations in the management of the area.

National scenic areas are areas of outstanding scenic significance, identified in 1978 by the then Countryside Commission for Scotland (subsequently subsumed into SNH). They have long been recognised in the development planning system and in national forestry and agricultural support, though little oversight or active management has taken place. New legislative proposals for this designation are designed to address this. Landscape management strategies will be prepared for the suite of national scenic area designations and new resources will be made available to implement them.

Regional parks are also managed by one or more local authorities, depending on the area they cover. Each park has a small number of dedicated staff with funding provided by local authorities and SNH. An important function of the park is the development of a strategic management plan for the area. While the main reason for establishing regional parks is the need to manage and facilitate outdoor recreation, the management goals of these areas now include the conservation and enhancement of the natural heritage and the promotion of appropriate land management activity and related development ■

Top: Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park

National parks in Scotland

How many?	How many sq km in total?	How much of the country do they cover?	What are they for?	What is their international status? (IUCN category)
2	5, 678	7%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conservation</li><li>• Sustainable use</li><li>• Recreation</li><li>• Sustainable development</li></ul>	V

Regional parks in Scotland

3	862	1.1%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recreation</li><li>• Enjoyment</li><li>• Education</li><li>• Conservation</li></ul>	V
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National scenic areas in Scotland

40	13,783	12.7%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conservation</li><li>• Enjoyment of landscape</li></ul>	V
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Scotland: Population: 5 million Area: 77, 925 square kilometres

‘Efo’n hen a myfi’n iau’

In the spectacular protected landscapes of Wales, valued by local people and visitors, a rich natural world of mountain and coast coexists with long-standing human use, and is protected for future generations.



Landscape legacy: Cribyn and Neuadd from Pen y Fan, Brecon Beacons National Park

Snowdonia is home to nearly 26,000 people, who live and work in its towns and villages, and on its hill farms. An estimated 6-10 million visitor days are spent every year enjoying its mountainous beauty and activities. It also supports unique nature, like the Snowdon Lily and the Rainbow Beetle.

The Brecon Beacons heights include Y Mynydd Du, the Black Mountain. Beneath the surface there are magnificent caves and passages, adorned with stalagmites and stalactites. From the end of the fifteenth century onwards industries such as ironmaking, charcoal burning, limestone extraction and coal mining began to be set up here. Currently it is estimated that 32,000 people live in the national park.

Wales boasts a truly coastal national park on the Pembrokeshire Coast, a spectacular landscape of rugged cliffs, sandy beaches,

wooded estuaries and wild inland hills. With a resident population of around 24,000 it is the most densely populated UK national park.

The areas of outstanding natural beauty are no less rich and rare, embracing many landscapes - the coastal scenery of Anglesey, Gower and Llŷn, the hills of the Clwydian Range and the more pastoral, wooded, river landscapes of the Wye Valley.

There is a rich variety of scenery and wildlife. The Clwydian Range has steep hills and lush green vales; Gower ranges from craggy limestone to saltmarsh and dune and Llŷn has cliffs, sandy bays and dunes and grey seals.

The ancient Ynys Môn, Isle of Anglesey, has habitats from marine heaths to mud-flats, and the gentle Wye Valley is one of the finest lowland landscapes in Britain.

## History

The history of national parks and AONBs in Wales is similar to England's, as until 1991 there was one organisation across both countries which dealt with matters relating to protected landscapes.

The classic coastline of the Gower (188 sq km) was chosen to be the very first AONB in England and Wales in 1956. In Wales this was followed by the long low peninsula of Llŷn



Pen y Cloddiau from Moel Famau, Clwydian Range Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

(161 sq km) in 1957, the Isle of Anglesey (221 sq km) ten years later, the meadows and woodlands of the Wye Valley (326 sq km total in England and Wales) in 1971 and the undulating hills of the Clwydian Range (157 sq km) in 1985. The Wye Valley is the only cross border area, with 36 per cent in Wales and the rest in England.

The high mountains, wooded valleys, rivers, lakes and coastline of Eryri or Snowdonia (2,132 sq km) led to its designation as one of the earliest National Parks in 1951, and the first in Wales. This was followed by the Pembrokeshire Coast (620 sq km) in 1952 with its islands. In south Wales, the Brecon Beacons (1,370 sq km), with 470 million years of geological history in its hills, was designated in 1957.

