



**ACTION FOR PROTECTED AREAS IN THE UK**  
A RESPONSE TO PARKS FOR LIFE



IUCN  
1997  
023



**COUNTRYSIDE  
COMMISSION**



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of  
NATIONAL PARK  
AUTHORITIES



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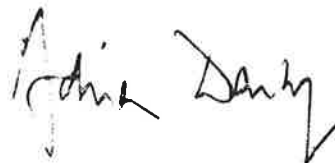


## **Preface**

The production of "Parks for Life - Action for Protected Areas in Europe" marked an exciting development of IUCN's work in Europe. For the first time it proposed a programme for the whole of Europe and one which gave individual country committees a role to play. This is typical of the new emphasis on decentralisation of IUCN, introduced at the Buenos Aires General Assembly and confirmed at the World Conservation Congress in Montreal, where the statutes of IUCN were modified to recognise national committees and regional fora.

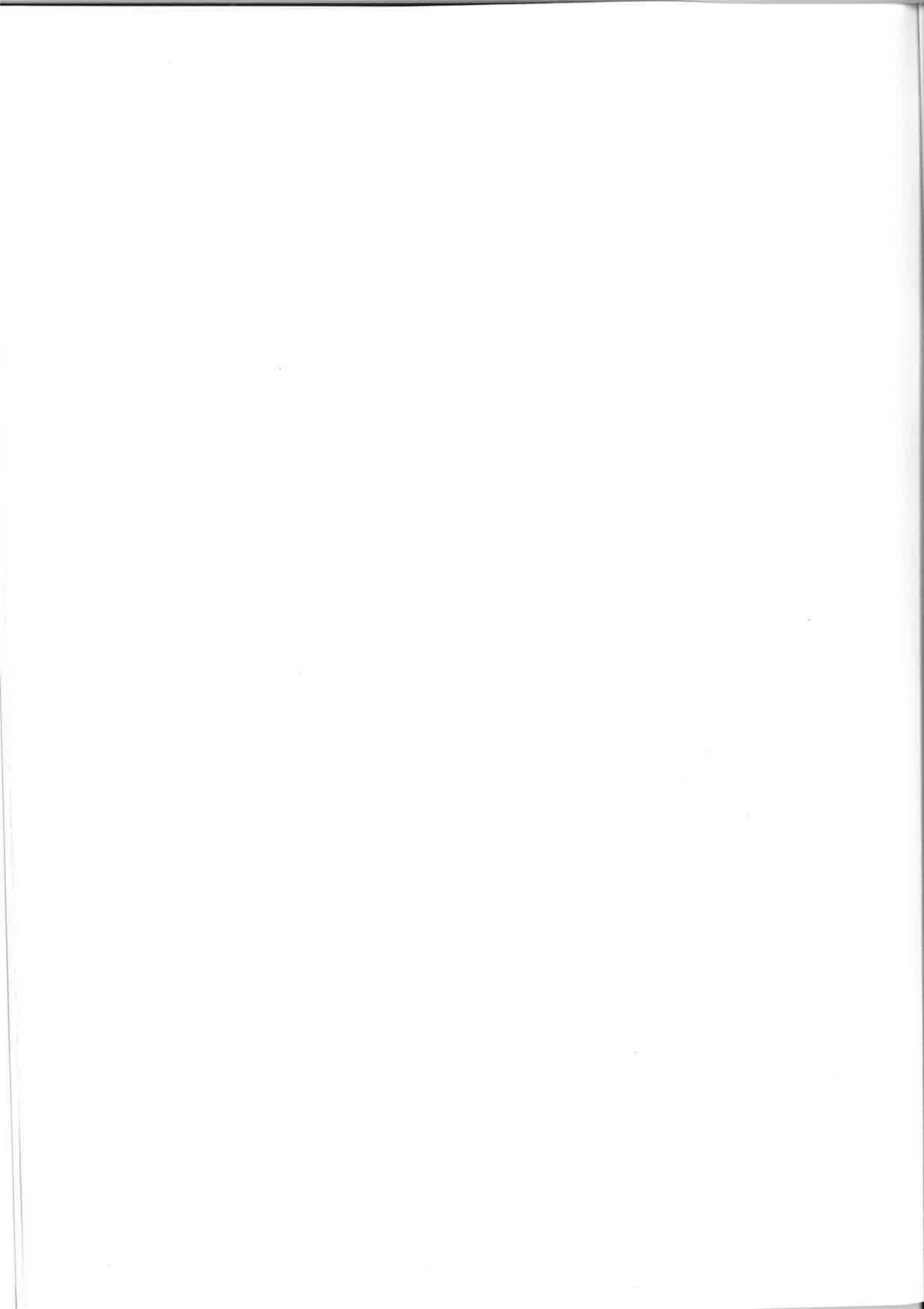
Parks for Life calls for each country to set up a national forum to promote the plan at a national level and this document represents the first fruits of that process. The UK Committee for IUCN set up the UK Task Force which produced it and is pleased to endorse its proposals.

The report sets the context for the United Kingdom and proposes six Action Projects. I commend these to you, but would also urge you to take heed of paragraph 1.3. It is crucial to maintain momentum. This report, valuable though it is, is only a necessary first step and it is through the completion of its Action Projects that the United Kingdom's success in implementing Parks for Life will be judged.



