



Achieving
30x30
in England
on land and at sea

Wildlife and
Countryside





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Foreword

Protected areas continue to play a vital role worldwide as we emerge from the global pandemic and intensify efforts on conserving biodiversity, reversing damage and degradation, and restoring natural ecosystems in light of the nature and climate emergencies. It has become clear that there is no option other than concerted and collective action and at scale.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) advocates a single global system to define and classify protected areas and the Protected Areas Working Group (PAWG), set up under the IUCN's National Committee for the UK, has been reconvened to demonstrate leadership in this area of conservation policy and practice, supporting the UK Government and devolved administrations in their application of the IUCN definitions and guidance.

It goes without saying that the global ambition towards achieving protection and conservation of at least 30% of the planet by 2030 will require significant focus, energy and skill from across non-government and government bodies, landowners and managers, and local communities.

Transformative approaches to governance and management, going beyond traditional protected areas to areas that qualify as 'Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures' (OECMs) will be essential to meet the goals of the new post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. We need innovation and creativity but also recognition that traditional approaches are a significant part of what we need too. We simply need more, better, more joined up, no different to the ambition set out by Professor Sir John Lawton in his review from 2010.

The UK has a rich history of protecting areas for conservation, with the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act leading the way to a system for statutory protection across the UK. The legacy of this original legislation is a plethora of protections and management regimes for specific sites and initiatives to conserve and restore landscapes for nature, involving people and organisations who understand what has worked well and what needs to be improved to meet international standards. The lessons and experiences from those who care for and manage land for nature can help inform approaches to achieving the 30x30 target and the voice of the Wildlife & Countryside Link and its members in this response needs to be heard and advice sought as critical decisions are made.

Dr. James Robinson
Chair of the IUCN UK National Committee's Protected Areas Working Group





The Government has taken an excellent lead in the rhetoric of area-based conservation; we hope it will now commit to create the network of site protection in England that would **bring the promise – and our natural environment – to life.**

Achieving 30x30 in England on land and at sea



The Government has pledged at least 30% of land and sea for nature by 2030 – the “30x30” target.

This is an important promise, with the potential to turn round the decline of nature in the UK. Environmentally protected areas are our most effective way to safeguard and restore the natural world. Extending the area of effective protection will be critical in halting and beginning to reverse biodiversity loss by 2030. The UK will be expected to deliver 30x30 as a single party, but each of the four UK countries must play a part in its success with 30% met in each nation.

Getting 30x30 right could also inspire worldwide action at the upcoming conference of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The Government has already shown good leadership through the Global Ocean Alliance and with a credible plan for 30x30 ahead of COP 15, it could make a real difference to global talks.

On the other hand, if the Government’s approach to 30x30 is lacklustre, it could be a smokescreen for a lack of meaningful action and make other countries less willing to act. A “lines on the map” approach of simply counting up existing designated areas – regardless of whether or not they are well-managed for nature – would amount to little more than self-congratulation. There is, however, a risk that the Government’s current approach is headed in that direction. Such an approach would be contrary to the IUCN definition, which describes a protected area as a clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values. The international definition of protected areas is recognised by international bodies such as the United Nations and many

governments as the global standard for defining and recording protected areas and it should be the touchstone against which to measure our ambition in the UK.

There is a risk that the Government’s current approach is headed in that direction.

So far, the Government has repeated the claim that **26%** of England’s land already meets the 30x30 standard, counting large areas that are neither primarily protected for nature nor in good ecological condition. This includes much of our National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), which are not primarily designated for nature’s protection. Unless these designated landscapes are reformed and supported to deliver nature’s recovery, National Parks and AONBs should not be counted toward the 30x30 target in their entirety. Similarly for the marine environment, the Government says that over **40%** of English waters are protected, basing that figure on the extent of Marine Protected Areas, even though most of these areas are not effectively managed.

Counting existing designations in this way would mean that 30x30 brings few environmental benefits over the status quo. Worse still would be an approach that adopted a loose definition of 30x30 as a replacement for existing effective site protection, such as the National Site Network.

However, we welcome the Government’s intention to publish a new nature Green Paper, which should include firm steps for making 30x30 meaningful. This is a chance to enhance and extend the UK’s existing protected site network with a next generation of sites managed for nature – protecting our best sites, marking out new areas for recovery, and connecting them up into resilient ecosystems.

In this report, we set out two basic conditions for inclusion in the 30x30 network: land and sea should be protected against harm, and positively managed for nature. We take stock of the starting point for 30x30 and find that the current extent of land and sea meeting those criteria is limited – just a few percent. Then we set out our recommendations for how the Government could meet the 30x30 commitment quickly and affordably: extending the National Site Network, strengthening designated landscapes, enhancing marine protections and adding new site-based planning designations for nature’s recovery.





Making 30x30 meaningful

Without protected areas, the long-term decline of nature would have been even faster and more destructive. To halt and reverse the loss of natural habitats and wildlife, much more space will need to be designated for nature – both to protect the remnants of important ecosystems and to allow nature to recover.

The quality of protection within existing and new sites will also need to be improved. Making 30x30 meaningful requires action to protect and restore habitats to ensure nature is recovering and thriving in these areas.

The **30%** should protect and deliver gold standard outcomes for nature in the most important terrestrial and marine habitats in England, connected and buffered by the wider Nature Recovery Network, and supporting the integration of nature across all of England's land and sea.

To be eligible for inclusion in the **30%**, monitoring should show clear evidence both of good management for nature and that the land or sea is either in good condition for nature or showing demonstrable signs of ecological recovery. The kind of management should be adaptable to changing ecological circumstances and may vary from highly species-specific and interventionist approaches such as long-term agri-environment systems to more hands-off approaches like rewilding.

In some cases, both protection and effective management will be conferred by a single designation, such as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). In other cases, designations and mechanisms may need to be layered together to combine protection from harm with long-term effective management.

For an area to be included in the 30% target, it should meet two conditions:

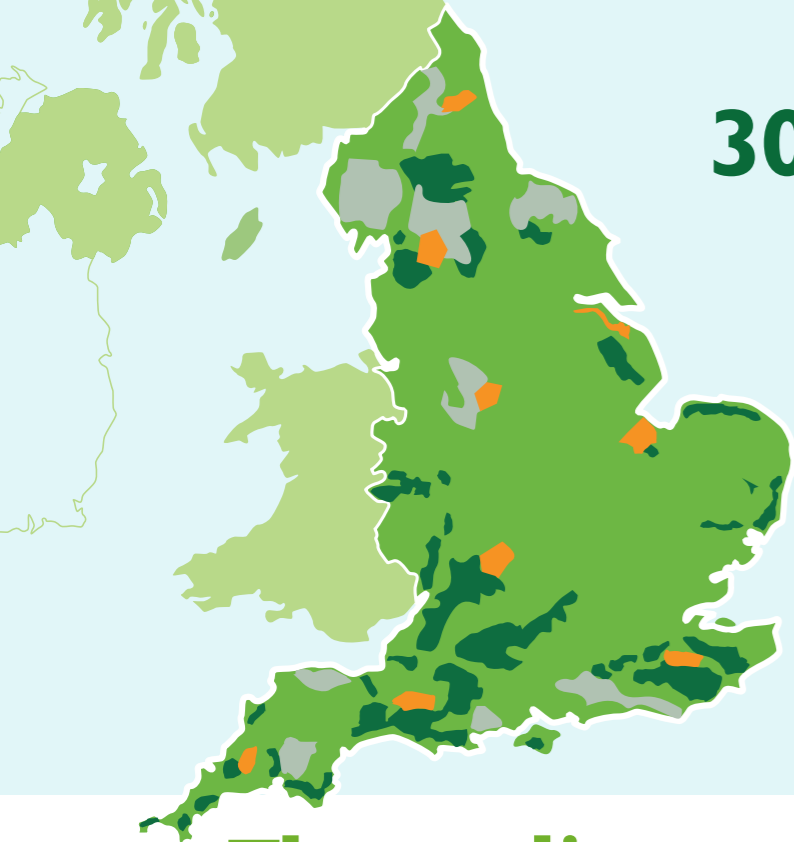
1) Protected for nature in the long-term.

