IUCN | National Committee United Kingdom

Putting Nature on the Map

Summary of a Report and Recommendations on the Use of the IUCN System of Protected Area Categorisation in the UK

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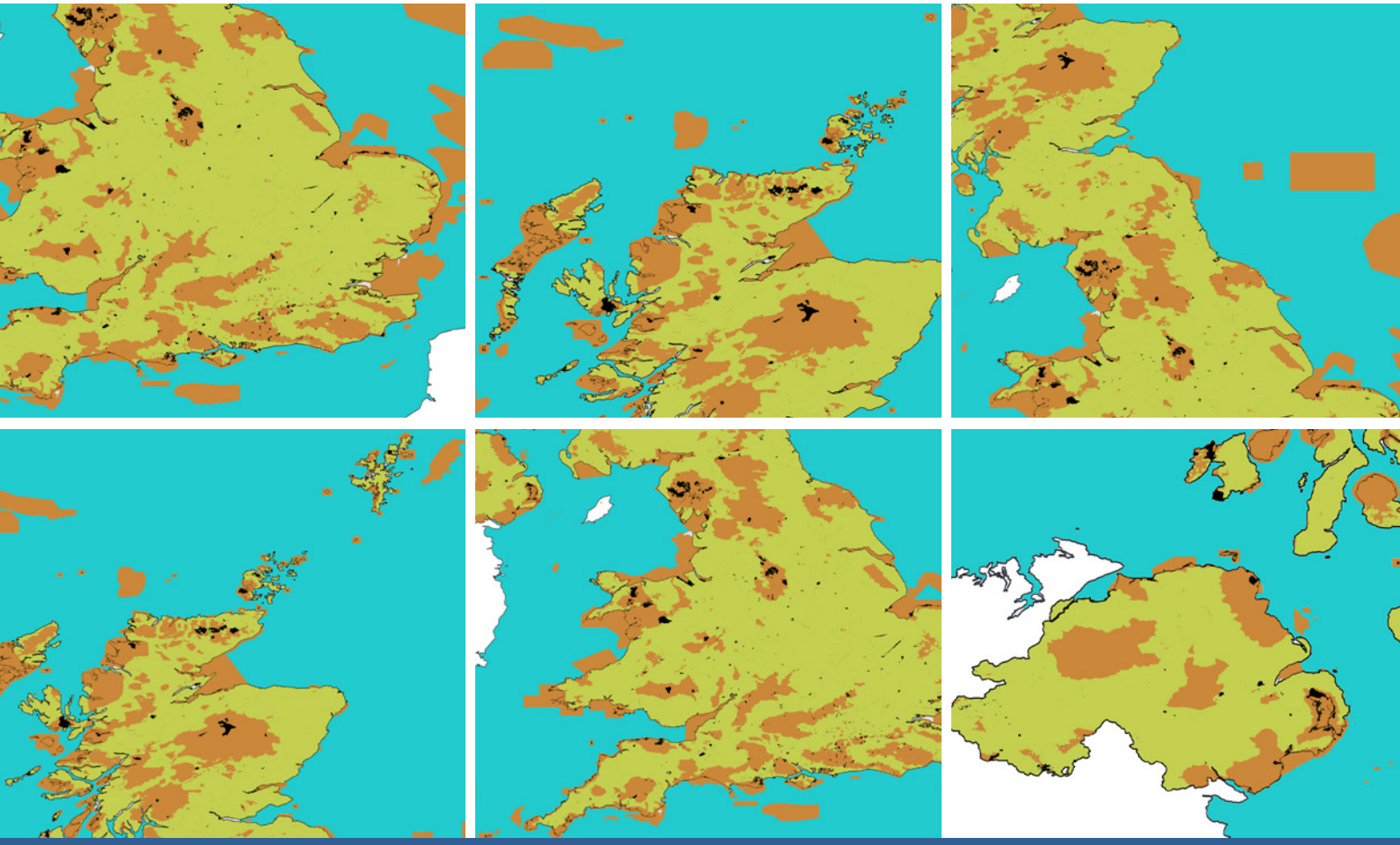

