

National Landscapes

National Landscapes are areas safeguarded for their character and beauty. This resource guide will help you find out more about them.

National Landscapes

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), are now known as National Landscapes in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. They have been renamed to reflect ambitions for the areas to play a key part in the international commitment to protect and conserve a minimum of 30% of land and sea for biodiversity by 2030, also known as 30 x30^[CT1].

What are National Landscapes?

A National Landscape is one of 46 areas within England, Wales and Northern Ireland safeguarded in the national interest for its distinctive character and beauty. The legal designation is 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty'.^{[CT2][AB3]}

AONBs are living, working landscapes, much loved and valued. They can be powerful symbols of national pride: places of motivation, excitement, pleasure and prosperity.

[Natural England \(NE\)](#), [Natural Resources Wales \(NRW\)](#) and [Northern Ireland Environment Agency \(NIEA\)](#) are responsible for formally designating AONBs (Scotland: see below). They advise on policies for their protection, acting as national “watchdogs” to ensure that they are successfully conserved and enhanced. Visit [National Landscapes Association](#) to find out more about the network and its purpose.

Where are National Landscapes?

There are 46 National Landscapes in Britain (33 in England, 4 in Wales, 1 which straddles the English/Welsh border and 8 in Northern Ireland) covering 18% of the countryside.

Scottish National Scenic Areas (NSAs) take a similar role in protecting designated landscapes in Scotland. The 40 NSAs, with their outstanding scenery, represent some of Scotland's finest landscapes within and beyond existing national park boundaries, covering 13% of Scotland's countryside.



Accessible and inspiring

Over two thirds of England's population live within half an hour's drive of a National Landscape and almost all of Wales' population can access one within an hour.

Steeped in history, culture and natural beauty, they are places of parks, mountains, fields and farms with many different landowners, as well as homes and gardens. (Your rights to go out onto some areas of open land may be restricted. Our Outdoor Access Resource Guide has more information about rights and responsibilities to aid your enjoyment of being in the outdoors.) Each National Landscape will have a variety of local information on events, opportunities and resources as well as where to go, what to do and ideas for great activities to get involved in.

The John Muir Award and National Landscapes

John Muir Award activity is widespread in many National Landscapes across England, Wales and Northern Ireland, delivered by schools, youth ranger groups, adult projects, families and individuals living in or near them. The John Muir Award helps people of all ages and backgrounds to connect with these wild places, to enjoy their natural beauty and understand more about their primary purpose - to conserve and enhance the landscape.

Useful websites

National Landscapes Association

Links to all 46 National Landscapes, further information and resources - [National Landscapes - Home](#)

[NatureScot – National Scenic Areas](#) - Links to Scotland's 40 NSAs, further information and resources

Resources from National Landscape websites:

Each NL has their own website with tailored individual information, things to do, resources and ways to get involved. Examples of some great NL themed resources:

[Forest of Bowland NL](#)

[South Devon NL](#)

[Shropshire Hills AONB](#)

Visit Wales

Find out more about what is going on in and around NLs in Wales, for local people and tourists - www.visitwales.com/things-do/nature-and-landscapes/welsh-areas-outstanding-natural-beauty