

IUCN protected area management categories

Statement of Compliance for

Plantlife reserves

Introduction to Statements of Compliance

Statements of Compliance are an innovation of the IUCN National Committee for the United Kingdom's *Putting Nature on the Map* project. The project has developed guidance on the use of the IUCN definition of a protected area and the assignment of the associated management categories and governance types¹. The guidance suggests that short but authoritative Statements of Compliance are produced for a conservation site or group of sites.

For groups of sites designated for conservation under one overriding piece of legislation or public policy the statements should concentrate on whether the sites meets the IUCN definition of a protected area. For statutory designations the Statements of Compliance should review all relevant legislation, focussing on the priority given to nature conservation in the long-term. For sites not covered by legislation the statements should review the significance for nature conservation of all relevant public policy positions that specifically affect the area.

In addition to reviewing legislation or policy in relation to the IUCN definition of a protected area, the Statement of Compliance can also assign sites to IUCN management category and governance type. In this case the statements should also provide an overview of current management objectives in particular in relation to prioritising nature conservation and summarize examples of current management practice that demonstrate the priority given to nature conservation and the ambition and vision for nature conservation in the future.

Note: Statements of Compliance should be prepared with full reference to the 2008 Guidelines for Applying Protected Area Management Categories (see footnote for details)

The Statement of Compliance below has been prepared for a group of sites some of which are defined in legislation and others in a non-statutory context.

¹ Dudley, N (Editor) (2008) Guidelines for Applying Protected Area Management Categories. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. X + 86pp. <http://data.iucn.org/dbtw-wpd/edocs/PAPS-016.pdf>

AND

IUCN NCUK (2012); *Putting nature on the map - identifying protected areas in the UK: A handbook to help identify protected areas in the UK and assign the IUCN management categories and governance types to them*, IUCN National Committee for the United Kingdom, UK <http://www.iucn-uk.org/Portals/0/PNOTM%20Final%20January.pdf>

Background

Plantlife is legally structured as a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales (registered number 1059559) and in Scotland (registered number SC038951), having its registered office at 14 Rolleston Street, Salisbury SP1 1DX. The organisation is governed by a voluntary Board of trustees who also fulfil the functions of directors of the company.

Plantlife was founded in 1989 to champion the conservation of plants and fungi in the wild.

Plantlife:

- Acts directly to stop common plants becoming rare in the wild
- Rescues wild plants on the brink of extinction
- Protects sites of botanical importance
- Undertakes practical conservation work
- Engages and involves people in its work
- Influences relevant policy and legislation
- Collaborates widely to promote the cause of plant conservation in the wild
- Aspires to develop an ecosystem approach to conservation

With 7,300 members, several hundred of whom are actively involved in conservation activities locally, it is the largest voluntary body working for the conservation of plants in the wild in Britain.

Plantlife owns or manages 21 nature reserves on over 1,755 hectares of land. These nature reserves are in England, Scotland and Wales. Currently, it does not have nature reserves in Northern Ireland. One of Plantlife's nature reserves is on the Isle of Man, and although this is referred to below, it is not included in the UK Putting Nature on the Map project.

Plantlife's vision is:

A world that values wild plants - now and for the future

Plantlife's Nature Reserves policy :

Plantlife owns and manages nature reserves principally for the direct conservation of threatened plant species and habitats. They are also owned and managed for research and demonstration, for supporting its policy advocacy work, for inspiring the public to support plant conservation and to support other areas of Plantlife's work.

Reserve management:

The overall objectives for the management of Plantlife's nature reserves are:

- To maintain and enhance their natural biodiversity
- To stimulate public interest in wild plants
- To carry out research that supports its conservation advocacy work
- To generate public support for plant conservation within local communities
- To extend existing nature reserves where this will provide strategic benefits

Plantlife holds information about the habitats and species that occur on its reserves. These data will be managed and shared in accordance with the principles outlined by the National Biodiversity Network. Plantlife retains the right to withhold any information that it deems sensitive or which could lead to a detrimental impact on the wildlife of its reserves.

Key documents:

Companies Acts 1985 to 2006 Articles of Association of Plantlife International - The Wild Plant Conservation Charity (as amended by special resolutions passed on 15 April 1998, 1st November 2007 and 22nd March 2012)

Plantlife International Strategic Business Plan 2012 - 2016

Plantlife Nature Reserves: where to enjoy wild flowers by Michael Scott

Plantlife’s Nature Reserves and the IUCN definition of a protected area

The table uses the main key in the Putting Nature on the Map Handbook for identifying if a site meets the IUCN definition of a protected area².

Main elements of IUCN definition	Discussion of element in relation to SWT wildlife reserves
Are the sites in clearly defined geographical areas?	Yes. Each of Plantlife's nature reserves has a fixed boundary that is mapped digitally.
Are they recognised, dedicated and managed to achieve the long-term conservation of nature? NB ‘nature’ includes all levels of biodiversity as well as geodiversity, landforms and broader natural values.	Yes. Plantlife's Articles of Association state the objects for which the Company is established, one of which is "to promote and undertake for the public benefit the establishment and maintenance of places of botanical interest for the cultivation and preservation of plants". Some of Plantlife's nature reserves are also in whole, or in part, SSSIs, and this designation is open-ended (i.e. permanent). Individual SSSIs are designated for one or more specified natural features - plants, animals, rocks and landforms; management must give priority to these features but may also support the conservation of other habitats, species, rocks and landforms.
Is the main management objective nature conservation? Other objectives of equal standing may be present but they do not cause conflict, i.e. nature conservation is the priority	Yes, the principal objective in the management of Plantlife's nature reserves is "to maintain and enhance their natural biodiversity". For those Plantlife nature reserves that are also SSSIs, the priority objective of SSSI designation and management is nature conservation.
Does the designation of the site prevent, or eliminate where necessary, any exploitation or management practice that will be harmful to the objectives of designation?	Yes, the principal function of Plantlife's nature reserves is "the direct conservation of threatened plant species and habitats". In addition, some of Plantlife's nature reserves are designated as SSSIs, some are also SACs and one is also an SPA and Ramsar site. For those sites that are also SSSIs, the designating authorities have various statutory and other means to prevent or eliminate practices that would obstruct achievement of a site's nature conservation objective(s).

² See page 26 of the *Putting Nature on the Map Handbook*

Main elements of IUCN definition	Discussion of element in relation to SWT wildlife reserves
Does the designation of the site aim to maintain, or ideally, increase the degree of naturalness of the ecosystem being protected?	Yes, the over-riding objective for Plantlife's nature reserves is to "maintain and enhance their natural biodiversity". For those nature reserves that are also SSSIs, the designating authorities monitor and report the condition of SSSIs (common standards monitoring) and take action to bring features into favourable condition.
Is the long-term nature conservation ensured through legal or other effective means? E.g. national or international statutory law/ agreement/convention, traditional rules or NGO policy.	Yes. Plantlife is committed to ensuring that the nature conservation interest on each of its reserves is properly safeguarded and managed in perpetuity. Plantlife owns the freehold on 20 of its 21 nature reserves. The remaining nature reserve (Ranscombe Farm in Kent) is partly owned freehold (60 hectares) and partly under a 25-year lease (190 hectares). In addition, a number of our nature reserves benefit from statutory protection (13 are SSSI and one is ASSI). For those reserves that are SSSIs, these are established in law (Scotland: Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 (as amended); England and Wales; Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)). For the reserve that is ASSI, this is also established in Isle of Man law under the Wildlife Act 1990.