A complex, challenging and ground-breaking project

In February 2010, the Chair of WCPA challenged the IUCN National Committee for the UK (NCUK) to apply the IUCN 2008 *Guidelines for Applying Protected Area Management Categories* (www.iucn.org/pa_categories) in the UK (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales). The result was the Putting Nature on the Map project (PNOTM). This has identified all the places in the UK that meet the IUCN definition of a protected area, and assigned to them one of the six IUCN protected area management categories and four protected area governance types. PNOTM was led by a group of UK-based WCPA members with long experience of the IUCN Categories system, who have authored both the main report and this summary.

The project has taken four and a half years. To date (late 2014), PNOTM has built up a picture of protected areas in the UK which is quite different from that previously reported to the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA). We have shown that some UK conservation designations currently in the WDPA do not meet the IUCN definition of a protected area, whilst others - notably the extensive contribution of conservation non-governmental organisations (NGOs) – can now be added, as they were not previously recorded in official UK and international databases. This core finding shows how nature conservation has moved beyond public policy and is increasingly a third sector or community-led activity.

Snowdonia National Park, Wales © Equilibrium Research

At a time when resources for conservation in the public sector are declining and policy commitment to conservation has weakened, at least in parts of the UK, PNOTM can report that a little over 20 per cent of the terrestrial UK fits the IUCN definition of a protected area. This is an important finding and shows the positive place of conservation in society today. But protected areas are subject to a growing number of threats and their effective protection also depends on what happens outside their boundaries. PNOTM demonstrated that the largest protected areas in the UK – the National Parks (NPs) and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) - were protected areas in IUCN terms, but also that they only just met the requirements of the definition. Any weakening of their protection could lead to their reduced recognition in the WDPA, potentially influencing the UK's ability to meet the Aichi Biodiversity Target of 17 per cent agreed at the Nagoya CBD CoP in 2010.

The work involved in PNOTM has been far more complex and challenging than was foreseen at the outset. But it has also been far more valuable, instructive and ground-breaking than anyone expected. We believe that our report offers a much richer picture of protected nature in the UK than existed before, and hope it will inspire and guide similar projects to apply the 2008 Guidelines in other countries.

PNOTM has only been possible through the financial support of The Sibthorp Trust, Natural England, the John Muir Trust, WWF-UK and Scottish Natural Heritage. The existence of five widely different kinds of funding partners, plus additional financial support and the sponsoring role of the IUCN NCUK, is evidence of wide support for the project.

UK protected areas – developing a dialogue

While the origins of nature conservation and landscape protection in the UK can be traced back hundreds of years, it was the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, applying to England Wales and (in part) to Scotland), that led directly to a system of statutory protection for the UK. This legislation separated nature conservation from landscape protection and access. It is this separation - along with growing devolution in the governance of the four countries of the UK, a range of international conservation obligations, and the action of conservation NGOs in creating their own protected sites - that accounts for the many kinds of protected area that exist in the UK today.

IUCN advocates the benefits of a single global system to define and classify protected areas, based on this definition of a protected area: '*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'.* It also promotes associated principles, including that *'in the case of conflict, nature conservation will be the priority*'.

Taking this as our starting point, we developed a dialogue with protected area policy makers, managers and owners, at the UK, country and local levels, and in the public, private and voluntary sectors, including:

- The UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), which collects data on protected areas and sets the data standards that they require for site entry into the WDPA and its publicly-accessible Protected Planet portal (www.protectedplanet.net).
- The UK's Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), the statutory body that collects official protected area data and makes it available to the European Environment Agency (EEA) and the WDPA.
- The UK's statutory nature conservation and landscape protection bodies in each of the four countries.
- Managers of individual protected areas, and representatives of groupings of certain protected area types, such as NPs and AONBs.
- A wide range of NGOs: some operating across the UK, others only in parts of it; some focussing on landscape protection, others on species or habitat protection; most owning land, but often leasing it too, or advising on land management.

