**Some basic comparative facts about UK and French protected landscapes**

Phil Holden – Sept 2025

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| **UK** | **France** |
| 15 **National Parks**, which unlike those in many European countries, are IUCN Category V landscapes – populated and land is mostly privately owned. | 11 **National Parks**  8 in metropolitan France, plus 3 in overseas territories. Strictly protected areas (IUCN Cat II). |
| National Parks have two purposes:   * To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage * To promote opportunities for the public understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Parks | The national park as a public institution and the national park charter are intended to develop and enhance forms of land use that are compatible with conservation, natural habitats and species residing in the core zone, and to a lesser extent in the partnership zone, and to prevent negative impacts on the core zone. |
| Independent National Park Authorities | Part of the State (national government). |
| [National Parks UK // British National Parks](https://www.nationalparks.uk/) | [Portail des parcs nationaux de France](https://www.parcsnationaux.fr/fr) |
| 46 **National Landscapes**  Formerly known as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (and this is still the legal designation). Found in England and Wales, and as AONBs in Northern Ireland under different legislation, but none in Scotland. | 59 **Parcs Naturels Régionaux**  57 across metropolitan France (including Corsica) and 2 in overseas territories. |
| Legal purpose ‘to conserve and enhance natural beauty’. | The purpose of a Regional Natural Park is to protect and promote the natural resources, human resources and cultural heritage by implementing an innovative and environmentally-friendly policy of land-use planning and economic, social and cultural development. |
| 5-year statutory Management Plan | 15-year Park Charter |
| Designated area does not change without the rare scenario of a legal order. | Communes opt in to the Parc or not at beginning of each Charter period. |
| Most are not organisational entities – teams are mostly hosted by a local authority, with various Partnership advisory structures. | Since 1995 the ‘syndicat mixte’ is the only model of organisation. Each Parc is an independent entity. |
| Designated from 1956 to 1995.  Proposals for further designations were recently shelved by government. | 1967 enabling legislation. Most recent Parc designation completed in 2024, with more planned. |
| Size from 16 km2 to 2038 km2 | Size c500 km2 to 3950 km2 |
| Total workforce of all teams approx. 400? | Total workforce of all teams approx. 2,000 |
| [National Landscapes](https://national-landscapes.org.uk/) | [Fédération des Parcs naturels régionaux](https://www.parcs-naturels-regionaux.fr/) |