

Protected Species and Habitats

Protected Species

Many species in the UK are given legal protection via a number of different pieces of legislation. It is therefore important to be aware of which species are protected under which legislation as there are different requirements and obligations.

The majority of protected species are listed in the form of regularly-updated [spreadsheets of conservation designations for all UK species](#). The list is compiled by The JNCC (Joint Nature Conservation Committee) - the public body that advises the UK Government and other administrations on UK and international nature conservation.

The spreadsheet gives details of the conservation designations of over 13,000 UK "taxa" (the biological hierarchy into which living things are organised). Each entry in the list has been assigned a designation due to factors including rarity, threat or legal status in Great Britain or the UK. It is a collation of many different "designation" lists including country-specific lists, and lists produced by national and international conventions or directives.

There is also a helpful guidance document on how to use the spreadsheet and a document detailing the constituent lists included in the spreadsheet.

Legislation and designation types

This is **not** a comprehensive list, but just an indication of the range of legislation:

- Bern Convention (Appendices 1, 2 and 3)
- Bonn Convention – Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species (Appendices 1 and 2, AEW, ASCOBANS, EUROBATS)
- Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) UK priority species list
- Birds Directive (Annexes 1, 2.1 and 2.2)
- Birds of Conservation Concern (Red/Amber list and not based on IUCN criteria)
- Convention on Migratory Species
- EC CITES (Annexes A, B, C and D)
- Global Red list status (includes red listings for pre-1994, 1994 and 2001 IUCN guidelines)
- Habitats Directive (Annexes 2, 4 and 5)
- Nationally Rare/Scarce (not based on IUCN criteria)
- Nationally Scarce and Nationally Rare Species (also with an IUCN status)
- National Red Lists (includes red listings based on pre-1994, 1994 and 2001 IUCN guidelines)
- OSPAR
- Protection of Badgers Act 1992
- Species of Principal Importance in England, Scotland, Wales and North Ireland (NERC section 41 and 42 lists)
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (Schedule 2, 4 and 5)
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (Schedule 1, 5 and 8)

As previously stated, the JNCC conservation designations list is not fully comprehensive; for example, local 'Red List' assessments are omitted, and for some reporting categories only selected annexes/appendices/schedules are included. The Red List is a critical indicator of the health of the World's biodiversity; it is compiled by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, and contains details of animals, plants and fungi that have been assessed for their risk of extinction.

Protected Habitats

If sites have high ecological or geological value, they may be given legal protection via a designation. For more information see the '**Protected Sites**' leaflet in this series.

Some individual trees, groups of trees and woodlands are offered protection via Tree Preservation Orders, and hedgerows have some protection via the Hedgerow Regulations. For more information see the '**Trees**' and '**Hedgerow**' leaflets in this series.

Ancient woodlands, veteran trees, wood pasture and hedgerows are also given protection through the [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#), which states that 'development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists'.

Ancient woodlands that are listed in the [Ancient Woodland Inventory \(AWI\)](#) have been deemed to be irreplaceable habitats and some will also have legal protection through other designations such as SSSIs. Other irreplaceable habitats include blanket bogs, limestone pavement, sand dunes, salt marsh and lowland fen.

The information below will help you locate ancient woodland, ancient trees, wood pasture and parkland, but these lists are not exhaustive and appropriate surveys may be required to identify the specific nature of a habitat. If a site has survey evidence that it is ancient woodland but is not on the AWI, you should contact Natural England for further advice.

It should always be remembered that 'irreplaceable habitats' are, by definition, irreplaceable

Further information and advice

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

UK conservation designations spreadsheet

<https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/conservation-designations-for-uk-taxa/>

Natural England's Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI)

https://naturalengland-defra.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/a14064ca50e242c4a92d020764a6d9df_0

MAGIC interactive mapping site

<https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

The Woodland Trust's Ancient Tree Inventory - click on 'Tree search' and enter a postcode

<https://ati.woodlandtrust.org.uk/>

Tree Preservation Orders

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tree-preservation-orders-and-trees-in-conservation-areas>