We have engaged with these and other interests in many ways. We set up an advisory group drawn from a variety of institutions; organised conferences, workshops and seminars (including a spatial data training workshop run by UNEP-WCMC); published an e-newsletter for all interested parties; set up an on-line 'Protected Areas Categories Club'; dedicated part of the IUCN NCUK (www.iucn-uk.org/) website for recording progress; held numerous face-to-face meetings and tailored correspondence with data providers; and ran a pilot project with the Scottish Wildlife Trust to test emerging ideas.

We confirmed that protected areas in the UK present a very complex picture, involving many different organisations, varying between each country, and using several management categories and governance types.

A five-step approach

At the outset of the project, IUCN WCPA and IUCN NCUK established that the data on UK protected areas held on the WDPA was deficient in several ways. It was not collected using the 2008 Guidelines; it was not comprehensive; it included some areas that might not meet the IUCN definition; it omitted other areas that should be included; and it was not categorised by the purposes for which sites were managed.

To improve the database, we had to apply the 2008 Guidelines, following these five steps based on IUCN's advice:

Step 1: Identify all sites that might possibly be protected areas

This was a major initial scoping exercise, as the UK has many different forms of site-based protection, run under a wide variety of governance regimes. To compile a comprehensive picture of all these required working with many stakeholders in all parts of the UK (we excluded UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies). The exercise went much wider than the list of UK official protected areas previously recorded on the WDPA, by including sites where the governance types are private (including NGO), mixed and community.

Step 2: Develop UK-specific guidance based on the IUCN guidelines

The 2008 Guidelines were the foundation for the whole exercise. However, a UK interpretation was needed to help explain how these global guidelines should be implemented. After consulting stakeholders, we developed a Handbook of UK-specific guidance (www.iucn-uk.org/projects/protectedareas/tabid/65/default.aspx)

Step 3: Determine what is – and what is not – a protected area under the IUCN definition

Using the 2008 Guidelines and the UK Handbook, it was possible to refine the long list of all possible types identified at Step 1. We excluded those which clearly did not conform to the IUCN definition, e.g. those not focused on nature conservation or which were temporary measures, such as: planning designations, like Green Belts; areas covered by time-limited EU-funded agri-environmental and rural development schemes; measures to protect the built heritage; and other places that that are intended to be managed for nature conservation but where protection could not guaranteed into the future, such as Local Wildlife Sites. Such places were identified as outside the IUCN definition of a protected area, and not considered further.

This still left many thousands of areas of land or sea that are given different types of protection but which might – or might not – be protected areas in the IUCN sense. Some of these are found throughout the UK, notably those deriving from international obligations and many NGO-owned sites; others are specific to particular parts of the UK. Our task was to determine which of these designations met the IUCN definition. The Handbook included sets of keys to help make that judgement - a useful aid to decision making but not sufficient on their own.

This was more than a technical exercise: many of the bodies consulted wished to stay within the international system and maintain their status as protected areas recognised by IUCN. For example, NPs and AONBs strongly resisted the possibility of 'de-listing', fearing that this would undermine efforts to protect the areas and exclude them from global conservation efforts. Many NGO bodies responsible for protected areas wished their land to be included in the WDPA for the first time.

A young common seal (*Phoca vitulina*) in the seas around Lundy Island, England which is owned and managed by the National Trust © naturepl.com / Alex Mustard / WWF-Canon

PNOTM also revealed that there had been no systematic approach by the UK in the past to the inclusion of sites as protected areas in the WDPA. There was clearly a need for greater rigour in deciding what should be considered as a protected area and how the categories should be assigned. There was also a need for a rational process to help implement the 2008 Guidelines in the case of many thousands of often very small sites. These challenges were met through the creation of a WCPA UK Protected Areas Assessment Panel and Statements of Compliance (SoCs) (see 'Innovation and quality control' section below).

