

## Natural England information



Natural England is a non-departmental public body in the United Kingdom sponsored by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

Natural England's purpose is to help conserve, enhance and manage the natural environment for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england>

## What is a NNR?

National Nature Reserves (NNR's) were established by the UK Government to protect some of our most important habitats, species and geology.

These 'outdoor laboratories' for research offer a place to connect with nature and be inspired by wildlife, habitats, geology and landscapes.

There are currently 221 National Nature Reserves in England with a total area of over 110,000 hectares - approximately 0.8% of the country's land surface.

Two thirds of the NNR's are managed solely by Natural England, the rest by organisations approved by Natural England, for example, the National Trust, Forestry England, RSPB, Wildlife Trusts and local authorities. To film on these reserves you will need to contact the relevant organisation.

To find a NNR in your area go to:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-nature-reserves-in-england>

Or for a more complete search go to <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

- in top left click on MAPS and select interactive maps
- in the Table of Contents on the left of the page click on the plus sign at Designations
- Click the plus sign at Land-based Designations
- Click the plus sign at Statutory
- Tick the box where it says National Nature Reserves (England)
- The map should show you the sites and you can zoom in on the map to the area you want.

National Parks are not covered by Natural England. For information about filming in National Parks do an internet search on the park you want to access.

## Images of NNR's

Locality has some photos of NNR's in the library. <https://www.localityonline.com/8/41/search?partner=13>  
Locality has some images of starling murmuration for sale.

Details of all NNR's can be found at this link

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-nature-reserves-in-england>

If you want to find something specific, say a beach, you can use Locality's advanced search engine and select a category, style or feature. You can even narrow the search to a particular region or within a distance from a postcode. <https://www.localityonline.com/47/210/tv-film>

**Disclaimer:** All data, imagery, and information is provided without warranty or any representation of accuracy, timeliness or completeness. The content of the information is solely a guideline and is subject to constant change.

## Conditions / Restrictions

### **NATURE COMES FIRST**

The natural environment will always come first and a great deal of work goes into making sure every precaution is taken to not harm any ecosystem.

- Production is to work within the guidelines of The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 and the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2010. Persons could be prosecuted if found committing an offence.
- To protect the indigenous flora and fauna no 'greens' material is to be brought on site.
- Depending upon the number of persons on site and production's requirements Natural England may ask for an environmental report to be drawn up by an ecologist.
- Production is expected to follow the Countryside Code. Never damage or disturb any habitats, species or biodiversity features.  
See : <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code>
- All activity is to be limited to tracks and tracksides. Incursion into off track areas must be pre approved by the Reserve Manager.

### **GENERAL PUBLIC**

- The production DOES NOT HAVE EXCLUSIVE ACCESS to Natural England sites.
- The general public has a legal right to enter an open access area, dedicated land or on common land.
- The production must not place notices on Natural England's land or inform local residents about potential filming without liaising with Locality first.

### **CONTENT**

Imagery can only be used for a named project, Natural England does not give permission for photography to be sent to any image libraries.

Natural England will not entertain any content, promotion or brand that:

- Could damage the reputation of Natural England.
- Involves gambling or illegal betting.
- Has a distinct political bias or be used for political party propaganda.
- Involves scenes of an inflammatory nature (racism, violence, inhumanity).
- Contains explicit nudity, adult only content or scenes of a sexual nature.
- Contains strong language.

### **WATER**

- Access into bodies of water that are part of a wildlife reserve is largely not permitted. The Reserve Manager will have the final say.
- Production needs to ensure anything that enters the water is retrievable and does not pollute the environment.
- Absolutely no emptying of dirty water into a water source.

Payment needs to have cleared Locality's bank account before access is allowed.

