

County Wildlife Sites

Information for landowners

Support for owners and managers

The high wildlife value of a County Wildlife Site is often a direct result of land management practices that allow wildlife to flourish. These are often of a traditional nature, such as coppicing of woodlands, and grazing and cutting of meadows.

Cumbria Local Sites Partnership recognises that site owners and managers might like guidance when looking after a County Wildlife Site. The partnership can provide free advice on maintaining and enhancing the special value of these sites as well as providing information on grants available to help.

Who are Cumbria Wildlife Trust?

We are an independent local charity largely funded by our members. We work closely with landowners, communities and other organisations to support their work to conserve Cumbrian wildlife. We own and manage 41 nature reserves across the county covering a total area of approximately 3650ha (9000 acres).

For further information, please contact the Wildlife Sites Officer:

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Cumbria LA8 8LX
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Working in partnership with:
Cumbria County Council, Lake District National Park Authority, District Councils, Natural England, Forestry Commission, National Trust, Tullie House Museum, Environment Agency.



What are County Wildlife Sites?

County Wildlife Sites are areas of land recognised for having high wildlife value, containing rare or threatened habitats and species.

They are considered to be of at least county, sometimes national, importance for their wildlife. Found on both public and private land, they include habitats such as ancient woodlands, heathlands, flower-rich hay meadows, marshy grasslands, bogs and tarns.

What does having a site mean to landowners and managers?



You will receive:

- ✓ Recognition that your land management has produced an important wildlife site.
- ✓ FREE information about the wildlife on your site, including plant species lists, habitat maps and aerial photos.
- ✓ FREE expert advice about conservation management and grant aid, if required.
- ✓ Your County Wildlife Site will assist in attracting funding from the Environmental Stewardship, Higher Level Scheme. Your site most likely contains Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitats and/or species.



There is:

NO requirement to change your land management or carry out extra work.

NO restrictions on sporting activities such as shooting and fishing.

NO new rights of access, although we may very occasionally ask permission to repeat our survey.

We will **NOT** publish land ownership details, or advertise your site to the general public.

Your land will **NOT** be submitted for consideration as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

It is **NOT** a legal designation, unlike SSSIs or Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). Whilst County Wildlife Sites are not protected by legislation their importance is recognised by local authorities when considering any relevant planning application.



How does the County Wildlife Sites system work?

In Cumbria, County Wildlife Sites are identified, selected, monitored, and protected through the Cumbria Local Sites Partnership. Cumbria Wildlife Trust administers the system on behalf of the partnership. Other members include Cumbria County Council, Lake District National Park Authority, District Councils, Natural England, Forestry Commission, The National Trust, Tullie House Museum and the Environment Agency.

Potential sites are initially identified through the study of existing habitat survey data and aerial photos. Site visits are then carried out by an experienced ecological surveyor who records wildlife habitats and species found on the site. Survey results are then assessed by an expert panel of ecologists (from the different partnership organisations) against strict selection criteria. All sites meeting the necessary standard are selected as County Wildlife Sites. Existing sites are resurveyed when information is out of date, typically within 10 years.

The County Wildlife Sites system is intended to be flexible so newly discovered sites can be added whilst those known to have deteriorated may be removed.

Why do we need County Wildlife Sites?

Collectively these sites form an important network of habitats that provide refuge for our county's diverse flora and fauna. County Wildlife Sites complement SSSIs and nature reserves by helping maintain links between them. Maintenance of this network is vital to allow migration of species across Cumbria, ensuring the richness of our countryside continues. Many of these sites contain habitats and species that are priorities for conservation in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan*.

*Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitats or species are on a list drawn up by the government after the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. They often take priority for conservation funding.