Step 4: Assign management categories and governance types

Once the question 'Is this a protected area?' had been answered positively, two further questions could be asked:

a. *What IUCN management category should the protected area be assigned to?*
   The Handbook provided keys and examples to guide a step by step assessment of management objectives in order to assign the most appropriate IUCN management category. The names that IUCN attaches to the categories were not used in the Handbook because of possible confusion between these and the national names used for protected areas: for example, all UK NPs have been classified as

Dalkeith Oakwood SSSI Midlothian, Scotland © Roger Crofts

Category V (protected landscape/seascape), not Category II (which IUCN terms 'national park') .

b. *What governance type should the protected area be assigned to?*
Four types of governance are described in the 2008 Guidelines, in the UK Handbook and in subsequent guidance from IUCN.

Step 5: Data collection and reporting

Once protected area status had been confirmed, data providers were invited to compile lists of their protected areas, with management categories and governance types, in accordance with UNEP-WCMC's Data Standards. In the case of government agencies, established data protocols were respected; but with the NGO data sets, which had never been included before, large bodies of new data on the UK's protected areas were collected, reviewed by the panel and then transmitted to UNEP-WCMC.

Data collection has been challenging. WDPA data standards were new to many in both the official and NGO sectors. So PNOTM invested in a pilot scheme with the Scottish Wildlife Trust and supported a UNEP-WCMC training workshop for data managers. Where NGOs were unable or unwilling to provide full digitised data, UNEP-WCMC accepted point data rather than boundary polygon detail.

Previously, the statutory nature conservation body in each UK country sent data on statutorily designated sites directly to JNCC for onward transmission to the EEA and its Common Database on Designated Areas (CDDA). PNOTM encouraged the data providers to transmit this information via the Assessment Panel before it went to JNCC.

Innovation and quality control

PNOTM introduced three novel ways to ensure that decision making was consistent, independent, transparent and informed: a national Handbook, a national Assessment Panel and SoCs.

The Handbook on the application of the IUCN guidelines in the UK

IUCN's global guidance on protected area categories is inevitably broad-brush, applying in principle to all countries. What is often needed is a 'bridge' between that global guidance and the national situation – so making the former relevant to the latter. The UK Handbook, completed during the first phase of PNOTM, performed this function. It demonstrated the value of using the IUCN categories system in the UK, introduced some novel assignment keys and included examples of the application of the categories in the UK. It also explained how the remaining work involved in PNOTM would be undertaken, including the setting up of the Assessment Panel and the purpose of SoCs. In effect, it provided a blueprint for much of the project. Any country embarking on an assignment exercise should consider the need to prepare such tailor-made national advice on the IUCN system.

The IUCN WCPA UK Assessment Panel

The IUCN NCUK set up a WCPA UK Assessment Panel to assess the material collected, including the SoCs. This followed trials in other parts of the world and is part of an international effort within IUCN WCPA to extend the use of the 2008 Guidelines and improve the accuracy of assessments by appointing accredited members of WCPA as members of national Assessment Panels. Using the SoCs (see below), the Assessment Panel looked at each designation to verify whether or not it met the IUCN definition of a protected area, and to confirm the proposed classification by management category and governance type; it also looked at a number of individual protected areas to confirm proposed assignments. The Panel's membership was approved by the Chair of IUCN WCPA, its six members all being members of WCPA in the UK, who had worked closely with the categories system for many years. Through this critical process of peer review, every candidate for protected areas status was subject to rigorous discussion, sometimes involving several iterations between those arguing the case and the panel.

Statements of Compliance

Early on in the project, it became clear that a structured approach would be needed to the Assessment Panel's work. 'Statements of Compliance' were requested from those representing different kinds of candidate protected areas and the Panel advised on their form and content of SoCs. In this way they had before them proposals for potential protected areas which were set out in a consistent, comparable, verifiable and transparent form.