**Adrian Darby OBE**

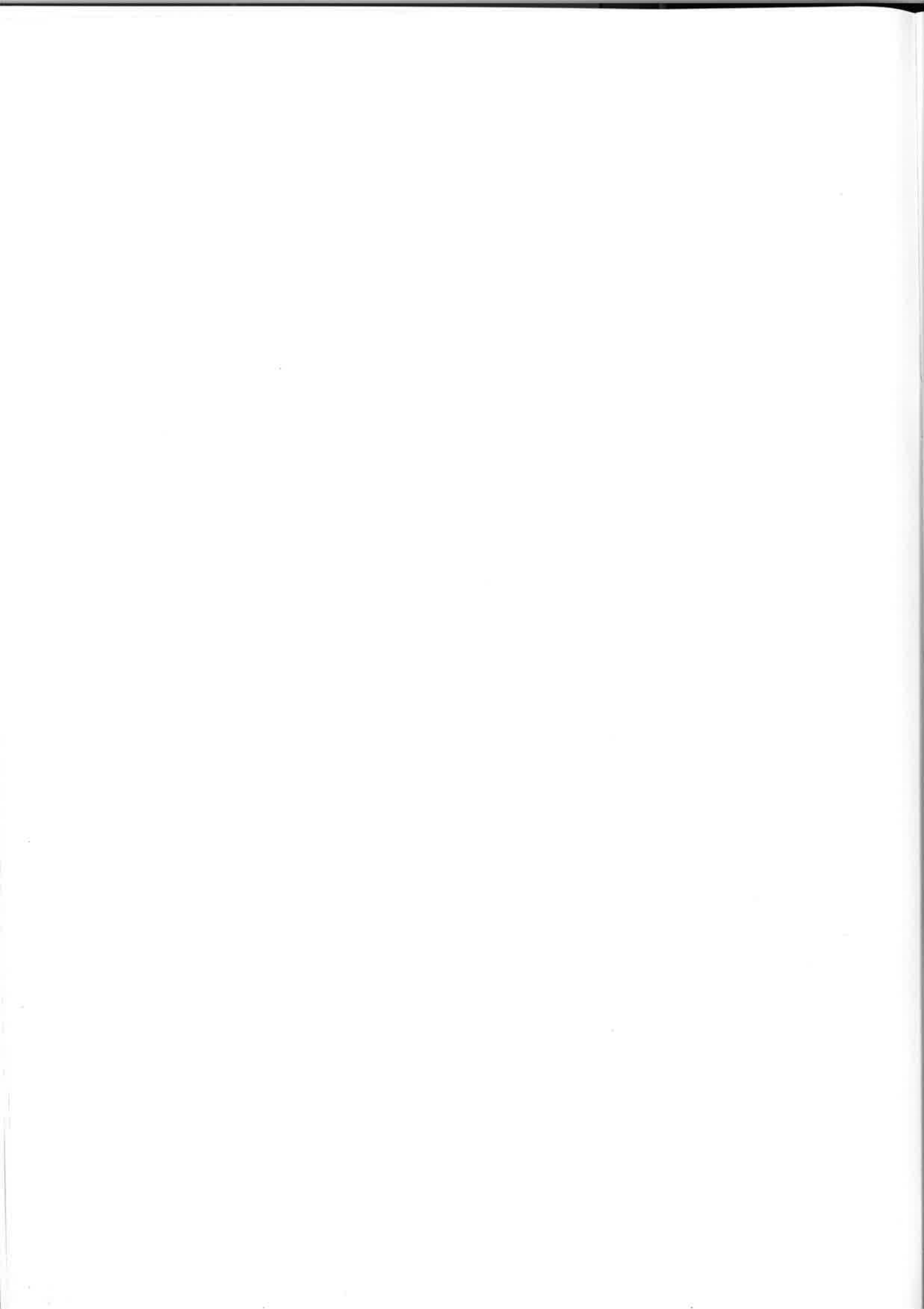
Chairman, UK Committee for IUCN



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## Foreword

Protected Areas in the UK include the most beautiful landscapes and the finest wildlife systems and, at the same time, reflect the country's cultural heritage. They have a unique role to play in today's changing countryside and this, together with increasing public concern, presents an opportunity to define that role more clearly, to highlight their benefits and to raise their profile as a whole.

This opportunity is enhanced by the need to respond to "Parks for Life - Action for Protected Areas in Europe", prepared by the IUCN Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas (CNPPA), now called the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA). It was produced with a number of other bodies in response to the Global Action Plan, which came out of the 1992 IV World Parks Congress in Caracas and called for regional action plans. Europe was the first region to respond to that call and Parks for Life represents an impressive and historic breadth and number of people and organisations united in an expression of how to achieve a shared vision.

Implementation at the European level is being promoted and co-ordinated by WCPA and UK organisations are playing an important part, but Parks for Life also calls for each country to set up a national forum to consider the implementation of the plan at national level. The IUCN-UK Committee has taken the lead in setting up a Task Force - the first national forum in Europe.

Parks for Life also calls for the preparation of National Action Plans for Protected Areas, to link global aims to national and local action. This Action Programme is the UK's initial response to that call and again is the first in Europe. It outlines the position on protected areas in the UK and identifies projects that need urgent action. Given the diversity of protected areas covered and the wide-ranging membership of the Task Force, the cohesion and unanimity of purpose shown during this process has been remarkable.

Progress has already been made in the UK, but we all need to build on that experience. The emphasis on protected areas being set aside from the mainstream must be changed to their being seen as the 'jewels in the crown', from which ideas and practice in sustainable management flow into the wider environment. To achieve this, the key issues that need to be addressed in the UK are - defining more clearly the role that protected areas can play in delivering the wider objectives of sustainability and biodiversity, promoting their benefits and the need to plan and manage protected areas, both in their wider context and through partnerships with the local community.

Finally, we are keeping in close touch with WCPA, through Marija Zupančič-Vičar, European Regional Vice Chair - the two-way exchange of ideas and information as work progresses at both European and national levels will form a vital part of the successful implementation of Parks for Life in the UK.



**Professor Aitken Clark**  
Chairman, UK Task Force





## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 The Task Force

The IUCN document "Parks for Life - Action for Protected Areas in Europe" was launched in the UK by the Secretary of State for the Environment in the Autumn of 1994. One of its recommendations was for the setting up of a forum in each country to consider its implementation at national level. There was an immediate call in the UK for a Task Force, with a brief to prepare an analysis of the implications of Parks for Life for protected areas policy and practice in the UK and to advise on how best to respond to its recommendations.

