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# Appendix 1 Natural Heritage Designations in West Lothian

## International

### Special Areas for Conservation (SACs)

In accordance with the EC Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (92/43/EEC — commonly known as the Habitats Directive), SACs require to be designated to safeguard rare and threatened species and habitats listed in the Directive. Terrestrial SACs are normally SSSIs. Together with SPAs, SACs will form a network of European sites to be known as Natura 2000. The aim of the network is to maintain rare or endangered species and habitats at a favourable conservation status throughout Europe.

### Special Protection Areas (SPAs)

Special Protection Areas are areas designated under Article 4 of the European Community Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds 1979 (EC79/409), commonly known as the Wild Birds Directive. To comply with this Directive the Government is required to classify SPAs. These can include land and marine areas. Within these areas special measures are required to protect wild birds and their habitats particularly rare or vulnerable species listed in the Directive, and regularly occurring migratory species. Terrestrial SPAs are normally SSSIs.

### Ramsar Sites

Ramsar Sites are wetlands of world wide importance particularly those containing large numbers of waterfowl. The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat was ratified by the Government in 1976. It promotes the wise use of wetlands, and requires them to be protected from damage or pollution.

## National

### Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)

SSSIs are key areas of marine conservation and wildlife importance. They are special for the nature conservation value of the plants, animals or habitats as well as any rock formations. In addition to land they can include rivers, freshwater and inter-tidal areas as far as the low water mark. SSSIs are designated by SNH under the provisions of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and in accordance with specific guidelines to protect the special interest of the site from damage or deterioration. SSSI status does not change the use of the land but local authorities, owners and occupiers must consult with SNH on any developments or activities which may affect the site.

### National Nature Reserves (NNRs)

National Nature Reserves are areas of national or international importance for nature conservation and include some of the most important natural and semi-natural habitats in

Great Britain. They are declared by SNH under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 for the purpose of study, research and the preservation of flora, fauna, geological and zoological interests. An NNR, unlike an SSSI, has to be managed appropriately to retain its special status.

### Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLVs)

The requirement to designate AGLVs is set out in Circular 2/1962. They are defined by local authorities in development plans with a view to safeguarding areas of regional or local landscape importance from inappropriate developments.

## **Local**

### **RIGS**

Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites (RIGS), designated by locally developed criteria, are currently the most important places for geology and geomorphology outside statutorily protected land such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The designation of RIGS is one way of recognising and protecting important Earth science and landscape features for future generations to enjoy.

The concept of RIGS was first initiated by the Nature Conservancy Council (NCC). RIGS sites started life as SSSIs denotified after the Geological Conservation Review (1997-1990). The statutory agencies wished to secure their conservation in another form. RIGS sites are those which, whilst not benefiting from national statutory protection, are nevertheless regionally or locally representative sites where 'consideration of their importance becomes integral to the planning process' according to the Earth Science Conservation Strategy (ESCS).

### **Regional Parks**

Regional Parks, designated under Section 48A of the Countryside (Scotland) Act 1981, are extensive areas of the countryside which provide for the co-ordinated management of informal recreation alongside and in close collaboration with the management of other land uses in the area. The four Regional Parks in Scotland, extending in total to 86,160 ha, were established by the former Regional Councils and confirmed by the Secretary of State for Scotland. Management of the Parks has now transferred to the new Local Authorities.

### **Country Park**

A Country Park is an area designated for people to visit and enjoy recreation in a countryside environment. The purpose of a country park is to provide somewhere for visitors who do not necessarily want to go out into the wider countryside. Visitors can enjoy a public open space with an informal atmosphere, as opposed to a formal park as might be found in an urban area. For this reason country parks are usually found close to or on the edge of built-up areas, and rarely in the countryside proper.

### **Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)**

A Local Nature Reserve is a place with special local natural interest, set up to protect nature, and for people to enjoy and appreciate. Local Authorities have exclusive statutory powers to set up and manage LNRs under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 as amended by the Local Government and Planning (Scotland) Act

1982.

### **Inventory of Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes**

The Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes in Scotland provides a representative sample of important historic gardens or landscapes. It includes private gardens, parks, policies in country estates and botanical gardens. The Town and Country Planning General Development Procedures (Scotland) Order 1992 and Circular 6/1992 puts an obligation on planning authorities to consult with SNH and Historic Scotland on any developments within listed sites.

### **Wildlife Site**

A network of sites all over Scotland is officially protected because of their value for wildlife and nature conservation - examples include National Nature Reserves and Sites of Special Scientific Interest. In order to complement this network, the Scottish Wildlife Trust has developed a system of 'Wildlife Sites', small areas which are of known local wildlife importance. SWT aims to secure the future of these sites for wildlife by identifying locally important habitats and species,

and by working in co-operation with landowners to protect them.

For the Lothians, Lothian Wildlife Information Centre (LWIC) has two categories of Wildlife Site:

1. Listed Wildlife Sites — recorded in the 1970s
2. Wildlife Sites (1993) — recorded in the 1993

### **SWT Reserves**

The Scottish Wildlife Trust (SWT) is also committed to acquiring and managing wildlife reserves: to help safeguard wildlife sites, to provide examples for others to follow, and for the public's benefit and enjoyment.

### **Habitats and species lists**

- Ancient Woodland Inventory
- Semi-natural Woodland Inventory
- Intermediate Bog Inventory
- Raised Bog Inventory
- Great Crested Newt Sites (Scotland)