SoCs have been produced for most official designations and for every major NGO which manages land in the UK conservation field (see table 1). Each statement contains these elements:

Table 1: **Statements of Compliance approved for sites owned and/or managed by the major nature conservation NGOs in the UK**

NGO name	Total area (ha) (SSSI overlap where relevant & available)	Average size (ha)	Number of sites & country-specific data
Butterfly Conservation	457 (240 SSSI)	20	23 sites in England and Wales
John Muir Trust	24,461 (7,662 SSSI)	2,718	Scotland 9 sites
National Trust	135,645 (c. 100,000 SSSI)	230	England & Wales 555 sites Northern Ireland 35 sites
National Trust Scotland	46,305 (33,686 SSSI)	1,653	Scotland 28 sites
Plantlife	1,775 (no SSSI data)	85	England 18 sites Scotland 1 site Wales 2 sites
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds	150,486 (97,875.67 SSSI)	710	212 sites in the UK
Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust	2,632 (1,536.7 SSSI)	292	England 6 sites Northern Ireland 1 site Scotland 1 site Wales 1 site
Wildlife Trusts	90,000 (c. 61,550 SSSI)	39	England 1,946 sites Northern Ireland 18 sites Scotland 120 sites Wales 216 sites
Woodland Trust	24,230 (2,493.5 SSSI)	56	England 290 sites Northern Ireland 9 sites Scotland 42 sites Wales 95 sites
Totals	**475,991 (c. 300,000 SSSI)**	**131**	**3,630**

- A standard introduction explaining the purpose of the SoC.
- A critical review of the policy context or legal objectives which indicate the purposes for which the areas are managed.
- The answers to questions asked in the Handbook relating to each part of the IUCN definition of a protected area (e.g. 'Is the site a clearly defined geographical area?' or, 'Is the main management objective nature conservation?') and amounting to a six-point test.

In addition, most SoCs also contain the proposed assignments of management categories and governance types, and some provide answers to questions contained in other keys in the Handbook. To see the SoCs, go to the IUCN NCUK web site (www.iucn-uk.org/projects/protectedareas/tabid/65/default.aspx).

In reviewing the SoCs, the Panel was often able to confirm that the sites described were protected areas that met the IUCN definition. Sometimes it asked for information and several SoCs were extensively redrafted as a result (in the case of the 38 AONBs in England and Wales, the Assessment Panel was not able to confirm the SoC until the manager of each AONB had individually provided written confirmation of their understanding of the IUCN advice, their endorsement of the 'generic' AONB SoC and their commitment to maintain or strengthen nature conservation policies in the next round of management plans). In some cases the Panel concluded that the sites did not meet the IUCN definition of a protected area.

In all, the Panel approved 16 SoCs (out of 23 received). As a result, revisions are now being made to the UK data on the WDPA to provide a more complete and accurate record of the protected areas that meet the IUCN definition.

The results: what we have learnt about Protected Areas in the UK

PNOTM has taken all those involved, including the authors of the report, on a learning journey. In the first place, this was about informing UK protected areas practitioners of the significance of the new protected area definition and the associated principles and guidelines that were adopted by IUCN in 2008. Then there was an exercise to promote their wider and more informed use through the development of the UK Handbook. Finally, the protected areas community was engaged directly through the writing of the SoCs and collecting data.

The key finding of PNoTM has been to show that a little over 20 per cent of the UK fits the IUCN definition of a protected area (see table 2). Additionally our main conclusions are these:

Some designations should be added to the data base

The 2011 WDPA did not include European designations (SPAs and SACs), though they are now included on WDPA's list of protected areas in the UK. Marine legislation of 2009 and 2010 has now been implemented and it is necessary to add the Marine Conservation Zone and Marine Protected Area designations which have been approved in England and Scotland respectively (equivalent areas elsewhere in UK waters had not been designated as of September 2014).