The Task Force was set up by the UK Committee of IUCN. It has a core membership of representatives from the four main statutory agencies and the two NGOs which were most closely involved in the Parks for Life process, all of whom have helped to fund the activities of the Task Force, plus other members brought in at appropriate times. A full list of the membership is in Appendix 1. The Task Force appointed a Facilitator to co-ordinate the project and draft the text of the response document.

The Task Force decided from the outset that, given its limited resources, it could most usefully pursue the general thrust of Parks for Life without taking on a comprehensive auditing role; point out the overall importance of protected areas and, in so doing, create goodwill and support for them; and create common ground on the way forward. As many existing initiatives were already playing a part in implementing Parks for Life, a comprehensive blueprint was not required.

The Task Force sees its role as threefold:

- looking at Parks for Life through UK eyes and producing a companion UK volume, with emphasis on the promotion of practical action and reviewing progress
- delivering the Parks for Life messages by acting as a catalyst and working in partnership with others on the implementation of the Action Projects identified in this document
- continuing a general review of the Parks for Life agenda and maintaining its momentum.

In order to achieve this, the Task Force set itself the following objectives:

- to use its membership to develop a cross-sectoral approach to protected area topics
- to avoid duplication of existing and developing initiatives
- to highlight the part that protected areas can play in implementing these initiatives
- to involve other key players in the preparation of the Action Programme
- to seek collaboration throughout the UK for developing and implementing the Action Programme.

Meeting as a group of professionals rather than as delegates from particular organisations, Members of the Task Force were able to reflect the views of their respective organisations without working to specific mandates. This allowed them to discuss issues openly and to collaborate in problem-solving and sharing experience, with the aim of building a new and strong consensus on many points. As a result this document is the work of the individuals and not necessarily of the organisations they represent.

### 1.2 Why action is needed

There are many environmental initiatives in the UK. Some address the needs of the UK as a whole; others concern individual countries; others relate to particular parts, eg the coast. Several of these initiatives cover protected area issues, but none is designed to stimulate action on protected areas as a whole across the UK. This is what this Action Programme sets out to achieve, covering both terrestrial and marine environments.

### 1.3 The target audience

The Action Programme is directed at decision-makers at national and local level and those with direct responsibility for planning and managing protected areas. It is not an end in itself, but the beginning of a process of action by all IUCN-UK members, who will take this process forward towards a shared vision of the role of protected areas in the UK countryside of the next millennium.

## 1.4 This document

This document sets out a response to Parks for Life by:

- presenting an overview in the form of messages coming out of Caracas, Rio and the European Parks for Life exercise, to give the Action Programme its context
- outlining the current UK position - identifying some of the current initiatives, explaining why action is necessary and identifying the overall issues to be tackled
- presenting an Action Programme which identifies overall aims and describes six Action Projects, the results of which will lead to recommendations for further action by others
- emphasising the need for periodic reviews between now and the next World Parks Congress in 2002 and defining benchmarks against which progress will be measured.

## 2. The Overview

A summary of the main messages from Caracas and Rio and then from the European Parks for Life document (see Boxes 1-3) helps to provide the context in which decisions on the catalytic action needed in the UK have been made. There is inevitably overlap between Parks for Life and other international initiatives, particularly from Rio and the European Union. The Task Force has made those links and related them to the traditional protected area system prevailing in the UK.

### 2.1 The global context

#### Lessons from Caracas

Parks for Life was chosen as the theme of the IV World Congress on National Parks and Protected Areas in Caracas in February 1992 to emphasise how vital protected areas are to the welfare of modern society. The Congress was designed to demonstrate that protected areas help society provide for its cultural, economic and spiritual needs in a sustainable manner.

There were five major messages (see Box 1), some of which were new and moved protected area thinking forward. Caracas essentially buried the isolationist view of protected areas. It concentrated on the linkages between protected areas and the areas that surround them and focused on the economic benefits that such areas can bring and the need to involve local communities in their planning and management.

## Box 1. Caracas Messages

### 1. People and protected areas

Protected areas cannot co-exist with communities that are hostile to them but, in a proper context, protected areas can make significant contributions to conserving cultural as well as biological diversity. It is important to identify the stakeholders and to use the protected area's assets as a base upon which to build customer satisfaction, investment and interest.

### 2. Conserving biodiversity

Few protected areas have given full attention to this issue and surveys are needed to identify and protect critical areas, with the importance of zoning being recognised. There should be a major effort to create well-managed marine protected areas.

### 3. Conservation on a regional scale

An island mentality for a protected area is fatal. It needs to be part of a broader regional approach to land management, where all agencies agree to collaborative management. Biosphere reserves are seen as a valid approach, though few have attained productive collaboration between the core protected area and surrounding lands.

### 4. Funding for protected areas

Many protected areas are profitable, especially through tourism. Protected areas make important economic contributions, but many of the benefits are unquantifiable and few protected areas are able to capture the profits from the benefits they provide. While Government has the prime responsibility for national assets and benefits provided to society, NGOs, the private sector, local communities and landowners also have some responsibility and innovative funding mechanisms are required.

### 5. Building a stronger constituency for conservation

It became obvious at the Congress that the key to protecting landscapes lies with the local communities. Support is required from all parts of society. While this stemmed from discussion about the rights of indigenous peoples, it is equally appropriate in the developed world. New partnerships are needed for the management of land and natural resources.

## Lessons from Rio

The over-riding messages from the UN Conference on Environment and Development (the Earth Summit), held in Rio in June 1992 (see Box 2), was that there were now new agendas of sustainability and biodiversity, to be addressed in the UK by:

- applying the principles of the Rio Declaration
- fulfilling the requirements of Agenda 21
- meeting the Treaty obligations

Rio reaffirmed the benefits of protected areas and the important part they can play in the sustainable development process, but recognised that they alone could not solve all the problems.