The Countryside Commission came into being in 1968, covering both England and Wales. The 1990 Environmental Protection Act established an integrated conservation agency in Wales made up of the Nature Conservancy Council and the Countryside Commission's Office for Wales, which became known as the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW). All the statutory responsibilities for the designation and advising on protected landscapes matters transferred to CCW in Wales ■

## Management and governance

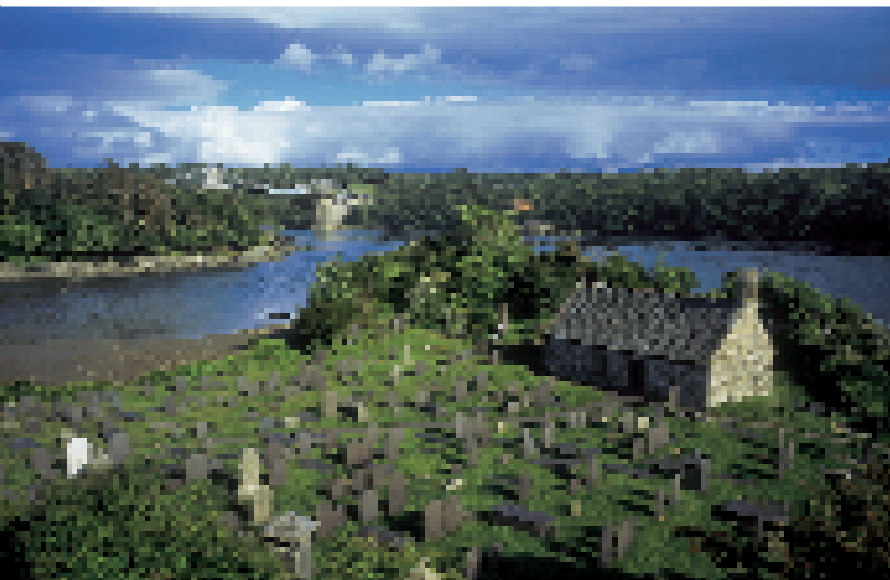
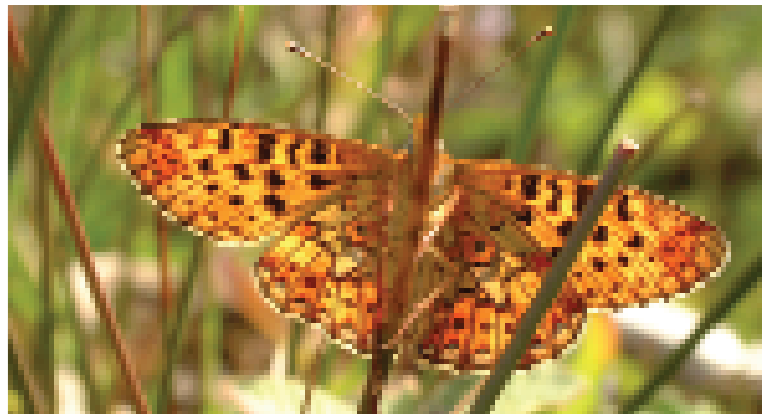
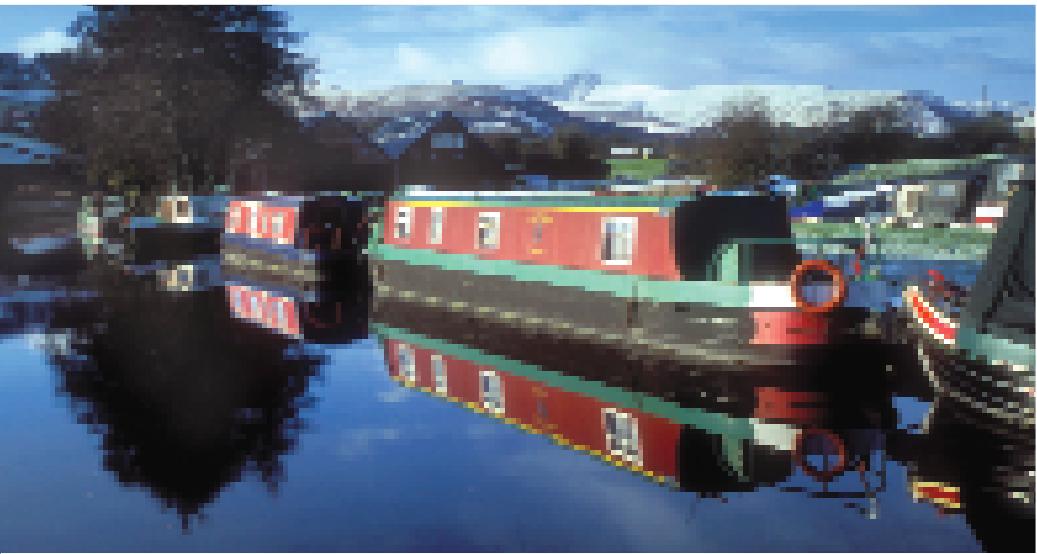
The Countryside Council for Wales is the national wildlife conservation authority for Wales and an Assembly Sponsored Public Body (ASPB). It is responsible for advising the Welsh Assembly government on national parks, has powers to designate and initiate boundary reviews, and is a statutory consultee on development plans and proposals. The legislative context is as in England.