Some designations are not considered to be protected areas (i.e. they are 'non-compliant')

The Assessment Panel did not consider that several designations - Heritage Coasts, Forest Parks, National Scenic Areas, Regional Parks, and AONBs in NI – were protected

Table 2: **Protected Areas in UK: the 2011 Data and the Results of PNOTM[2]**

Designations	Sites on WDPA 2011	Sites meeting the IUCN definition in 2014	Summary of PNOTM findings (with reference to contents of SoCs)
NATIONAL DESIGNATIONS			
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (E, W)	49	38 1,950,000 ha	Evidence includes receipt of a letter of endorsement and a commitment to nature conservation which will be reflected in future management plans from each AONB manager.
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NI)		0	Evidence for the effectiveness of protection of nature in planning policy is insufficient at present.
Area of Special Scientific Interest (NI)	226	334 101,658 ha	Designated by statutory bodies for the representation and protection of natural features. Increased number owing to active designation programme.
Forest Park (UK)	0	0	There is no evidence for long term security assurance or primacy of nature for these sites.
Heritage Coast (E, W)	32	0	Sites not derived from legislation, with no statutory standing, and no long-term security assurance.
Local Nature Reserve (UK)	1,372	0	Sites generally do not guarantee long term protection and management for nature, so a site by site approach needs to be developed if these sites are to be included on the WDPA.
(Nature Conservation) Marine Protected Area (S)	0	30	The Assessment Panel considers that the intent is compatible with protected area status and this designation merits recognition in principle. But this is a new designation and until the precise arrangements for the management of natural resource extraction, especially fishing, are in place the panel considers it premature to make a definitive judgement. The panel has recommended that the position is reviewed in 2017 in light of experience and especially of the interpretation of the clause that would permit potentially damaging activities where the 'public benefit outweighs the risk of damage'.
Marine Conservation Zone (E)	0	27	The Assessment Panel considers that the intent is compatible with protected area status and this designation merits recognition in principle. But this is a new designation and until the precise arrangements for the management of natural resource extraction, especially fishing, are in place the panel considers it premature to make a definitive judgement. The panel has recommended that the position is reviewed in 2017 in light of experience and especially of the interpretation of the clause that would permit potentially damaging activities where the 'public benefit outweighs the risk of damage'.
Marine Consultation Area (S)	2	0	A transitional stage towards the creation of MPAs in Scotland that has no permanency.
Marine Nature Reserve (UK)	3	2	Marine nature reserves were introduced in England and Wales by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and in Northern Ireland by Article 20 of The Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (NI) Order 1985. They were designed to conserve marine life and geological or physiographical features of special interest. They have similar status and protection to NNRs, but were specifically concerned with a marine environment, including both the sea and seabed. In view of their closeness to NNRs, it was not thought necessary to prepare a separate SoC for these two sites, which will in any case soon be replaced by other forms of marine protected areas arising out of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009.
National Park (E, W, S)	14	15 2,262,518 ha	Legislation for the 15 NPs in the UK affords a statutory basis which delivers nature conservation goals.
National Scenic Area (S)	40	0	Evidence of the effectiveness of protection of nature in planning policy is insufficient.
National Nature Reserve (UK)	403	394 c. 224,862 ha	Legal and policy arrangements vary but the use of the statutory designation in common across the UK.
Regional Park (S)	4	0	Regional Parks are not able to demonstrate the primacy of nature in policy and the decision making process.
Site of Special Scientific Interest (E, W, S)	6,586	6,609 2,369,663 ha	Designated by statutory bodies for the representation and protection of natural features.
NGO RESERVES AND OTHER SITES			
Local Wildlife Site (UK)	0	0	These areas (42,000 sites covering 690,000 ha) do not enjoy a sufficient level of protection to be considered protected areas.
Privately Protected Areas managed by NGOs (UK)	0	3,640 475,991 ha	NGOs own multiple sites in the UK. Site data in nine SoCs received from landowning/ managing NGOs were analysed. Some sites will have been listed on the WDPA previously as SSSIs, but not all. Updated site data includes governance information and WDPA data management ensures areas with multiple designations (e.g. NGO site and SSSIs) are not double counted, but any variation in boundary will be shown.
Privately Protected Areas managed by individuals and Voluntary Reserve (UK)	0	0	This group of sites includes community conservation areas and private conservation initiatives developed by landowners, business etc. As there is no centralised body representing these reserves no SoC for the group could be developed. So, as with local nature reserves, a site by site approach needs to be developed if these sites are to be included on the WDPA.