## **Expectations of the production.**

### **LIAISING WITH THE PUBLIC**

- It is expected that all people associated with the production behave in a respectful and kind manner at all times.
- Liaison with the public should be by a member of the production crew that has been well briefed on dealing with the public and their rights.
- The general public may be politely asked to move out of the way or wait during a 'take' but the production has no right to enforce this.
- Production is not to capture the image of any member of the public without their consent.
- Children, young people (under 18) and vulnerable adults cannot give their own consent to photography; the consent of a parent or guardian is required.
- The production must not place notices on Natural England's land or inform local residents about potential filming without liaising with Locality first.
- It is important to agree a communications strategy between the production, Natural England and local stakeholders such as parish councils and birdwatching clubs.

### **ACCESS**

- The production does NOT have exclusive access to Natural England sites. The public has a legal right to open access areas, dedicated land and common land.
- On rare occasions, the general public may be restricted from accessing areas if it is unsafe for them to enter. The local Natural England Open Access Case Officer will assess the request and give advice.
- All activity is to be limited to tracks and tracksides. Incursion into off track areas must be pre approved by the Reserve Manager.
- Film set areas must be well signed and marshalled to avoid accidents or persons being mistakenly filmed. Alternative routes should be provided but not enforced.
- NNR's are wildlife reserves and prone to holes created by animals and naturally occurring uneven surfaces. Persons to be extra vigilant to avoid accidents.
- Be aware of grazing livestock and do not approach, touch, startle or feed the animals.
- Gates should be closed.
- Permission can be obtained to open locked gates but production must supply security on any opened gates.

### **WELFARE**

- Production to supply its own welfare provisions for crew. This should include: toilets; hand washing facilities; covered space for rest; drinking water; food.
- Production to have at least one 'appointed first aid person' on site at all times.
- Production crew should dress according to the weather forecast and prepare for adverse conditions. Stout footwear and covered arms and legs is always recommended.
- It is advised that production ask their personnel to check their body for ticks and insect bites within 24 hours of being on site.
- Temporary Ezy-ups/marquees may be erected in less sensitive areas close to filming locations with the approval of the Reserve Manager. Do not 'dig' into the soil but use weights instead.

### **SECURITY**

- The Production is solely responsible for all items of equipment and vehicles.
- Natural England does not accept responsibility for any lost or stolen items.

## VEHICLES

- Locked gates can be opened for vehicular access with the approval of the Reserve Manager.
- Vehicles must drive on existing tracks at all times.
- Speed limits of 5 mph should be observed.

## WASTE/RUBBISH

- Production must remove from site all waste it creates at the end of each day.
- Please avoid using any bins on site but dispose of items responsibly.
- Recycling is always encouraged.

## Procedure / Steps

Locality will guide you through the process and liaise with Natural England for you.

You will need you to either fill out the enquiry form (**[link to enquiry form](#)**)

or email the following details to [info@localityonline.com](mailto:info@localityonline.com)

Production company:

Type of shoot:

Where imagery will be seen:

What are you filming/photographing:

Dates required:

Preferred access times:

How many people on site:

Do you require a NE spokesperson:

Any large equipment or props:

It can take several days to process your film or photography request because Locality needs to:

- Approve the content with the Natural England press office.
- Check if there are any operational clashes with the Regional Team Leader.
- Discuss details with the Reserve Manager.

Also, depending upon what is being filmed, the production may be asked to provide an ecology report to help the Reserve Manager make decisions.

After the lovely Locality team has completed due diligence they will then:

- Ask production for evidence of its Public Liability Insurance of at least £5 million UK pounds.
- Get production to provide a Health and Safety Risk Assessment to cover the action on site. Locality can supply a template risk assessment if you need one.
- Draw up a contract/Location Hire Agreement that covers your legal obligations and details the productions intentions whilst on site.
- Send you an invoice.

Please note that:

- Payment needs to have cleared Locality's bank account before access is allowed.
- Photography can only be used for a named project, Natural England does not give permission for photography to be sent to any image libraries.

## What is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)?

A Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is a legal designation and imposes certain requirements and restrictions.

