

# Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations in the Peak District National Park

## What are the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations?

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) (Agriculture) Regulations 2006 are designed to protect uncultivated land and semi-natural areas from damage caused by the introduction of, or changes in activities that improve the productivity of land for agriculture. The Regulations also protect land from negative environmental effects from physical change to rural land by restructuring. Under the Regulations, all land within the boundary of a Protected Landscape (National Parks & National Landscapes) is considered to be a semi natural area. Land inside and outside (adjacent to) the Protected Landscape that supports regionally significant heritage features, priority habitats or areas of significant bracken and scrub is also considered a semi natural area.

## What are upland waders and why are they important?

Around 50% of England's lapwing, curlew and snipe breed in grasslands on upland farms, most often in rush pastures and on rough grazing land.

Lapwing and curlew are considered birds of principle importance for conservation. Changes to the management of fields that support breeding pairs, that make the land more productive for agriculture or restructure the land, are covered by the Regulations.



## Heritage features

Changes to the management of fields that include historic or archaeological features of regional importance, that make the land more productive for agriculture or restructure the land, are covered by the Regulations. These features do not have to be designated (e.g. Scheduled Ancient Monument) to be covered by the Regulations.

This could include fields with heritage features such as ridge and furrow, remains of limestone or lead workings, significant field boundaries, and pre-historic features such as burial mounds and settlement sites.



## Flower-rich grasslands



Changes to the management of traditional hay meadows and pastures, flower-rich fields with rush, grasslands on dalesides, rough grassland on the moorland edge, and sites associated with old mineral workings (e.g. lumps and bumps left from lead workings), that make the land more productive for agriculture or restructure the land are covered by the Regulations.

## Special Qualities of the Peak District National Park

In addition to the features, species and habitats described above the Regulations also protect the special qualities of the National Park from management and restructuring changes that could include but are not limited to:

- Intensification of semi-improved grasslands.
- Traditional field boundary removal in distinctive landscapes including impacts on boundary trees.
- Agricultural improvements or restructuring that:
  - have a significant impact on geology, soils and landform;
  - impact on the natural or cultural landscape or public enjoyment;
  - impact on ponds, rivers and streams.

### What do I need to do?

Any change that increases agricultural productivity\* on land within a Protected Landscape, regardless of what that land supports, or changes to uncultivated land, or if you intend to carry out restructuring works (such as adding, removing or changing the type of field boundaries) will be within the scope of the Regulations and you may need to apply for a screening decision from Natural England. You should review the current advice on the EIA website where the screening application form can also be accessed. See here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/eia-agriculture-regulations-apply-to-make-changes-to-rural-land>

\* Examples of increasing agricultural productivity can include, but are not limited to, cultivation, re-seeding, use of fertilisers, increased stocking rates, adjustments to drainage, tree planting and scrub or other vegetation removal. Further examples are included within the EIA guidance at the link above.

On already agriculturally improved grassland that supports upland waders, some activities will be permissible outside the bird breeding season (15th March—31st July), but a screening application may still be required.

### Still unsure?

Contact the Peak District National Park Authority Farm Advisers on 01629 816270. They will be able to help with how to make a screening application, as well as provide advice on conservation management and environmental schemes.

The Environmental Impact Assessment unit helpline number is free on 0800 028 2140 or you can contact them via email on [eia.England@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:eia.England@naturalengland.org.uk). Contact this helpline for advice on assessing whether your project will require an application for a screening decision.

**Carrying out work that is covered under the EIA Regulations without seeking advice from Natural England could affect your access to schemes & payments, result in a fine and you may be required to restore the site.**



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