2 As there is now clarity on what is and what is not a protected area in the UK, data is now being collected and being added to the WDPA. Until this process is completed, we cannot give a definitive figure for area under protection, as without the UNEP-WCMC analysis it is impossible to identify nested sites (i.e. when one parcel of land and water is defined as a protected area under different designations). The full analysis and a new map will be published in 2015.

Designations	Sites on WDPA 2011	Sites meeting the IUCN definition in 2014	Summary of PNOTM findings (with reference to contents of SoCs)
EUROPEAN DESIGNATIONS			
Special Area of Conservation (UK)	0	615 8,013,587 ha	SACs are the means to implement the 'Habitats Directive' throughout the UK as an EU Member State. These areas are also covered by other designations in the UK.
Special Protection Area (UK)	0	270 2,750,335 ha	SPAs are the means to implement the EU Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds throughout the UK as an EU Member State. These areas are also covered by other designations in the UK.
INTERNATIONAL DESIGNATIONS			
Ramsar sites (UK)	158	148	UK policy is to treat Ramsar sites in the same way as Natura sites; most are also SSSIs or ASSIs; this means that Ramsar sites in the UK are always equivalent to IUCN protected areas (this is not true in a global sense).
UNESCO Geopark (UK)	0	0	Analysis undertaken and concludes with six reasons why the UK's seven Geoparks do not at present meet the IUCN protected area definition.
UNESCO Biosphere Reserve (UK)	9	6	The core and buffer zones of BRs meet the IUCN definition but the transition zone does not. BRs often include sites designated for nature and/or landscape protection.
World Heritage Site (Natural and Mixed) (UK)	3	3	WHS aim to protect the Outstanding Universal Values for which they were inscribed. These three areas are managed for the protection of their natural values.

areas. Nor did they confirm Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) as such, due to the weak statutory protection they receive.

The status of international designations in the UK has been clarified

The 2011 database included a number of international sites without a critical consideration of their status in terms of their being IUCN protected areas. The Assessment Panel considered that Ramsar sites and Natural and Mixed World Heritage Sites were protected areas. Similarly for the core and buffer zones of Biosphere Reserves, though it was established that the transition zones of BRs and Geoparks are not protected areas.

Many NGO-owned or managed sites should be regarded as protected areas

PNOTM revealed that the coverage of private protected areas is not entirely known. Although many privately protected areas were included in protected area data, this was usually only the case if they were also recorded as statutorily designated sites. The NGOs' reserves were not noted as such in the national data because there had not previously been a coordinated effort to collect data on privately protected areas across the UK. However, NGOs are very important for nature conservation in the UK, and PNOTM focused on gathering data from this sector.

How things stand now

At the completion of PNOTM we can see significant progress in three ways.

There is now a better understanding of the IUCN system of protected area categories in the UK

At the outset, there was a low level of understanding of the IUCN categories system among individuals, government and NGO bodies in the UK, as was evident in the quality of the data previously returned to UNEP-WCMC and in the widespread misunderstandings revealed during our contacts with data providers. By the completion of the project, we can say that – even if there is not yet full institutional awareness of the IUCN categories system among all those who can benefit from it - there is a far better understanding of how it can help the UK protected areas community.

