

Scottish Natural Heritage

# National Scenic Areas Scotland's finest landscapes



National Scenic Areas (NSAs) were designated in 1980 in recognition of their outstanding scenery. Along with Scotland's two National Parks, they represent our nation's finest landscapes, and are equivalent to the Areas of Outstanding Beauty (AONBs) found in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

NSAs are found throughout Scotland, from Shetland to the Solway Firth. They include spectacular mountain areas such as the Skye Cuillins, Ben Nevis and Glencoe, the unique island landscapes of the Hebrides and Northern Isles, and the picturesque landscapes of Perthshire, the Borders and Dumfries & Galloway. These are some of Scotland's most iconic places, of importance for both their natural and cultural heritage.

## Special Qualities

Scottish Natural Heritage has surveyed all the NSAs and produced an up-to-date list of the landscape qualities that make each one special. This work was carried out in partnership with Historic Scotland and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS). It provides an important resource for everyone with an interest in these special landscapes.

## NSA Statements

Building on the special qualities work, Scottish Natural Heritage is preparing short 'NSA Statements' for each NSA. These statements provide landscape objectives that seek to protect and enhance the special qualities of the area and help to increase enjoyment and appreciation of it. They are being developed to help inform the work of all those involved in the future planning and management of NSAs.





# NATIONAL SCENIC AREAS IN SCOTLAND

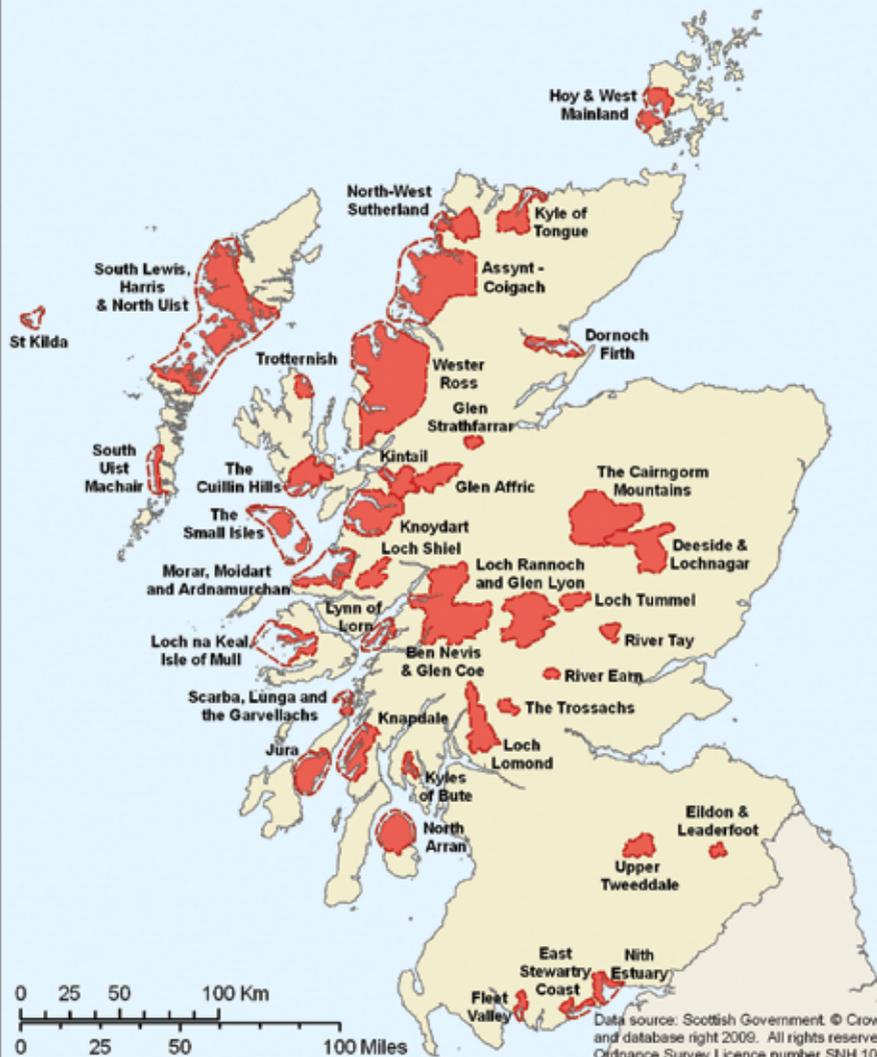


National Scenic Area

Shetland



Fair Isle



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## Planning

NSAs are designated under Section 263A of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, and are defined as “of outstanding scenic value in a national context.” The legislation also states that within an NSA “special attention is to be paid to the desirability of safeguarding or enhancing its character or appearance.”

The Scottish Planning Policy, the Scottish Government’s statement on land use planning, states:

“A National Scenic Area (NSA) is an area which is nationally important for its scenic quality... Development that affects a NSA... should only be permitted where:

- It will not adversely affect the integrity of the area or the qualities for which it has been designated; or
- Any such adverse effects are clearly outweighed by social, environmental or economic benefits of national importance.”

Most new developments within NSAs need to be accompanied by a design statement, and there are restrictions on certain permitted development rights.

## Management of NSAs

The day-to-day care of NSAs is largely undertaken by landowners and managers. Decisions by local planning authorities on built development are also important, particularly for the communities within these areas. Visitors also have an interest, with recreation and tourism based on the special qualities of these landscapes itself an important source of economic activity.

Balancing this mix of interests requires careful planning and management, with management strategies an option for achieving this. A ‘management strategy’ is a document produced through public consultation which describes the NSA, identifies what is important about its landscape and summarises the action needed. To-date, the three NSAs in Dumfries & Galloway have strategies in place. Details of these can be found on the Dumfries and Galloway Council web-site.

Management strategies can attract new funding to the area, and they also help maximise the social and benefits that positive landscape management and promotion can deliver.

## Further information

Full information on the National Scenic Areas, including their history, legal basis, policy, special qualities and NSA Statements can be found on the NSA pages of Scottish Natural Heritage’s web-site:

<http://www.snh.gov.uk/>



**Scottish Natural Heritage**  
**Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba**

All of nature for all of Scotland  
Nàdar air fad airson Alba air fad