Following the Welsh National Park Review 2003-4, aspects of national park governance are under consideration. At present national park authorities are made up of members from their constituent unitary authorities and members appointed by the Welsh Assembly Government, to reflect the national and local context in decision making. CCW advises on appointments. The national parks report to the government through its Environment, Planning and Countryside Committee.

All national parks in Wales have their own authorities responsible for governance and

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- 1 Tintern Abbey, Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- 2 Natural arch - the Green Bridge of Wales, Pembrokeshire National Park
- 3 Monmouth and Brecon Canal, Brecon Beacons National Park
- 4 Celtic cross, Carew, Pembrokeshire National Park
- 5 Drystone walling, Loggerheads Country Park, Clwydian Range Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- 6 Pearl-bordered Fritillary - the Wye Valley is famed for butterflies and moths
- 7 Conwy, Snowdonia National Park
- 8 Puffins





management; and for planning matters. All other local government functions remain with the relevant local authority.

Following policy changes and the implementation of European directives CCW is currently updating its advice on national park management plans, working with national park authorities to incorporate best practice and include elements of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment.

In Wales funding of national parks comes partly (75%) from the Welsh Assembly Government and partly from the precept (25%) levied from constituent local authorities. CCW provides advice to the Welsh Assembly Government on the allocation of resources to and between the national park authorities in Wales in accordance with Section 72 (2) of the Environment Act 1995.

CCW recognises the importance of the management planning process in identifying need and the associated resource requirements and over the past few years has worked closely with the Welsh national parks to develop a needs based funding formula. This formula is designed to help inform decision-making over the distribution of any additional resources between the three parks.

Development activities beyond the boundaries of these protected landscapes may impact on their special qualities, therefore as nationally important designations there is a requirement for them to be consulted on planning applications which are likely to have an impact on their areas and statutory purposes.

The AONBs are governed as part of the local authority system with Joint Advisory Committees (JACs) or similar, made up of a

partnership of local authority members, and representatives from community groups, local business and environmental groups.

By law AONB authorities must produce a management plan for their area. The management planning process in Wales is based on the Pressure-State-Response model. The first stage is an assessment of the resource (state of environment report for the area) and the identification of the special qualities for which the area was designated, followed by identification of issues, and an assessment of the response necessary.

Integral to the process is the formulation of a shared vision for the area, and creation of a set of management objectives to ensure effective protection. Management is set within the context of achieving a sustainable future for the area. The plan is agreed in consultation with local communities and organisations.

AONB management plans are often adopted as supplementary planning guidance by local authorities. As part of the implementation stage an action plan or work programme is devised. Measurable objectives linked to Performance Indicators provide information on progress.

There is no ‘funding formula’ for Welsh AONBs. Part of the funding comes via grants from CCW related to delivery of the action plan or work programme and this is match funded by local authorities.

Since 2000-1 the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) has been available for applicants to submit ideas for projects within or benefiting the Welsh protected areas. The fund provides grant aid for innovative, sustainable, environmental projects, which involve and benefit local communities ■

Top: Choughs

National parks in Wales

How many?	How many sq km in total?	How much of the country do they cover?	What are they for?	What is their international status? (IUCN category)
3	4,122	20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conservation</li><li>• Recreation</li><li>• Education</li><li>• Helping economic and social well-being</li></ul>	V

Areas of outstanding natural beauty in Wales

5	844	5%	Conservation of natural beauty	V
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Wales: Population: 2.9 million Area: 20,640 square kilometres

Key contacts

Subject	Organisation	Website
European protected areas	Europarc Federation	europarc.org
English protected areas	Countryside Agency	countryside.gov.uk
Irish protected areas	National Parks and Wildlife Service	npws.ie
Northern Irish protected areas	Environment and Heritage Service	ehsni.gov.uk
Scottish protected areas	Scottish Natural Heritage	snh.org.uk
Welsh protected areas	Countryside Council for Wales	ccw.gov.uk

The EUROPARC Federation — the Federation of Nature and National Parks of Europe — brings together a wide range of organisations and individuals involved in the policy and practice of managing parks and protected areas. Its members represent well over 400 nationally protected areas in 38 European countries. The EUROPARC Federation aims to raise awareness of and support for protected areas and to promote good management practices among them. Its overall purpose is to promote ‘conservation without frontiers’.