There is better quality data held by on the WDPA on UK protected areas

- In the past, there was no input from the NGO sector and no quality control in terms of meeting the IUCN protected area definition, category or governance type. Now, as a result of PNOTM, data flowing through to the WDPA includes that from NGOs and both this data - and that on official sites that goes via JNCC - incorporates the verification provided by the Assessment Panel. As a result, the data base has not only been updated but designations have been added that were not previously recorded in official databases.
- Designations will be adjusted where they do not meet the IUCN definition.
- A large number of privately protected areas have been added.
- A wider range of management categories is included that reflects the diversity of *in situ* conservation in the UK. (Previously all protected areas were classified as Categories IV or V; now some are also listed as Categories Ia, II and III).
- Information has been added on governance types. (Previously all sites were government type sites; now the substantial contribution made by NGOs to conservation in the UK has been recognised, with several thousand sites covering almost 500,000 ha under private governance).

As a result, there is more scope to use protected area data in support of conservation

Because PNOTM has generated more reliable and comprehensive data on protected areas in the UK, the results can be used in a variety of ways:

- For more accurate reporting on international conservation obligations,

- To provide a baseline against which to assess the effectiveness and value of protected areas,
- To encourage a dialogue and cooperation between different authorities and organisations managing protected areas,
- To clarify the place of protected areas within landscape-scale nature conservation strategies,
- To show what needs to be done to strengthen the protection given to areas that fall short of the IUCN definition, so as to achieve recognition in future, and
- To provide a more robust context against which to measure the potentially damaging impacts of policies, projects and practices affecting nature conservation. This is all the more important at a time when there is rising concern about the continuing loss of biodiversity and the support given to protected areas.

Recommendations

The report identifies ten detailed recommendations addressed to the partners in this work and designed to apply the PNOTM approach. Nine of these are UK-focused. In addition, Recommendation 9 says that the NCUK should urgently communicate the findings of PNOTM to the World Parks Congress 2014, to relevant stakeholders within the UK and its constituent parts, and to colleagues within the WCPA network in Europe and beyond. The communication of this summary is a first step in that process.

Recommendation 1: **All statutory agencies and other bodies owning and/or managing protected areas should update their data sets every three years starting in 2017, using the IUCN 2008 Guidelines, UK Handbook and the findings of PNOTM, and make their returns for the WDPA.**

Recommendation 2: **IUCN NCUK should retain the WCPA Assessment Panel to undertake reviews of new data and to continue to encourage the wider adoption of international approaches to protected areas categorisation in the UK.**

Recommendation 3: **UNEP-WCMC should work with the JNCC and the EEA to improve the quality, consistency and comparability of UK data included in the WDPA and CDDA.**

Recommendation 4: **the statutory bodies should retain a cross-border dialogue, involving the JNCC, to maintain a reasonable consistency of approach in the collection and transfer to central databases.**

Recommendation 5: **The bodies responsible for all designations which are non-compliant should consider what they need to do to make them compliant.**

Recommendation 6: **The Assessment Panel should reconsider the 'non-compliant' areas by 2017 to establish if they have made progress towards achieving the IUCN standards.**

The need to reconnect people to nature starts with active educational programmes © Lorne Gill/SNH

Recommendation 7: **The Assessment Panel should review the effectiveness of the implementation of marine conservation areas in 2017**.

Recommendation 8: **The relevant bodies in Scotland, England and Northern Ireland should examine and seek approval for the changes needed for NSAs, Heritage Coasts and AONBs respectively to pass the IUCN definition.**

Recommendation 9: **IUCN NCUK should lead a process for communicating the findings of PNOTM to the World Parks Congress 2014; and also to relevant stakeholders within the UK and its constituent parts, and to colleagues within the WCPA network in Europe and beyond, within a year of this report being published.**

Recommendation 10: **The IUCN NCUK should use the results of PNOTM, and follow up its support for the project, in developing a Programme of Work for UK Protected Areas. This should, like PNOTM, engage both the official and NGO sectors, in all parts of the UK, and aim to:**

- **Secure a better understanding of the factors that are undermining the effectiveness of protected areas.**
- **Develop the case for the importance of protected areas in land use and development planning, as well as environmental policy, in the UK and its constituent parts.**
- **Propose what needs to be done to strengthen the protection given to UK protected areas.**
- **Show how their management effectiveness should be monitored and improved, using IUCN guidance.**

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