The entirety of the **30%** should be afforded long-term protection for nature and long-term protection against damage such as pollution, overexploitation, invasive non-native species, habitat destruction and harmful development.

2) Effectively managed for nature.

As well as protection from harm, areas counted toward the **30%** should be afforded appropriate management for nature's recovery. They should be well-managed for nature and regularly monitored at appropriate intervals as part of a programme of management and investment to ensure that they are in good or recovering condition.





30X30

↑ 8%

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

Only SSSIs in good condition (3% of England's total land area) **should count** towards the target

↓ 7%

National Parks

↓ 13%

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs)

National Parks and AONBs (20%) **should not be counted** towards the target in their entirety

The reality on land

To date, the Government has seriously underestimated the effort required to deliver 30% effectively.

Nature is not in good condition in many of the areas the Government currently counts towards the **30% target**. Even where there are environmental designations in place, this includes many poorly-managed sites that are not in good ecological condition and have not been monitored for years.

On land, the true area that is currently protected and well-managed for nature on land in England is much lower than the **26%** the Government claims is already protected for nature.¹

In reality, designated landscapes (National Parks and AONBs), which make up the majority of the **26%** already claimed by the Government, are not designated primarily for nature's protection and frequently lack sufficiently strong management priorities and actions for nature's recovery. In many cases, nature in conservation sites within these designated landscapes is in poorer condition than nature in sites outside them.

There are several reasons why our designated landscapes do not currently meet the two criteria for inclusion in 30x30:

- The statutory purposes of National Parks and AONBs do not include nature's recovery.
- The land covered by National Parks and AONBs also includes areas where it would never be possible to meet the criteria, such as towns and villages, roads, quarries and other industrial activities.
- Most of the land in National Parks and AONBs is privately owned. Even where land is in public ownership, there are few conditions in place to prevent damaging land management or to ensure positive management for nature. Much stronger duties and requirements should be put in place for all relevant bodies to ensure that land in these areas is effectively managed for nature's recovery. The bodies responsible for running National Parks and AONBs also need the powers and resources to ensure these requirements are delivered effectively.

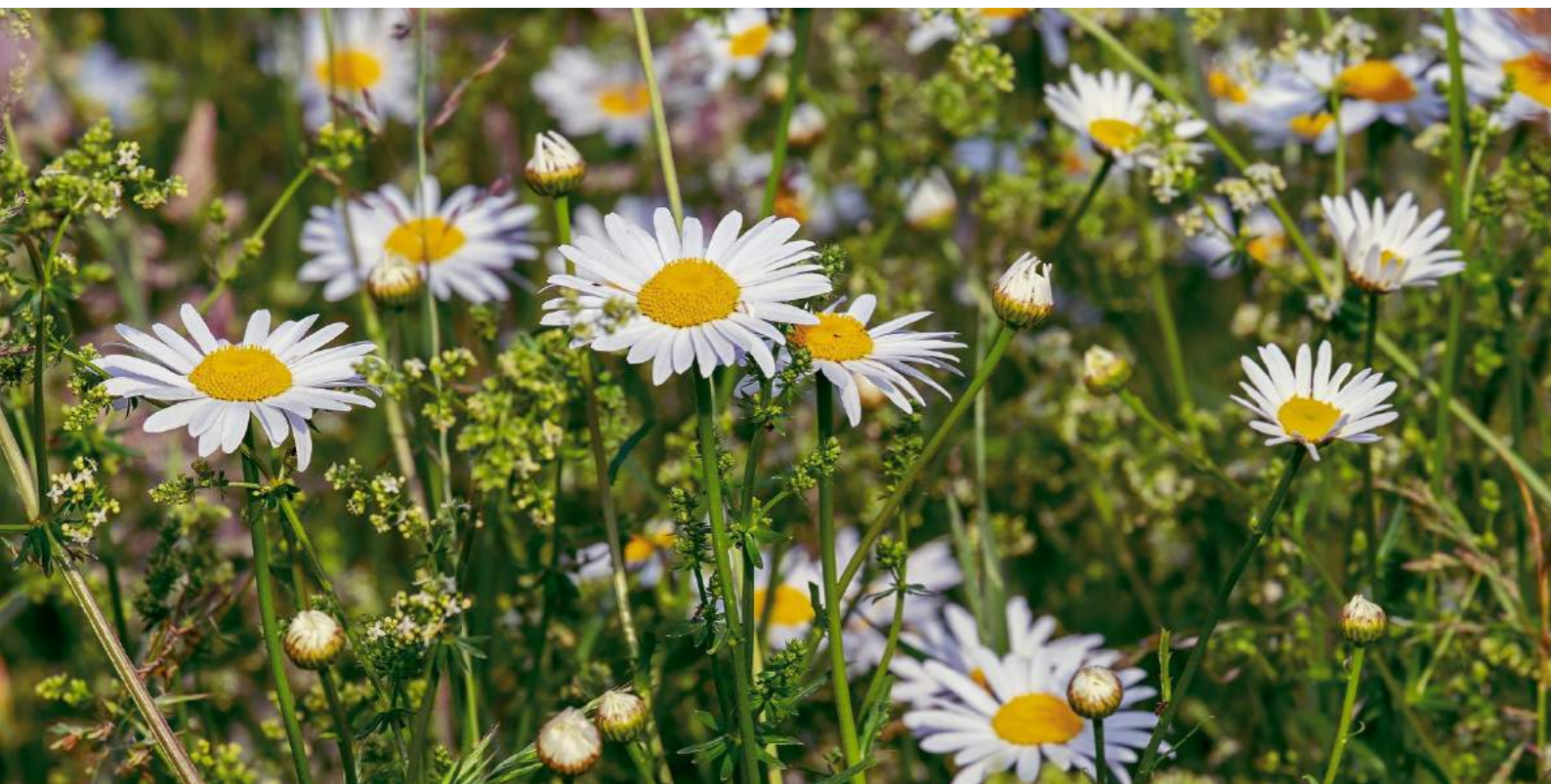
Quite simply, our designated landscapes were protected for different reasons. They were protected for their natural beauty (including wildlife), cultural heritage and recreational opportunities. As the Glover Review has pointed out, these purposes need to be modernised and reformed to reflect the growing importance of nature conservation and the urgency of the ecological emergency.

