



## Geological Conservation Review sites

The Joint Nature Conservation Committee carries out the Geological Conservation Review to select Britain's very best geological and geomorphological features.

Geological Conservation Review (GCR) sites contain geological and geomorphological features of national and international importance. They are selected through a process known as the [Geological Conservation Review](#).

There are nearly 900 GCR sites in Scotland. Most have statutory protection through designation as geological features in [Sites of Special Scientific Interest \(SSSIs\)](#).

However, more than 200 GCR sites, known as 'unnotified GCR sites', have no protective SSSI designation status. Significant areas of almost 30 further GCR sites also have no protective SSSI designation status.

National Park authorities and some local authorities, therefore, treat unnotified GCR sites as 'candidate SSSIs' and afford them the same protection as SSSIs.

Some unnotified GCR sites are also [Local Nature Conservation Sites](#). As such, they are at least given the same protection as locally important sites – though they are actually nationally or internationally important.

All other unnotified GCR sites have no statutory protection.

Search for Geological Conservation Review site boundaries on our [Natural Spaces website](#).

## **GCR sites in SSSIs**

All GCR sites are considered to qualify for designation as features in [Sites of Special Scientific Interest](#) (SSSIs).

Features selected by the Geological Conservation Review (GCR) include:

- rocks, minerals and fossils
- landform features formed during the Ice Age
- modern rivers and coasts

SSSIs containing such features may be designated solely for their geological interest (geo-SSSI) or may also have a biological interest (mixed SSSIs).

The location of GCR sites within SSSIs indicates the location of geological and geomorphological features within the SSSI.

NatureScot is responsible for the conservation and enhancement of Scotland's SSSI network. As part of this, we advise on the conservation and enhancement of GCR sites.

## **Condition monitoring of GCR sites**

The condition of notified Earth science features (protected GCR sites) in SSSIs is monitored under our [Site Condition Monitoring programme](#).

View the latest Site Condition Monitoring data on the Scotland's Environment website.

## **Soils in GCR sites and SSSIs**

GCR sites and SSSI designations cover geology and geomorphology, but don't specifically cover soils.

But the nature and quality of soils within GCR sites and SSSIs are often integral to the features – geological and biological – for which the sites were selected. For example, peat soil in pollen sites or in sites designated for bog habitats.

Soil conservation is thus fundamental to SSSI conservation.

### **Further information**

[Standing advice and guidance for forestry and woodland planning - Geological Conservation Review Sites and Earth Science SSSIs](#)