## Box 2. Rio Messages

The main outputs from Rio were:

- **Rio Declaration:** a Statement of Principles on the need to balance environmental protection and sustainable development
- **Agenda 21:** a comprehensive programme of action to achieve a more sustainable pattern of development
- **Biodiversity Convention:** an international agreement on how to protect the diversity of species and habitats
- **Climate Change Convention:** an international agreement establishing a framework for action to reduce the risks of global warming
- **Statement of Forest Principles:** for the management, conservation and sustainable development of all the world's forests

## 2.2 The European context

Parks for Life, published in September 1994, was prepared as a contribution to the implementation of the Caracas Plan, the Rio agenda and European strategic environmental initiatives. It set out to strengthen the network of national parks and protected areas throughout Europe and to provide a blueprint for the future management of protected areas that would meet both the needs of conservation and local communities. There were four main themes (see Box 3) and 30 Priority Projects at European level were identified.

### Box 3. Parks for Life Messages

#### 1. The wider context

Protected areas should be set in a wider context. Environmental issues should be addressed in their geographical (global, regional, national and local) context and in the context of other public policy sectors. Protected areas would thus be integrated with planning for sustainable development at both the national and the local level and would be seen to play a vital part in sustaining the economic and social well-being of local communities and society at large.

#### 2. Regional coverage

A European network of protected areas should be developed to secure an adequate coverage of landscape and habitat types and to cover the needs of fauna and flora.

#### 3. Management Planning

The planning and management of protected areas should be strengthened through an effective legal framework, effective institutions, management plans, adequate funding, training and information and monitoring systems.

#### 4. Creating the Climate for Success

A climate for success should be created by increasing public and political support for protected areas.

The key strategic decisions on nature conservation are now taken at EU level rather than at national level. The EC Birds and Habitats Directives provide a framework for the greater part of the UK's policies on nature conservation and set minimum standards for biodiversity conservation. They are also a vital part of the EU's Fifth Environmental Action Programme.

In addition, the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy was endorsed by the ECE Ministers of the Environment at their meeting in Sofia in October 1995. It is a European response to support implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity. It seeks to introduce biological and landscape diversity considerations into all social and economic sectors and provides a co-ordinating and unifying framework for strengthening and building on existing initiatives and programmes.

### 3. The UK Position

#### 3.1 The protected areas

The UK has a sophisticated protected area system and an active NGO sector to keep protected areas on the political agenda. The system has a multitude of purposes and has developed over time as circumstances demanded. There are also different approaches in different parts of the UK.

Comparable up-to-date information on all the different types of protected areas is not easy to obtain. Appendix 2 uses information available in February 1997 from a variety of sources. It identifies eighteen types of protected area in the UK with different labels, scales and functions. However, there are two main types of protection: a site-based nature conservation system of over 6,000 SSSIs in England, Wales and Scotland and ASSIs (Northern Ireland); and a landscape-based area system of National Parks and AONBs in England and Wales, AONBs in Northern Ireland and National Scenic Areas (NSAs) in Scotland, over which are superimposed international designations. The current agenda is being driven by international nature conservation commitments, which tend to focus on sites, individual species and habitats.

#### 3.2 Current UK initiatives

Many of the recommendations contained in Parks for Life are already being addressed in the UK, many through complementary initiatives at global, European and national level. The Action Programme recognises the great diversity of initiatives already underway and that protected areas can make a contribution to these and support them. Illustrative examples of some of the current UK initiatives are listed in Appendix 3.

#### 3.3 Room for improvement

Protected areas in the UK form an impressive network, but there is no room for complacency. There is no doubt that the UK is seen by many to be at the leading edge of developments in protecting areas of importance for wildlife and landscape. It has an enviably long tradition of endeavour in this field, public support for its aims and resourcing for public and private initiatives. However, there

are still many opportunities for improvement, as outlined in para 3.4.

Progress has already been made on some issues and the UK needs to build on that experience. The negative image of protected areas being isolated oases or of being set in aspic is out of date and needs to be replaced with a more positive recognition of the benefits which they can bring to the nation as a whole. This will involve a change of emphasis, with protected areas being seen as demonstrations of sustainable management.

#### 3.4 Gaps and threats

There are still some gaps in the system, continuing threats to existing protected areas and weaknesses in the way in which they are managed. A review of factual analyses, coupled with a rapid subjective appraisal, led the Task Force to identify the following major gaps, weaknesses and threats.

**Gaps and weaknesses** (not in priority order) include:

- no overall strategy or collaborative framework for protected areas in the UK
- limited organisational capacity for conceptual thinking on protected areas and very few resources devoted to thinking strategically in this way
- particularly slow progress on marine protected areas
- lack of widespread joint management with local communities
- the absence of national parks or equivalent designations in Scotland, although the Natural Heritage Area concept might be developed to fill this gap
- the absence of statutory duties on local authorities in relation to AONBs and NSAs and the lack of resources for their long-term management
- poor performance in completing the designation of EU protected sites and international sites
- the need for staff training opportunities to cover new and emerging issues

- the lack of a consistent monitoring system for evaluating the protected area system and the protected areas themselves
- inadequate protection for SSSIs and ASSIs leading to loss or damage every year
- ineffective protection for the species and habitats contained in sites that are too small for this purpose
- the benefits of protected areas not being sufficiently well-articulated and promoted to maintain support for the concept