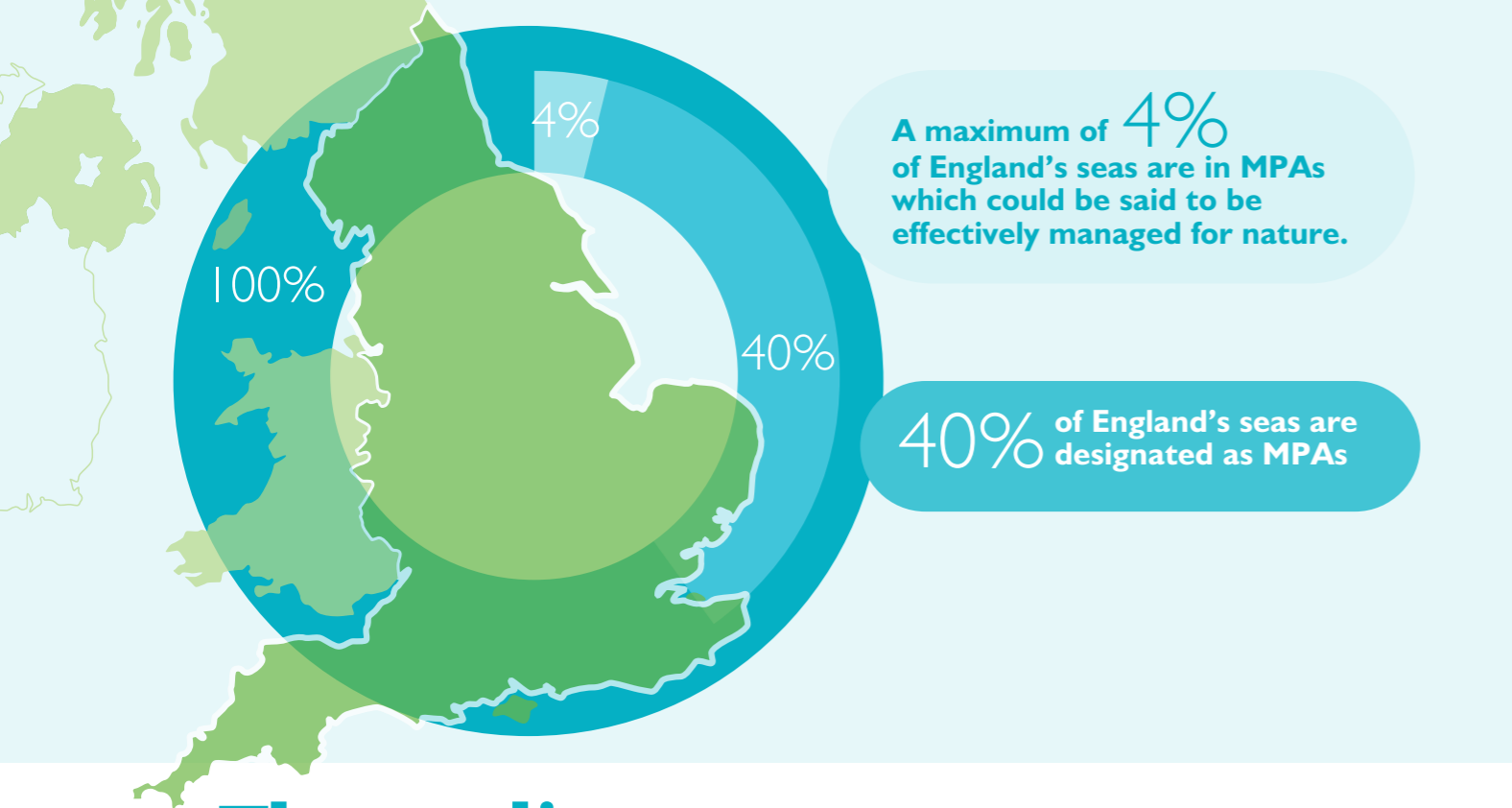
In future, there is the potential for large portions of the National Parks and AONBs to be adapted to contribute toward the **30%**, but currently only those areas that are also designated as SSSIs or as part of the National Site Network of environmentally protected sites should be eligible.²

National Parks and AONBs should not be counted toward the 30x30 target in their entirety.

Even in the **8%** of England's land statutorily designated for nature's protection, including SSSIs, SACs, SPAs and Ramsar sites, fewer than **40%** of SSSIs are in favourable condition.³

In other words, by our reckoning, only **3%** of land could be said to be genuinely protected for nature.





Marine Protected Areas should not be counted toward the 30x30 target unless effective management measures and monitoring are in place.



The reality at sea

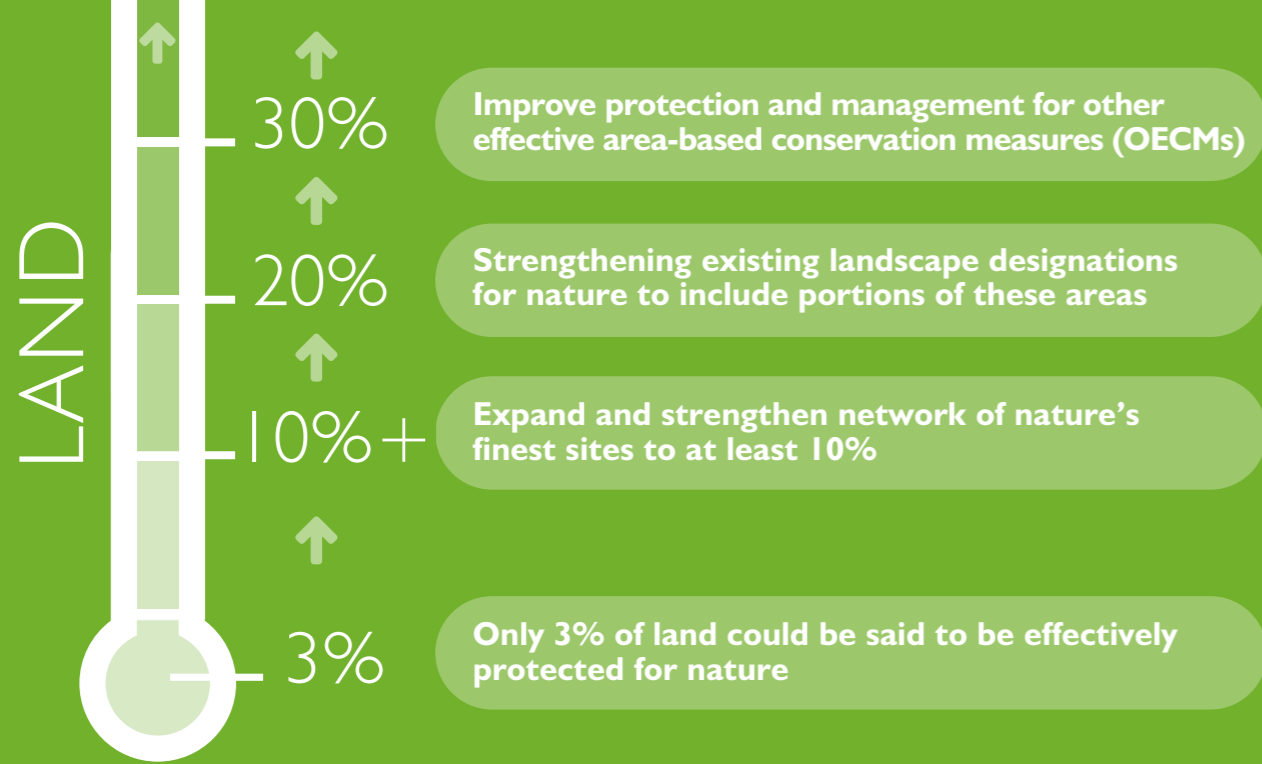
There is also a considerable gap between rhetoric and reality for protection of our seas. The Government has suggested that 40% of the seas around England are already protected for nature in Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). There are 182 MPAs, including areas designated as part of the National Site Network, SSSIs and Marine Conservation Zones.