EUROPARC Atlantic Isles is a section of the EUROPARC Federation. It has an expanding membership of over 60 organisations who bring with them a wealth of practical experience, from national parks, regional parks, areas of outstanding natural beauty, local authorities, academic institutions, government agencies and non-governmental organisations. It is the only organisation to have such a comprehensive resource network spread across the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland and Iceland, and linking into the rest of Europe.

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Editor: Lucy Galvin  
Design: Brennan Design





I only went out for a walk, and finally  
concluded to stay out till sundown,  
for going out, I found,  
was really going in.

John Muir (1838-1914)

*John of the Mountains, 1938*

### ***A place called England***

England is **not flag or empire**, it is not money, it is not blood,  
It's limestone gorge and granite fell, it's Wealden clay and Severn mud,  
It's blackbird singing from the may tree, lark ascending through the scales,  
Robin watching from your spade, and English earth beneath your nails.

*From a song by Maggie Holland (1949- )*

### ***Windharp (for Patrick Collins)***

The sounds of Ireland,  
that restless whispering  
you never get away  
from, seeping out of  
low bushes and grass,  
**heatherbells and fern**,  
wrinkling bog pools,  
scraping tree branches,  
light hunting cloud,  
sound hounding sight,  
a hand ceaselessly  
combing and stroking  
the landscape, till  
the valley gleams  
like the pile upon  
a mountain pony's coat.

*John Montague (1929 -)*

### ***Landscape and I***

Landscape and I get on together well  
Though I'm the talkative one, still he can tell  
His symptoms of being to me, the way a shell  
Murmurs of oceans.

Loch Rannoch lapses dimpling in the sun.  
Its hieroglyphs of light fade one by one  
But recreate themselves, their message done,  
**For ever and ever.**

*Norman MacCaig (1910-1996)*

### ***The Peninsula***

When you have nothing more to say, just drive  
For a day all around the peninsula.  
The sky is tall as over a runway,  
The land without marks, so you will not arrive  
  
But pass through, though always skirting landfall.  
At dusk, horizons drink down sea and hill,  
The ploughed field swallows the whitewashed gable  
And you're in the dark again. Now recall

The glazed foreshore and silhouetted log,  
That rock where breakers shredded into rags,  
The leggy birds stilted on their own legs,  
Islands riding themselves out into the fog,

And drive back home, still with nothing to say  
Except that now you will uncode all landscapes  
By this: **things founded clean** on their own shapes,  
Water and ground in their extremity.

*Seamus Heaney (1939- )*

### ***Y mynydd a minnau***

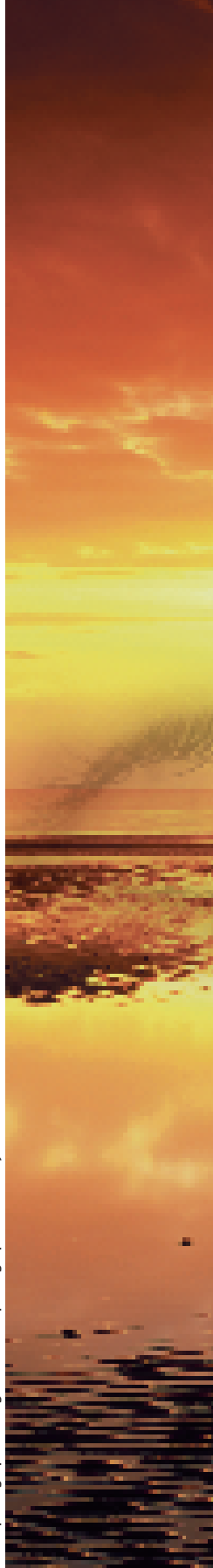
Un enaid oedd i'n dau — tragywydd —  
Y mynydd a minnau;  
**Efo'n hen a myfi'n iau** — ganrifoedd,  
Uwch ael ei diroedd a'i uchelderau.

### ***The mountain and me***

Our souls were as one — eternal —  
The mountain and me;  
The ancient and the young — centuries,  
Hovering over the hills.

*T. H. Parry Williams (1887-1975)*





Cover photograph montage based on a photograph - 'Dawn' by Tom Mackie



**EUROPARC**  
**Atlantic Isles**

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