**Actual or potential threats** (not in priority order) include:

- for most protected areas, pressure from
  - development and land use change, eg quarrying, inappropriate woodland cover, particularly when the traditional rural economy is in decline
  - infrastructure development, eg transport, energy, telecommunications
  - an increasing number of visitors
- concern about the effect of the EU Common Agricultural and Common Fisheries Policies
- distortion of priorities through the need to meet international nature conservation obligations, at the expense of the national series and of the equally essential landscape and cultural aspects of protected areas
- inadequate resources for protected areas resulting from the combination of a retrenchment of public funding and a diffusion of resources across the wider countryside
- external threats include:
  - pollution
  - climate change

### 3.5 Key issues

Key issues to be addressed will include:

- How can the protected area system meet the needs of the environmental, social, political and economic agendas of the 21st Century?
- How can protected areas secure the natural value for which they were established while also contributing in sustainable ways to economic welfare? How can they deliver sustainable development and biodiversity programmes?
- How can local communities understand and be provided with more of the benefits of conservation, thereby becoming enthusiastic supporters of protected areas?
- How can protected areas be better managed to support biological, landscape and cultural diversity?
- How can protected areas be better planned and managed to relate to and promote better conservation in the wider countryside?
- How can the effectiveness and adequacy of the UK protected area system be evaluated?
- What else is required to enable protected areas to survive and prosper into the next millennium?

## 4. The Action Programme

### 4.1 The aims

The overall aims of the Action Programme are:

- to identify actions already in hand and the steps required to enhance, initiate or redirect actions selected as the most pressing priorities over the next five years
- to build on and strengthen the commitment of national and local government and others to implementing conservation of landscape and biodiversity
- to promote the need for an appropriate coverage of well-managed protected areas
- to encourage the integration of protected areas into their wider geographical context and public policy context
- to promote a wider understanding of the UK's protected areas and of the benefits they bring to society as a whole and encourage the support and involvement of local communities
- to promote awareness of the international context in which the UK's protected areas are set and the contribution they can make to the development of planning and management thinking at that level

### 4.2 The Action Projects

Six Action Projects have been set in the context of a series of general themes, derived from those set out in the Global and European Parks for Life documents, but made specific to the UK (Appendix 4). The four UK themes are:

- a national strategy
- the wider context
- management planning
- a constituency of support

In choosing the UK Action Projects, the Task Force gave careful consideration to the 30 Priority Projects identified in Parks for Life. However, although some have very similar themes and have been derived from the same long list of recommendations, the UK Action Projects have been selected as priorities at the UK rather than at the European level.

This should not be taken to indicate that these European projects are not relevant to the UK. Indeed, UK organisations are taking the lead in many of the projects, eg Plantlife for Priority Project 6 - "Identification of Important Plant Areas" and WWF-UK for Priority Project 11 - "Support for a protected areas protocol for the NE Atlantic"; and the Landscape Institute is encouraging the organisation of a European Protected Landscape Conference (Priority Project 21).

Many other UK organisations are also making valuable contributions, reflecting the important role the UK plays in the wider European environment. Progress on their implementation has been included in the proposed review process (Section 5).

The six Action Projects have been designed to address some of the gaps and threats identified in Section 3 (Appendix 5). There are inevitably some overlaps between them. They are catalytic in nature and out of them may come advice to government and others on the policies and actions needed to improve protected areas in the UK.

The criteria used in the process of choosing the Action Projects were:

- perceived gaps or shortcomings in information or action
- perceived threats to protected areas
- the need to avoid duplication of effort, particularly when resources are constrained -information from other initiatives could be drawn upon where appropriate
- the need for the unique approach which the Task Force membership could provide: a collective approach which is UK-wide and across all types of protected areas, with the Task Force acting as catalyst, broker and/or clearing house
- a balance of policy and action
- ease of approach, eg all players ready to contribute
- the need for an innovative approach
- ability to deliver within a reasonable timescale
- whether action was essential rather than merely desirable

Outlines of each of the six Action Projects follow. The role of the Task Force will be to act as catalyst and to work in partnership with the lead agencies and others to ensure



progress. Fully costed detailed briefs with timescales will be developed with each of the lead agencies and sources of funding approached jointly. Contracts will be let by organisations acting as agents for the Task Force, where appropriate. Each lead agency will report back to the IUCN - UK Committee

### **Action Project 1 - A Model System for the UK**

Parks for Life calls on each country to evaluate its protected area system for coverage and effectiveness before the next World Parks Congress in 2002. This Action Project will develop a vision of a protected area system to meet the environmental, social, political and economic agendas of the UK in the 21st Century, in order to provide a template against which to measure the effectiveness of the current pattern of protected areas.

#### **Objectives:**

- To produce a model system of protected areas for the UK of the 21st Century.
- To develop objectives, criteria, standards and performance measures needed for evaluating the existing system against such a model
- To indicate how the existing system might evolve towards the ideal model

#### **Method:**

- A preliminary scoping paper to identify and structure the issues
- A high level seminar to review the issues, examine alternative models and provide guidance and agree principles for the development of a vision
- Appointment of consultants to develop the vision, develop evaluation criteria and make recommendations for action
- A major conference to launch the vision

#### **Output:**

- Advice to government on the development of an overall strategy for protected areas in the UK.

#### **Lead agency:**

Task Force.

### **Action Project 2 - Protected Areas in the Wider Agenda**

Parks for Life identifies the need for the future of protected areas to be placed more prominently and more centrally within a wider environmental, social and economic policy context.

#### **Objective:**

To identify how protected areas in the UK can better contribute to the achievement of government objectives through the overall strategies for sustainable development and biodiversity (including the Biodiversity Action Plan) and the Rural White Papers.

#### **Method:**

Appointment of a consultant to carry out:

- a desk exercise to examine existing documents and organise discussions with agencies and NGOs to analyse:
  - what is being developed in those strategies that is relevant to the implementation of Parks for Life, ie the implications of sustainable development and biodiversity for the planning and management of protected areas
  - how the implementation of Parks for Life can help in delivering these strategies
  - the role of protected areas in delivering the Rural White Papers, and particularly how they can be used to revitalise rural economies
- an annual review up to 2002, producing the key indicators necessary for such an exercise.

