

Annex 3
Designated sites in the Cairngorms National Park

Designation	Purpose
SAC – Special Area of Conservation	These areas, created under the EC Directive on the Conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the “Habitats Directive”), are of European importance.
SPA – Special Protection Area	These areas, created on the EC Directive on the Conservation of wild birds (the “Birds Directive”) are of European importance.
Collectively SAC and SPA sites are known as Natura sites.	
SSSI – Site of Special Scientific Interest	Areas in Scotland which are special for their plants or animals or habitat, their rocks or landforms or a combination of these features.
GCR – Geological Conservation Review	These sites display sediments, rocks, fossils, and features of the landscape that make a special contribution to our understanding and appreciation of Earth science and the geological history of Britain,
NNR – National Nature Reserves	All of these sites are important in terms of public understanding and enjoyment, as well as being important nationally for nature. They are also designated SSSIs.
Ramsar	These sites, designated under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance are internationally important wetland sites protecting wildfowl habitat. Scottish Government policy states that proposals with potential to affect these sites are considered under the same process as SAC and SPA sites.

These designations often overlap. For example, Insh Marshes is SAC, SPA, SSSI and NNR. European Protected Species are also present on the site.

The possibility of effect on a designated site brings a statutory requirement on the planning authority to apply more stringent tests in determining applications. This requires a greater level of information from the developer.

A guide is available from SNH (www.snh.org.uk/pubs/results.asp?Q=natura+sites&rpp=10) outlining the consideration of proposals which may affect SACs and SPAs.

An interactive map is available on the SNH website (www.snh.org.uk/snhi/map.asp) which shows the location of all SSSIs, SACs, SPAs and RAMSAR sites.

If an applicant believes that their proposal may affect a designated site then they should contact the planning authority as early as possible.