Some welcome improvements are underway. Forthcoming protections to manage activity in four of England's offshore MPAs are under consultation by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) which if implemented, would protect the sites from damaging fishing activity. The MMO is undertaking a three-year programme to manage impacts from fishing activity in all English offshore MPAs by 2024. And the Government's new Highly Protected Marine Area (HPMA) programme could be a positive step in delivering protections needed for nature.

However, we believe that **MPAs should not be counted toward the 30x30 target unless strong protections, effective management measures and monitoring are in place.** Of the 40% of English seas designated as MPAs, a recent assessment of the UK network found that management measures had only been fully implemented in 10% of sites. Taking this into account, a maximum of 4% of our marine environment could be said to be effectively protected for nature, rather than the 40% suggested by the Government. This figure could be even lower than 4%, as poor monitoring makes it impossible to adequately assess nature's recovery in MPAs.

Overall, the majority of the MPA network fails to meet the criteria for inclusion in the 30x30 due to:

- **Failure to prevent damaging activities:** All but one of our offshore MPAs designated to protect the seabed are being damaged by bottom trawling and dredging, amongst other activities such as cabling routes and offshore developments. Bottom trawl and dredge vessels spent at least 89,894 hours fishing the seabed inside MPAs protected for their seabed features over a 3-year period.⁴
- **No potential for entire ecosystems to recover:** Current designations allow single features protection, rather than a whole site approach that delivers recovery of the whole marine ecosystem. Management objectives usually aim only to maintain site status, against a baseline of degraded condition, rather than restore it.
- **Poor management of sites:** The UK Government supports the OSPAR⁵ guidance for assessing MPA management effectiveness which assesses the transparency, efficacy and progress of MPA management towards conservation objectives.⁶ An assessment using the OSPAR criteria found that management measures have only been fully implemented in 10% of sites in the UK network.⁷
- **Failure of monitoring:** To determine the benefit of the MPA network to nature, appropriate regular scientific and ecological monitoring is vital. But only 13% of the UK's MPAs have monitoring plans in place.⁸ Therefore, to a large extent, even where management measures are in place, we are unable to know whether they are delivering their objectives.
- **Limited and decreasing funding:** Analysis of MPAs in the North Devon Biosphere found the gap between current spending and that required to achieve a "well managed" site was on average £156,000 per MPA per annum.⁹ An assessment of regional MPA management effectiveness found sustainable funding sources to be the criteria on which all MPAs assessed performed most poorly.¹⁰



Achieving 30x30 on land

The Government has much further to go to achieve a meaningful 30x30 than it has so far recognised. Nevertheless, with targeted reform of existing designations and strategic action to identify and protect new sites for nature, the 30% target in England is achievable on land by 2030.

Strictly protected sites, sites designated for nature's conservation, should form the heart of the network, expanding from 8% now to at least 10% and towards 16%. This core should be bolstered by reform of our designated landscapes, which could enable other parts of these landscapes to contribute another 10% of the target. Combinations of other new and improved designations should fill the remainder, with a focus on connecting up habitats across the landscape and making space for nature to recover.

(1) Expand and strengthen the network of nature's finest sites to at least 10%

In England, many important remnants of natural habitats such as ancient woodlands, Important Invertebrate Areas and Important Plant Areas remain undesignated. The Government should undertake a comprehensive exercise to identify the most important areas, with significant wildlife populations or remaining fragments of unspoilt habitat and representative of all habitats.

These areas should be given the highest levels of legal protection (SSSI, SAC, SPA, Ramsar) as the finest nature sites. Scientific evidence suggests that to establish resilient ecological networks, 16% of land or more should be designated for strict protection and be in good condition.¹¹ The Government should aim for at least 10% to 16% or more of the land to be strictly protected in nature conservation designations by 2030 at the latest. This wildlife-rich core of sites would be the backbone of a Nature Recovery Network.

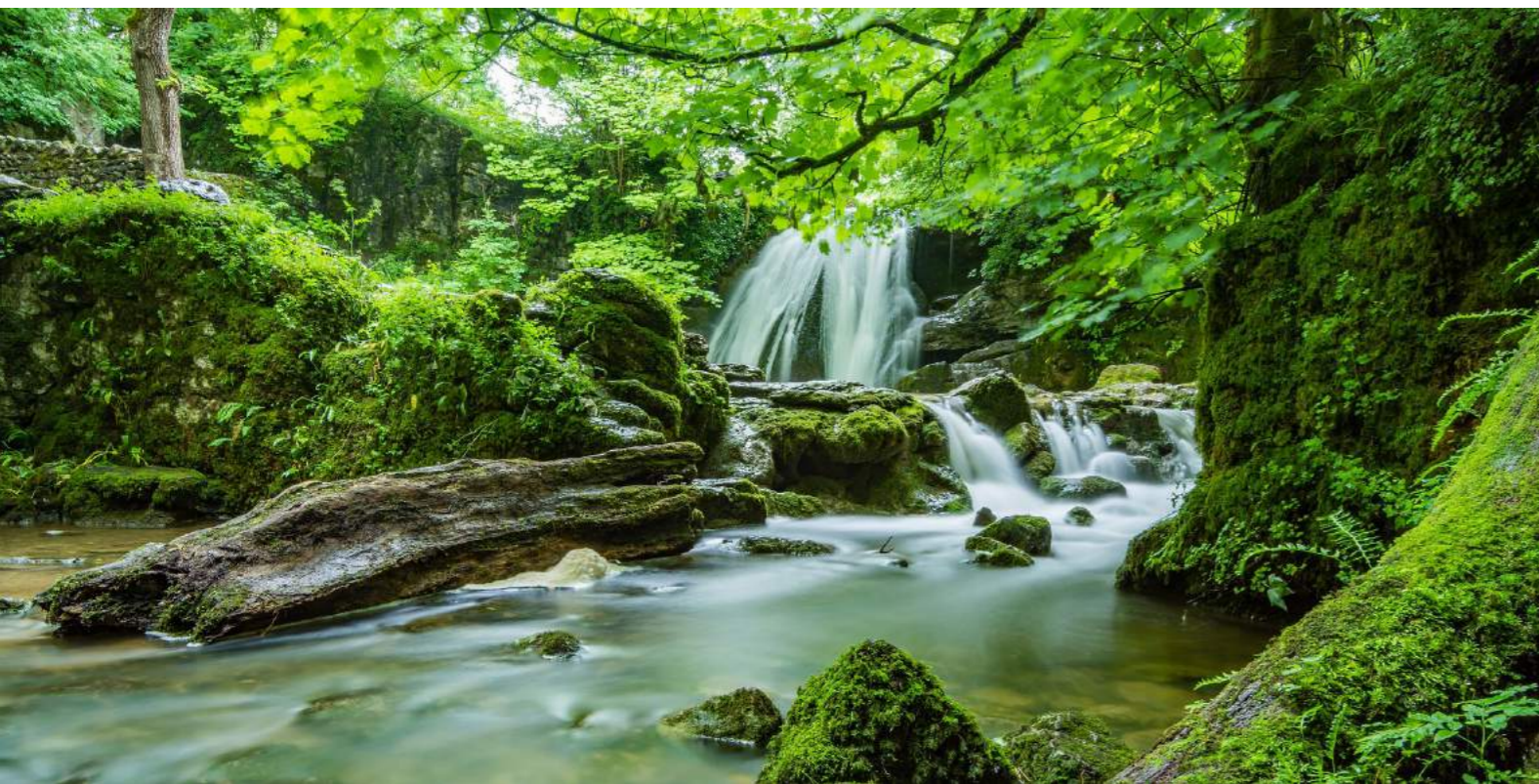
Many of the sites that should be designated for strict protection have already been identified. The recommendations from Natural England's reviews of SSSIs and UK SPA Reviews should be implemented.¹² All sites identified as meeting the guidelines for SSSI should be considered, rather than a representative sample.