#### **Output:**

A published report describing the relationship between Parks for Life and major government initiatives and indicating the role that protected areas are playing and might or should play in delivering those initiatives. Annual monitoring reports will then be produced, based on agreed key indicators. Results will be fed into Action Project 6 where appropriate.

#### **Lead Agency:**

Task Force.

**Action Project 3 - Putting Sustainability into Practice**

Parks for Life suggests that protected areas can provide models for sustainable management of the countryside.

**Objective:**

To identify practical models of sustainable management of the countryside in selected protected areas and suggest ways in which the approaches might be applied elsewhere in the countryside.

**Method:**

A Working Group to organise workshops to discuss case studies of sustainable management.

**Output:**

A series of case studies of good practice and of attempted approaches that have not worked, with guidelines for good practice and recommendations for action to decision-makers and countryside managers. The results will be promoted as part of Action Project 6.

**Lead agency:**

FNNPE-UK

**Action Project 4 - Effective Management**

Parks for Life calls for more effective management of protected areas. Managing a protected area depends on the objectives set and, in the UK, these vary between countries and between protected area types. In many cases, protected area management could be made more effective and lessons could be shared across the broad range of protected areas.

**Objective:**

To examine how protected area management could be made more effective and experience shared.

**Method:**

A Working Group to look at protected area management from several aspects, including:

- internal management and communication methods
- corporate management methods across protected areas
- partnerships with stakeholders
- information and monitoring

The needs of each will be identified separately and then the essential interaction between them described.

**Output:**

A series of case studies of good practice and of attempted approaches that have not worked, with guidelines for good practice aimed at protected area managers.

**Lead Agency:**

Countryside Commission, working with other agencies and organisations.

**Action Project 5 - Training for the Future**

Parks for Life recognises that well-trained staff are essential to effective management and up-to-date training should be a top priority. The results of this Action Project will feed into European Priority Project 25 - "A Major European Training Initiative".

**Objective:**

To review training needs and current provision in the UK across all types of protected areas at all levels of staffing.

**Method:**

A short-term contract for a consultant:

- to identify the target audiences
- to undertake a stocktaking exercise of current needs and provisions, focusing on:
  - the themes identified in the action programme
  - the need for integration of nature conservation and landscape training
- the need to ensure that protected area managers do not become isolated from the wider countryside management training agenda

**Output:**

Innovative ideas on new courses and materials for different target audiences.

**Lead agency:**

Environmental Training Organisation

## Action Project 6 - Promoting the Benefits of Protected Areas

Protected areas can provide major direct and indirect benefits to local and national economies. All sectors of society need to be informed and educated about these benefits, so that they become active partners and supporters and take pride in designations; and co-ordination between agencies and other organisations which hold this objective in common needs to be improved.

### Objectives:

- To suggest ways of promoting the practical benefits of protected areas identified in Action Projects 2 and 3.
- To define the key audiences
- To define the key deliverers and identify more cost-effective ways of co-ordinating them and integrating the messages to be promoted
- To suggest ways of identifying the key interests of groups and the priority concern of local communities and of generating a two-way process of understanding with protected area managers
- To devise effective ways of getting the messages across, eg through new publications, information technology, a focal point of information etc

### Method:

A contract for a market research and publicity and promotion exercise.

### Output:

Campaign 1999 - a major publicity and promotional exercise on the benefits of protected areas as a whole.

### Lead agencies:

RSPB and WWF-UK to develop initial ideas, involving all the government agencies.

## 5. Maintaining Momentum

### 5.1 The process

The Task Force will need to ensure that this document does not become an end in itself but that momentum is maintained by:

- facilitating the Action Projects
- ensuring that action is taken on recommendations arising from the Action Projects

The Task Force will also need to keep a watching brief on the progress of the overall Parks for Life agenda, including:

- complementary initiatives, eg testing progress on the Biodiversity Action Plan and the Sustainable Development Strategy against the Parks for Life agenda (Action Project 2)
- how protected areas are delivering these initiatives (Action Project 2)
- action by others in the implementation of the Parks for Life agenda, including the European Priority Projects
- the identification of new opportunities.

A provisional timetable for the Task Force, working with others, is outlined in Appendix 6.

### 5.2 Benchmarks for success

Indicative benchmarks are needed, to assess progress by the next World Parks Congress in 2002. Progress will be measured against the following benchmarks, grouped under each of the four UK themes.

#### 1. A national strategy

The current protected area system is valuable as it stands, but:

- there would be a strategy for protected areas, acting as a framework for their planning and management (Action Project 1)
- protected areas would play a part in interconnected networks

- the networks would be constructed so as to include one or more viable populations of all species threatened on a UK scale
- more marine protected areas would have been created and would be effectively managed
- in Scotland, protected area structures meeting IUCN international criteria and tailored to Scotland's needs, with appropriate zoning to allow the application of IUCN management categories, would have been created
- the management capacity and conservation status of many protected landscapes, eg AONBs, would have been raised
- all international designation programmes would have been completed
- SSSIs/ASSIs would be better protected from development, damage, deterioration and threat
- for each protected area there would be a management plan or a statement of management objectives, with an agreed plan of action for their achievement
- improved training opportunities would be available for all (Action Project 5)
- a consistent monitoring system for all protected areas would have been put in place throughout the UK and the results published.

#### 4. A constituency of support

The development of a two-way support mechanism would strengthen the constituency of support for protected areas - involving local communities in decision-making at both the planning and management stages and identifying and promoting the benefits of protected areas to the local and national economy (Action Projects 3, 4 and 6):

- protected area agencies would work more closely with local communities, co-operating with them in management
- protected area agencies would draw on the support of many other sectors in society
- the benefits of protected areas would be made obvious so that the public would value them more highly - seeing them as models for sustainable lifestyles in harmony with the environment
- the Government and its agencies would continue to co-operate with international organisations - to strengthen international links in support of national initiatives.

