



Key points you should
know about the new
Nature Conservation
(Scotland) Act 2004
and
Sites of Special
Scientific Interest

If you own or occupy land within an SSSI

All SSSIs, written consents and nature conservation orders continue. You do not need to do anything about these. In 2005, we plan to start reviewing documents for each SSSI. This will take about six years. If we need to change anything to do with your SSSI notification we will contact you.

If you manage land within an SSSI

The Government, its departments and agencies, remain committed to encouraging the voluntary uptake of incentives to support the conservation management of SSSIs. You may be eligible for payments to help conserve and enhance your site from, for example, SNH (Natural Care schemes), SEERAD (Rural Stewardship Scheme) or Forestry Commission Scotland (Scottish Forestry Grant Scheme).

If you propose a new activity on an SSSI

The new Act has changed the way we deal with proposals for new activities within SSSIs. These are explained more fully in the SSSI booklet.

If you plan to carry out a new activity that is listed in the SSSI notification, you must apply to us in writing and you may not proceed without our consent. These lists will now be called lists of operations requiring consent (or ORC lists). Starting in 2005 we will review (and aim to shorten) all ORC lists and existing consents. If we need to change anything, we will contact you.

If you have permission from certain regulatory authorities

Certain regulatory authorities (listed in the notes at the end of the SSSI booklet) can now give permission for activities on SSSIs. If you have permission from one of these regulatory authorities, you do not need consent from SNH for the same operation.

If we don't agree

In cases where, despite our best efforts, we are unable to agree with you how to manage a site, or if we do not issue a consent, you may now appeal to the Scottish Land Court.

If we constrain your management

Where a decision we make restricts your established management of land within an SSSI, we must offer to enter a management agreement with you to compensate for any actual loss of income. Where a decision we make constrains a new plan or project, we no longer need to offer compensation, but may still offer you a management agreement to support the conservation management of your SSSI.

If there is a change in owner or occupier

You must tell SNH within 28 days if you dispose of your interest in an SSSI or become aware of a new or additional occupier of your land within an SSSI. You must also tell the new owner or occupier that the land is an SSSI.

If you need more information

If you have any questions about your SSSI, how the new Act might affect you, or would like copies of SSSI documents, please contact your local SNH office. You can also find information on our website www.snh.org.uk. The Act is available on the Stationery Office website www.hms.o.gov.uk and the new Financial Guidelines for SSSIs are on the Scottish Executive's website www.scotland.gov.uk.