Monitoring of these sites by Natural England should be regular, to ensure they are in good ecological condition. In 2021, 78% of SSSIs had not been monitored in the past six years.¹³ Improving this record will need substantial investment in Natural England's mapping and monitoring capabilities.

We recognise that the process of designating sites can be cumbersome and expensive, but this is in large part a feature of practice rather than a legal requirement. We would support the Government in taking a more pragmatic and expeditious approach to designating nature conservation sites.

We also recommend strengthening the guidance relating to development in strictly protected sites to clarify that damaging activities should only happen in the most exceptional circumstances. Substantial costs continue to be incurred when developers propose developments that would affect our most important wildlife sites. These costs could be reduced by reinforcing the interpretation of overriding public interest, this would reduce the number of speculative applications relating to strictly protected sites and ensure Natural England has the resources to assess and enforce good management for nature.

This would have the added benefit of providing additional clarity to developers and investors, and reducing the volume of reactive 'casework' undertaken by both Natural England and NGOs, liberating resource for proactive management and monitoring.



(2) Strengthening existing designated landscapes for nature

Designated landscapes have the potential to be extraordinary places for nature. Designated landscapes could make a crucial and genuine contribution to nature's recovery, if given a clear requirement to do so through amended statutory purposes, strengthened Management Plans and greater resources to deliver these actions.

Only those sections of designated landscapes that ensure protection against harm and effective management for nature should count towards the **30%**, once they are in recovering or good condition. We estimate that just less than half of existing designated landscapes may be able to meet the 30x30 criteria,¹⁴ contributing up to **10%** to the overall target.

The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and the Environment Act 1995 should be amended to strengthen the statutory purposes of National Parks and AONBs and to require all relevant bodies (including public authorities) to contribute to the development and implementation of Management Plans capable of delivering nature's restoration. This management should be adaptable to ecological circumstances and may range from highly species-specific and interventionist approaches such as long-term agri-environment systems to more hands-off approaches like rewilding. The new statutory purposes should include a strong emphasis on nature's recovery, as recommended in the Glover Review.

In order to fund the implementation of Management Plans, additional layers of long-term support are likely to be necessary. The Landscape Recovery component of the Environmental Land Management programme could help support and fund the creation and restoration of habitats at scale in designated landscapes.

There should be a requirement on all relevant bodies (including statutory undertakers, like water companies and energy companies) to further the purposes of designated landscapes, giving a clear obligation to undertake actions for nature's recovery. All undeveloped public land in designated landscapes should be effectively managed for nature. In some cases, this will involve specialised conservation management. In other areas, less intensively managed options such as rewilding have tremendous potential to contribute to nature's recovery at scale.

(3) Other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) could make up the remaining area.

A number of other site protection tools are already available that could be layered together or strengthened to make up the remaining portion of the 30x30 target.

We recommend that the forthcoming nature Green Paper should include an analysis of:

- (a) existing site protection options, and how they would need to be bolstered to meet our two criteria for inclusion in 30x30; and
- (b) options for any new designations where gaps remain.

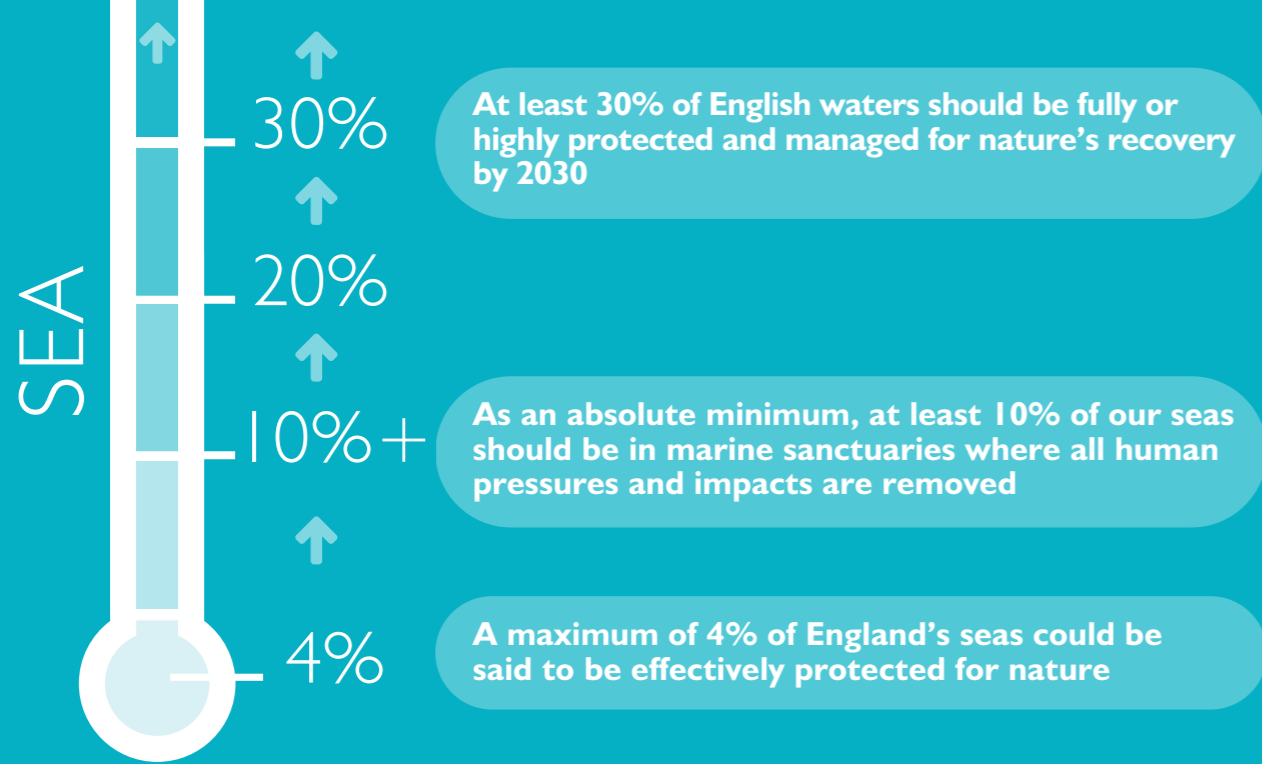
In particular, this third category should focus on creating spaces for nature to recover and connect up important habitats across the landscape. These may be sites that are currently of low biodiversity value, but with the potential to form important wildlife corridors or to grow into priority habitats in their own right.