## 2. The wider context

Protected areas will be successful only if they are well-integrated into the wider countryside in which they are set and placed more prominently within wider land use and resource-based policies, leading towards sustainable development of the nation as a whole:

- protected areas would be well-integrated into the environmental, social and economic aspects of national policy (Action Project 2)
- protected areas would, in appropriate circumstances, provide models of sustainable management (Action Projects 3 and 4), demonstrating:
  - their part in revitalising their rural economies
  - how to involve local communities in their management

## 3. Management planning

The positive management needs of many protected areas following designation have only relatively recently been recognised (Action Project 4):

- there would be effective laws to secure the sustainable management of all protected area types
- there would be effective institutions and adequate funding to plan and manage all protected areas

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Members of the Task Force and Acknowledgements

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Professor Adrian Phillips, Chairman of WCPA

Mary Anne Robinson, Scottish Natural Heritage

Rosie Simpson, Countryside Commission

Andrej Sovinc, 'Parks for Life' Co-ordinator, Europe

**Appendix 2: Protected areas in the United Kingdom**

(based on best available information in February 1997)

Protected Area Category	Geographical Occurrence	Number in UK	Area Covered (ha)
National Park	E,W	11	1,401,100
AONB	E,W	41	2,123,700
AONB (NI)	NI	9	284,948
National Scenic Area	S	40	1,001,800
Natural Heritage Area	S	-	-
Regional Park	S,NI	5	88,201
SSSI/ASSI	UK	6,321	4,024,624
Local Nature Reserve	UK	575	31,641
National Nature Reserve	UK	319	259,046
Marine Nature Reserve	UK	3	22,347
Forest Nature Reserve	UK	81	n/k
Forest Park	UK	28	311,101
Special Protection Area	EU	140	547,146
Special Area of Conservation	EU	-	-
Biogenetic Reserve	CoE	18	7,990
World Heritage Site	World	2	923
Biosphere Reserve	World	13	44,258
Ramsar Site	World	108	404,125

**NOTES**

- 1** E = England; S = Scotland;  
W = Wales; NI = Northern Ireland;  
EU = European Union; CoE = Council of Europe; n/k = not known.
- 2** National Parks includes the Broads, but not the New Forest, part of which is included under Forest Parks.
- 3** World Heritage Sites refers only to the natural sites.
- 4** Many of the designations overlap, so the total of column 4 (area covered) is misleading.
- 5** Sources are various: they include WCMC, JNCC, Council of Europe, Environment & Heritage Service of Northern Ireland and the Forestry Authority.

### Appendix 3: Current UK Initiatives

This Appendix contains illustrative examples of some of the current UK initiatives, listed under each of the four UK themes.

#### A National Strategy

- work is proceeding on the implementation of the Habitats and Birds Directives and the Natura 2000 network is being established
- the 1995 Environment Act gives National Park Authorities the opportunity to take a strategic view of biodiversity and the new Protocol between the Countryside Commission, CCW and English Nature and the review of National Park management plans recognises this new emphasis
- habitat creation and species recovery feature in several programmes, eg Countryside Stewardship, Moorland Scheme, Millennium Forest

#### The Wider Context

- UK Strategy on Sustainable Development has been published and annual progress reports are being produced by Government for the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, while sustainable development principles are being increasingly applied in planning and projects
- the Biodiversity Convention has been ratified, the Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan has been prepared and is being implemented and the UK is participating in the Conference of Parties
- the UK Steering Group on Biodiversity has produced a Report and Action Plan and the Government has pledged support for its implementation
- the recently-formed Association of National Park Authorities encourages the use of protected landscapes as models of sustainable living and the sustainable management of the countryside
- implementation of the EU Fifth Environmental Action Programme and continuing work by WWF/RSPB/BLI on the environmental provisions of EU funding
- at the launch of Parks for Life, the Secretary of State for the Environment promised to keep protected areas on the European agenda
- in England the Countryside Character and Natural Areas programmes will provide a countrywide understanding of the wider landscape and nature conservation contexts in which protected areas can be set
- agri-environment schemes have been initiated:
  - ESA schemes have been set up for protected areas and the wider countryside
  - set-aside schemes now have environmental components
  - there is a pilot extensification scheme in Scotland which might assist protected areas and the wider countryside alike
  - both Scotland and Wales are committed to a review of protected areas, while the Rural White Paper for England

contains a commitment to create no new categories of protected areas in England

- Countryside Stewardship schemes (England) and Tir Cymen (Wales) have been established
- the concept of sustainable tourism is being promoted by agencies and NGOs:
  - pioneering schemes and demonstration projects are being supported
  - Scotland's Tourism and the Environment Task Force is preparing a national strategy, including a series of pilot projects aimed at sustainable tourism in local areas, eg the Trossachs and the Cairngorms
- pioneering traffic management schemes are being tested in some national parks
- the UK's Know How Fund has supported exchanges between protected area managers in the UK and Central and Eastern Europe