More details can be found at <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SSSIGuidance.aspx>

Just because a NNR is a SSSI does not mean it cannot be used for filming, it depends on why the site has been designated, the time of year, and what the filming requirements are.

Natural England has every right to decline filming requests but Locality will liaise with them and inform the production crew of the decision.

To process the filming request, the production company or filming individual, will be asked to employ a qualified ecologist to write a report. This Ecology Report should assess the likely impact filming may have on the environment, and give advice on how to avoid any damage.

Locality can provide contact details of freelance ecologists.

It is most likely that the production will be asked to cover the costs of having a Reserve Manager and/or an ecologist escort the film crew.

To check areas designated as SSSI's go to <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

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- in the Table of Contents on the left of the page click on the plus sign at Designations
- Click the plus sign at Land-based Designations
- Click the plus sign at Statutory
- Tick the box where it says Sites of Special Scientific Interest (England)
- The map should show you the sites and you can zoom in on the map to the area you want.

## What if I want to film in an SSSI area but it's not within a NNR?

If the SSSI site is not within a National Nature Reserve, an application must be made to Natural England for a SSSI Consent Form.

Applications will only be taken from the landowner, or someone they authorised to act on their behalf.

It can take up to 28 days to process the SSSI Consent Form, so early contact with Natural England is recommended.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sites-of-special-scientific-interest-consent-advice-request-form>

To fast track the process you can pay £500 to get a Discretionary Advice Service (DAS) FAST TRACK SSSI CONSENT form.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/get-fast-track-advice-for-sssi-assent>

Please email [protectedsites@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:protectedsites@naturalengland.org.uk) for any more advice.

## Can I use a drone or UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle)

Natural England may grant permission for filming with drones/UAV's but safeguards must be met to minimise risk to the public and the ecology.

A Reserve Manager or Ecologist must be present to oversee filming and check that the drone/UAV stays within the predetermined flight path. The production will be invoiced the costs of NE staff time as per the location hire fees.

Flying may be restricted at Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and it is very unlikely that permission will be given if flying is within the migration and breeding seasons or when birds are nesting.

The production or individual will be charged a location fee plus staff fees, (generally about 2 hours) for the extra paperwork required. For more details see **NNR filming hire fees**

The production company must follow strict competency and regulations. In general when flying a drone or UAV for commercial purposes you should:

- Know that using a drone that weighs over 250g or has a camera attached you must be registered with the CAA and have an A2 Certificate of Competency (A2 CofC) to fly it. Your Operator ID number must be labelled on the drone. More information can be found at <https://www.caa.co.uk/drones/>
- Prearrange the flight path or area where the drone will fly. There are strict flight restriction zones (FRZ) if you are near airports, airfields and spaceports. Maps and info at <https://nats-uk.ead-it.com/>
- Not fly the drone/UAV at a distance beyond 500 metres from the operator (and not outside the direct line of sight of the operator). Operating height must not exceed 400 feet.
- Not fly within 150 metres of any congested area/crowds
- Not fly within 50 metres of any person, vehicle or structure which could be damaged if impacted by the drone.
- Find a safe area to land/ take off the drone from. It must be equipped with a mechanism that will allow it to land in the event of a failure of any of its control systems, including the radio link.
- Ensure that the operator has checked that the drone is in an airworthy condition, that any loads are securely tied and that the flight can safely be made taking into account the wind and other atmospheric conditions. They are responsible for the drone/UAV.

For more information please see:

Government advice about drones and the guidance and laws surrounding their use:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/drones-are-you-flying-yours-safely-and-legally>.

Civil Aviation Authority information about drone use:

<https://www.caa.co.uk/drones>

The National Trust has guidance about flying drones here

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/who-we-are/about-us/flying-drones-at-our-places>

The Production is encouraged to sign up to Albert, this is a BAFTA initiative offering online tools, training, events and practical guidance to identify sustainable ways to combat climate change.

<https://wearealbert.org/>