Conservation covenants, Local Nature Reserves, National Nature Reserves, land owned by conservation NGOs, and a new planning designation such as Wildbelt could contribute towards the **30%** target, provided land in these areas meets the conditions of protected for nature in the long-term and good management for nature and in good or recovering condition.

In particular, we recommend improving protection for the **5%** of England's land already in Local Wildlife Sites to contribute towards the target. Stronger and more specified protection against harm for Local Wildlife Sites and resources for regular monitoring for these sites through Local Wildlife Site Partnerships would enable these areas to meet the criteria of long-term protection and good management and condition for nature in order to be included towards the target.

A targeted, robust and well-funded Environmental Land Management programme has a significant role to play in contributing to the positive management of land for nature. While participation in itself is unlikely to satisfy the conditions to be included in 30x30, land under an ELM scheme could contribute to 30x30 in combination with other designations that provide long-term protection for nature or potentially through participation alone, if designed with long-term protection from harm and positive management for nature. Long-term Landscape Recovery contracts may complement improved landscape designations (National Parks and AONBs) or conservation covenants to ensure more parts of those designations are suitable for inclusion towards the target. If the Landscape Recovery scheme is designed with multi-decade contracts that specify strict conditions preventing harm and requiring environmental management and monitoring to deliver gold standard outcomes for nature, it may be able to meet the criteria of long-term protection and positive management in order to contribute to 30x30.





Achieving 30x30 at sea

The foundations are also in place to achieve a meaningful 30x30 at sea. By delivering strong protections and ensuring good management for England's best marine sites for nature, delivery of 30x30 can help reverse the long-term decline of wildlife in England and set the UK on the path to a nature-positive economy.

The UK Government has promoted the Tristan da Cunha MPA in the UK Overseas Territories – the fourth largest 'no take zone' on the planet – as an example of the 30x30 initiative's success, urging other nations to follow suit. However, domestically the Government is failing to deliver MPAs which offer the same protections as in the Overseas Territories.

To remedy this inconsistency and contribute towards a **30%** target, the Government should commit to:

(1) 30% of English waters are fully or highly protected¹⁵ and managed for nature's recovery by 2030:

By 2030, at least **30%** of England's seas should be either within fully protected MPAs or licenced to allow only extremely limited activity, within the context of wider ecologically coherent networks. As an absolute minimum, at least a third of this area should be in marine sanctuaries where all human pressures and impacts are removed. This status would provide permanent protection for nature and permanent prohibitions against all extractive or destructive activities.

Across the wider MPA network, expectations should be reversed. Rather than permitting activities until they are prohibited, all environmentally harmful activities should be restricted by default unless they are licensed. Utilising scientific assessments based on enhanced monitoring, licensing decisions should be made on a case by case and site by site basis by relevant authorities, with only light extractive activities considered for consent, restricting all heavy extractive activities. Activities should only be permitted if it can be proven that they neither prevent ecosystem recovery nor inhibit progress towards conservation objectives. All other impacts should be minimised. There are currently no fully protected MPAs in England, or any which are managed in the manner outlined above, so this would require significant change in the protection and management of existing sites or new designations.

(2) Active, effective management, achieving good or recovering condition

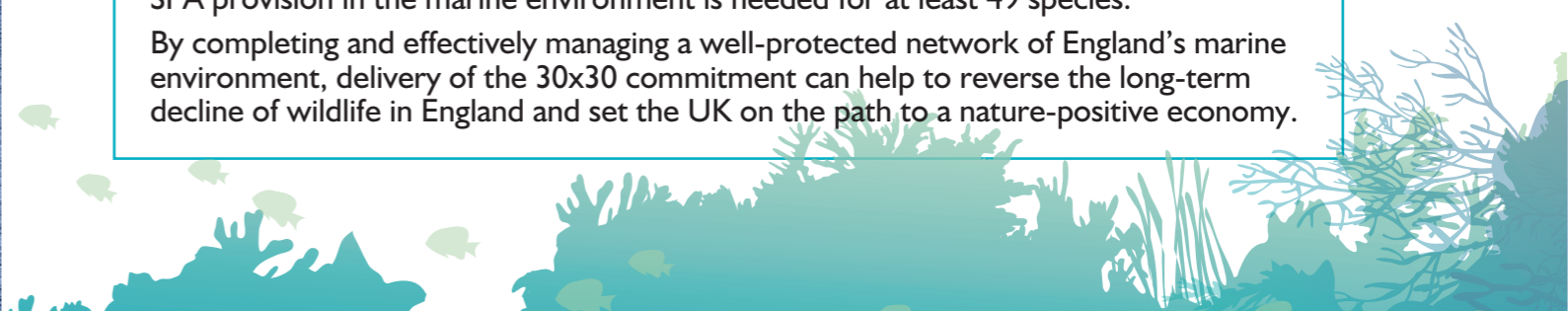
Marine protected areas that count towards the **30%** should be well-managed for nature, and must be regularly monitored at appropriate intervals as part of an ongoing programme of active management. MPAs must have demonstrable and ongoing enforceable rules, monitoring, evaluation, adaptive management and conservation outcomes.

Programmes of management should be delivered by appropriately resourced agencies with the primary purpose of achieving conservation objectives. Monitoring should show clear evidence of both good management for nature and that the site is either in good condition or showing demonstrable signs of ecological recovery. Recognising that achieving 30x30 will require significant funding, the Government must deliver the resources required for effective management and properly fund enforcement agencies to deliver conservation goals.

(3) A connected network across England's seas

The connectivity of areas of habitat has been identified as a key criterion in nature's recovery. While these areas may not always themselves contribute towards the **30%**, the Government must set targets and introduce policies that will increase the connectivity of areas of habitat and following its own guidance ensure, where possible, sites of similar features are not be separated by more than 40 – 80km. Key gaps in the network remain, such as the lack of protection of any of the feeding grounds of cliff-nesting seabirds. The last UK SPA Review published by JNCC highlights that "review of SPA provision in the marine environment is needed for at least 49 species."¹⁶

By completing and effectively managing a well-protected network of England's marine environment, delivery of the 30x30 commitment can help to reverse the long-term decline of wildlife in England and set the UK on the path to a nature-positive economy.





Conclusion

As world leaders gather in Kunming, China for the COP 15 next year, the chances of securing a global environmental treaty that can finally turn round the decline of nature may depend on the leadership of a few ambitious nations.

The Government's target in the Environment Bill to halt biodiversity loss by 2030 is a pioneering legal commitment for nature, setting a high bar of ambition for the negotiations.

