

IMPORTANCE	SITE DESIGNATION	EXPLANATION
<p>INTERNATIONAL (more than one designation may apply to site)</p>	<p>RAMSAR SITES Ramsar Convention</p>	<p>Sites identified as being of international importance as wetlands, particularly for their populations of migratory or wintering water fowl. (None within West Oxfordshire.)</p>
	<p>SPECIAL PROTECTION AREAS (SPAs) EC Birds Directive</p>	<p>Habitats of international importance for birds, designated to ensure the survival and reproduction of rare breeding and migratory species. Together with SACs they will form a network of internationally important sites known as “Natura 2000” throughout the European Union. (None within West Oxfordshire).</p>
	<p>SPECIAL AREAS OF CONSERVATION (SACs) EC Habitats Directive</p>	<p>Sites of international importance as natural habitats, designated to conserve habitats and species which are rare or threatened within the European Union. Sites hosting habitats or species which are particularly threatened have “priority” status. These sites will also form part of the “Natura 2000” network (Cassington Meadows).</p>
<p>NATIONAL</p>	<p>NATIONAL NATURE RESERVES (NNRs) S.19 of the 1949 National Parks & Access to the Countryside Act, or S.35 of the 1981 Wildlife & Countryside Act</p>	<p>Sites of key national, or international, biological or geological importance which are managed primarily for nature conservation. NNRs are owned or leased by English Nature, or bodies approved by them, or are managed in accordance with Nature Reserve Agreements with landowners or occupiers (eg. Wychwood Forest).</p>
	<p>SITES OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST (SSSIs) S.28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (all Ramsar Sites, SPAs, SACs and NNRs are also designated as SSSIs)</p>	<p>SSSIs collectively form a nationally important series of sites of biological or geological value and are notified by English Nature in accordance with published guidelines. Some SSSIs have also been identified by English Nature as Nature Conservation Review or Geological Conservation Review Sites which individually are key sites of national importance. (29 in West Oxfordshire).</p>

Hierarchy of Nature Conservation Designations

IMPORTANCE	SITE DESIGNATION	EXPLANATION
REGIONAL/ LOCAL	LOCAL NATURE RESERVES (LNRs) S.21 of the 1949 National Parks & Access to the Countryside Act, and NON-STATUTORY NATURE RESERVES	LNRs are sites of at least local importance for nature conservation, which are declared and usually managed by local authorities. (Tackley and North Leigh Common). Non-statutory nature reserves are established by organisations such as the Local Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) and the Woodland Trust.
	COUNTY WILDLIFE SITES Non-statutory wildlife sites	These are wildlife sites which are important in a county context.
	REGIONALLY IMPORTANT GEOLOGICAL & GEOMORPHOLOGICAL SITES (RIGS) Non-statutory geological sites	RIGS are sites of regional geological or geomorphological importance. Sites are selected primarily for their educational value, but are also important for research and stimulating public awareness of geology.