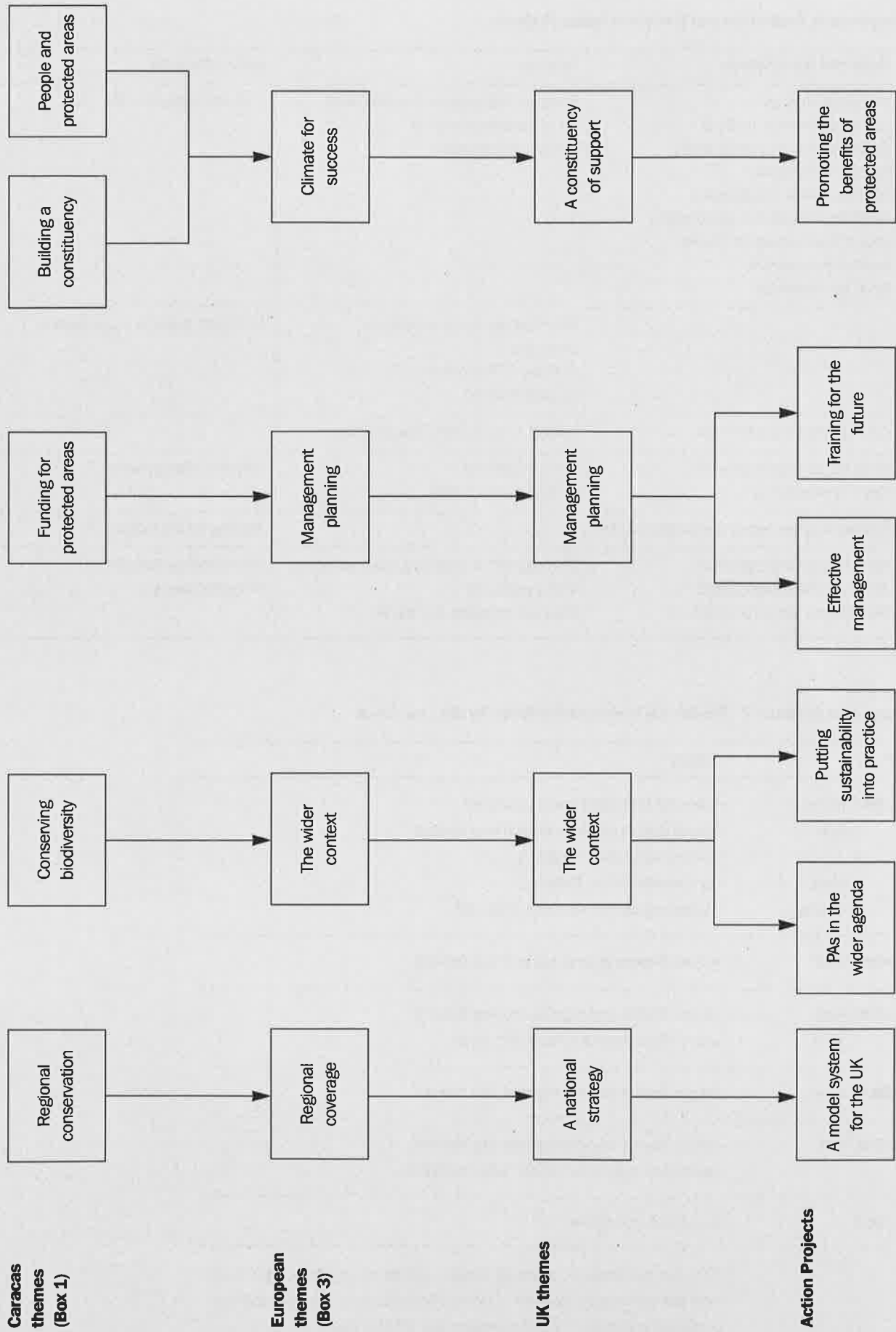
#### Management Planning

- management plans or statements of objectives are being prepared or are in place for many protected areas
- a wide array of partners is involved in the management of many protected areas
- the use of conservation volunteers is a familiar feature of protected area management
- some protected areas have developed novel approaches to funding, eg sponsorship from industry, charging
- a range of in-service training opportunities is available for protected area staff and a good deal of information is available
- English Nature's ENSIS and CIS systems are pioneering, with other countries liaising through the Joint Monitoring Group

#### A Constituency of Support

- local Agenda 21 and local Biodiversity Challenge programmes involve local communities
- the 1995 Environment Act encourages National Park Authorities to get more involved in community issues and includes parish representatives on National Park Committees
- some AONBs work through Joint Advisory Committees
- the importance of protected areas for recreation is recognised and is integrated into some but not all management plans
- environmental education is part of the national curriculum and continuing development work is being carried out by agencies and NGOs, eg RSPB, WWF-UK
- information and interpretation techniques are well-developed

Appendix 4: From Caracas via Europe to the UK: the route to the Action Projects





**Appendix 5: From Gaps and Threats to Action Projects**

Gaps and Weaknesses	Threats	Action Projects
No overall strategy Lack of conceptual thinking Slow progress on marine areas No NPs in Scotland AONB and NSA weaknesses Need for international designations Loss of and damage to SSSIs Ineffective small sites Need for monitoring	Focus on international commitments could be detrimental to national designations	A Model System for the UK
	Development and infrastructure pressures CAP and CFP concern External threats	Protected Areas in Wider Agenda
Need for joint management	Putting Sustainability into Practice	
Need for joint management Need for monitoring	Visitor pressures Inadequate resources	Effective Management
Training to cover new and emerging issues		Training for the Future
Need for joint management AONB and NSA weaknesses Benefits not well-articulated	Development and infrastructure pressures Visitor pressures Potential reduction in support	Promoting the Benefits of Protected Areas

**Appendix 6: Phase 2 - Provisional Timetable for Action by the Task Force**

Date	Action
<b>1997</b> March	Action for Protected Areas published
April	Annual Report on progress and way forward Commission Action Project 5
June	Commission Action Project 2
October	Workshops on the six Action Projects*
<b>1998</b> April	Annual Report on progress and way forward
<b>1999</b> April	Annual Report on progress and way forward
June	Launch Campaign for Protected Areas
<b>2000</b> April	Annual Report on progress and way forward
<b>2001</b> April	Annual Report on progress and way forward Report on progress for World Parks Congress
<b>2002</b>	World Parks Congress

\* Further development of the six Action Projects will depend on the output from the workshops, to which a broad cross-section of those involved in protected area planning and management will be invited.