If it can back up that statutory target with a credible plan for conservation action in the form of a strong 30x30 delivery programme in the Nature Green Paper, then the UK will genuinely be in a position to influence the course of worldwide conservation efforts and to improve the state of nature here in England.

At the moment, the Government's commitment to protect 30% of land and sea for nature by 2030 is ambitious, but there is a huge gap between rhetoric and reality. The claim to have already protected 26% of England's land and 40% of the sea is unfounded and risks undermining the positive diplomatic messages of 30x30, while doing nothing to genuinely restore nature domestically. We hope the Government will set the record straight on its starting point.

Nevertheless, the foundations are in place for a meaningful 30x30.

Ambitious expansion of the strictly protected core of the network, combined with strengthened landscape designations on land and better management of the MPA network at sea could deliver genuine protection for a third of our land and sea, affordably and quickly.

With the right combination of protection for existing habitats, corridors to connect precious places, and space for nature to recover across the landscape, achieving 30x30 could help secure a Nature Recovery Network across the country that will allow nature to thrive at last.

Our supporters



Analysis of designations

This table is an indicative view of the shortcomings and potential solutions for a range of designations that may be considered for inclusion in 30x30. More detailed analysis would be needed to finalise recommendations – an exercise that the Government could helpfully contribute to in its forthcoming nature Green Paper.

Designation	Condition 1: Protection against harm		Condition 2: Effective management for nature		Potential to meet the grade for 30x30 inclusion?
	Protection from development	Protection from damaging activities	Requirement for effective management	Means to secure management and monitoring	
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	Partial; presumption against development should be strengthened.	Yes; although protection limited to within boundaries of sites – impacts of activities on adjacent land need to be addressed.	Yes	Partial; mechanisms exist but inadequately applied and resourced. More regular monitoring needed to ensure good condition.	Yes if regular monitoring demonstrates good or recovering condition.
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partial; mechanisms exist but inadequately applied and resourced. More regular monitoring needed to ensure good condition.	Yes if regular monitoring demonstrates good or recovering condition.
Special Protection Area (SPA)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partial; mechanisms exist but inadequately applied and resourced. More regular monitoring needed to ensure good condition.	Yes if regular monitoring demonstrates good or recovering condition.
Ramsar sites	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partial; mechanisms exist but inadequately applied and resourced. More regular monitoring needed to ensure good condition.	Yes if regular monitoring demonstrates good or recovering condition.
National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) – areas not covered by nature designations	Partial; purposes should be amended to include nature's recovery, stronger duties on other bodies to further these purposes.	No; purposes should be amended to include nature's recovery, and mechanisms needed to secure this protection on land identified for management for nature.	Partial; purposes should be amended to include nature's recovery, stronger duties on other bodies to further these purposes, Management Plans should be strengthened with priorities and actions for nature's recovery and a requirement for their implementation.	No; duties on other bodies to further the purposes should be strengthened, Management Plans should be strengthened with priorities and actions for nature's recovery and a requirement for their implementation, more resources are needed to implement these Plans.	Only if; strengthened to secure the necessary protections, tools and resources, portions of these landscape designations could be included where regular monitoring demonstrates good or recovering condition.
Local Wildlife Sites	Partial; presumption against development should be strengthened.	No; protection from damaging activities should be required.	Dependent; on landowner entering an agreement for positive land management.	Dependent; on landowner and land management scheme. More resources are required through LWS Partnerships for management and monitoring.	Only if; strengthened or combined with other measures in order to provide protection against damaging land management and requirements and mechanisms for effective management and monitoring.

Designation	Condition 1: Protection against harm		Condition 2: Effective management for nature		Potential to meet the grade for 30x30 inclusion?
	Protection from development	Protection from damaging activities	Requirement for effective management	Means to secure management and monitoring	
National Nature Reserves	No; protection from development should be put in national planning policy.	Partial; no legal protection but are managed by bodies accredited for nature conservation.	Partial; no legal requirement but brand is assigned to land that is explicitly managed for nature and land is managed by bodies accredited for nature conservation.	Dependent; on managing body. More regular monitoring needed to ensure good condition.	Only if; used in combination with other measures that meet the conditions of protected and managed for nature and/or on rigorous, frequent and publicly available monitoring data that demonstrates good or recovering condition.
Local Nature Reserves	No; protection from development should be put in national planning policy.	Partial; level of protection is set by managing local authority – protection against damaging activities should be strengthened.	Partial; management is set by the managing local authority – requirement for effective management for nature should be strengthened.	Partial; Management Plans should be required and more regular monitoring is needed to ensure good condition.	Only if; the particular site meets the two conditions, and regular monitoring demonstrates good or recovering condition.
Conservation Covenants	Partial; terms of the covenant should ensure protection from development.	Partial; terms of the covenant should ensure protection from damaging activities.	Partial; terms of the covenant should require effective management for nature.	Partial; terms of the covenant should require effective management for nature and monitoring to ensure good condition.	Yes, in cases where the bespoke covenant meets the two conditions, and regular monitoring demonstrates good or recovering condition.
Environmental Land Management: Landscape Recovery component	No	No	Yes, if designed to drive effective management for nature.	Yes, if designed to drive effective management for nature and regular monitoring.	Only if; designed with long term contracts which require and secure effective management and regular monitoring and provide effective protection from development, or used in combination with other mechanism which achieve that, such as improved NPs and AONBs or conservation covenants. LR will however be a key mechanism for securing effective management within areas that do contribute to 30x30.



Analysis of designations

Designation	Condition 1: Protection against harm		Condition 2: Effective management for nature		Potential to meet the grade for 30x30 inclusion?
	Protection from development	Protection from damaging activities	Requirement for effective management	Means to secure management and monitoring	
Environmental Land Management: Local Nature Recovery component	No	No	No; short-term (5 to 15 years) and flexible contracts will not ensure long-term effective management for nature.	Partial; lack of long-term contracts means management measures will not ensure good condition for nature in the long-term.	No
Sustainable Farming Incentive	No	No	No; short-term (5 to 15 years) and flexible contracts will not ensure long-term effective management for nature.	No; lack of long-term contracts means management measures will not ensure good condition for nature in the long-term and SFI is unlikely to require adequate monitoring.	No
Net gain compensatory habitat	No; protection is limited to just 30 years.	No; protection is limited to just 30 years.	Partial; effective management for nature is limited to just 30 years.	Partia; effective management for nature is limited to just 30 years and there are no monitoring requirements to demonstrate good condition.	No

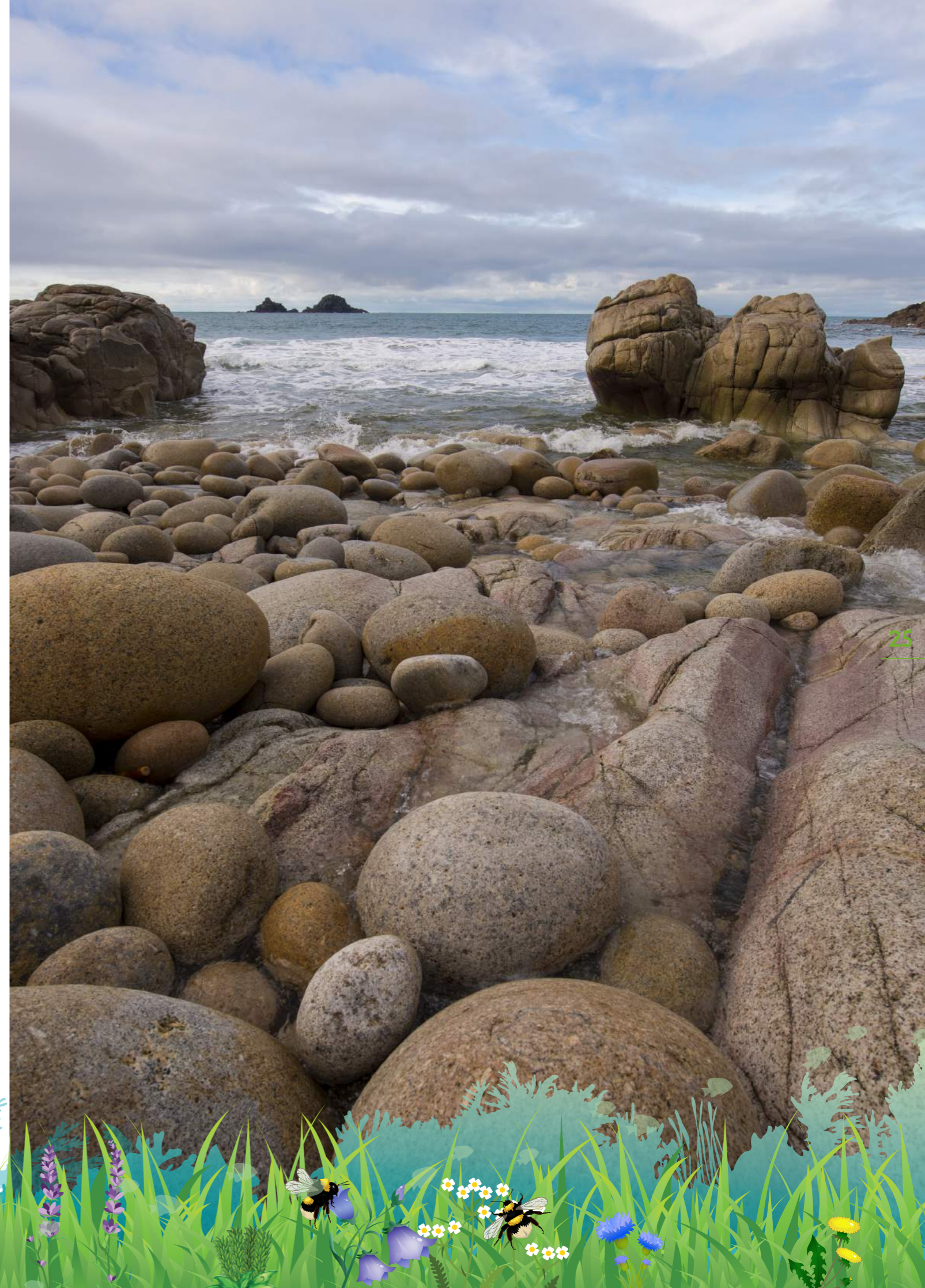
This table is an indicative view of the shortcomings and potential solutions for a range of designations that may be considered for inclusion in 30x30. More detailed analysis would be needed to finalise recommendations – an exercise that the Government could helpfully contribute to in its forthcoming nature Green Paper.

Designation	Condition 1: Protection against harm		Condition 2: Effective management for nature		Potential to meet the grade for 30x30 inclusion?
	Protection from development	Protection from damaging activities	Requirement for effective management	Means to secure management and monitoring	
Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs)	Partial; development currently permitted unless explicitly prohibited.	Partial; extractive activities currently permitted unless explicitly prohibited.	Partial; there is a legal requirement for management to deliver the conservation objectives, but no enforcement if management is not delivered.	Partial; there is a legal requirement for the reporting and monitoring of progress on management for conservation objectives, but there is no enforcement of this requirement. Resources are required for effective management, monitoring and enforcement.	Only if; substantially reformed and strengthened to guarantee long-term protection against harm and effective management for nature and a regular programme of monitoring demonstrates areas are in good ecological condition. Rather than permitting development and activities unless they are prohibited, all environmentally harmful activities should be restricted by default unless they are licensed. Only light extractive activities should be considered for consent.
SSSIs, SPAs, SACs and Ramsar sites.	See above.	See above.	See above.	See above.	See above.
Highly Protected Marine Area (HMPA) – proposed UK Government designation	Yes, if designed with long-term protection from development.	Yes, if designed with long-term protection from damaging activities.	Yes, if designed with effective management objectives for nature.	Yes, if designed with effective management measures for nature and a programme of regular monitoring to demonstrate good or recovering condition.	Yes, if designed to meet the two conditions and regular monitoring demonstrates good or recovering condition.
Fully Protected Marine Protected Areas – IUCN definition	Yes, no extractive or destructive development is allowed and all impacts are minimised.	Yes, no extractive or destructive activities are allowed and all impacts are minimised.	Yes	Yes	Yes, if regular monitoring demonstrates good or recovering condition.



Footnotes

- 1 Starnes et al (2021) <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S235198942100295X?via%3Dihub>
- 2 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/925414/1_Extent__and_condition_of_protected_areas_2020_accessible.pdf, figure based on Mean Low Water mark
- 3 Figures are based on data spanning the period 2015 and 2018 <https://media.mcsuk.org/documents/marineunprotected-areas.pdf>
- 4 OSPAR is the mechanism by which 15 Governments and the EU cooperate to protect the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic.
- 5 https://www.ospar.org/site/assets/files/1431/ospar_management_reporting_guidance_2018.pdf
- 6 https://jncc.gov.uk/media/1970/chaniotis_et_al_2018_jncc_mpas.pdf
- 7 https://jncc.gov.uk/media/1970/chaniotis_et_al_2018_jncc_mpas.pdf
- 8 <https://ukseasproject.org.uk/cms-data/reports/North%20Devon%20Marine%20Protected%20Areas%20Cost%20Evaluation%20-%20%20Final%20Report.pdf>
- 9 <https://ukseasproject.org.uk/cms-data/reports/Compass%20Report.pdf>
- 10 <https://besjournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1365-2664.13196>
- 11 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/925414/1_Extent__and_condition_of_protected_areas_2020_accessible.pdf
- 12 <https://data.jncc.gov.uk/data/d1b21876-d5a4-42b9-9505-4c399fe47d7e/ukspa3-status-uk-spas-2000s-web.pdf>
- 13 <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/wrans/?id=2021-02-09.151834.h&s=%27SSSI%27#g151834.r0>
- 14 <https://besjournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1365-2664.13196>
- 15 Based on IUCN definitions, for full definitions see the Protected Planet Marine Protected Areas Guide <https://www.protectedplanet.net/en/resources/mpa-guide>. Note: The Government's proposed Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs) could deliver the first designations in English seas which meet the criteria for 'fully protected' areas
- 16 <https://data.jncc.gov.uk/data/d1b21876-d5a4-42b9-9505-4c399fe47d7e/ukspa3-status-uk-spas-2000s-web.pdf>





Wildlife and Countryside Link is the largest environment and wildlife coalition in England, bringing together 60 organisations to use their strong joint voice for the protection of nature, animals and people.



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September 2021