

Appendix 9.9 - Summary of Criteria for Nature Conservation Evaluation

Criteria	Description
<i>Size</i>	Large, continuous areas of habitat are considered to be of greater importance than small or fragmented areas.
<i>Diversity</i>	Species and habitat diversity, including variations in topography and wetness, increase the wildlife value.
<i>Naturalness</i>	This reflects man's intervention or management of the habitat. Most habitats of this survey are semi-natural. Naturalness indicates the amount of modification of the land by man. Generally a less modified area results in an increase in the nature conservation value.
<i>Rarity</i>	The scarceness of a habitat, and the presence of rare/uncommon species, relates to its importance and priority for nature conservation. Rarity is related to the frequency of occurrence at national or county level.
<i>Fragility</i>	Fragile habitats are those where changes due to man's intervention, environmental factors or natural succession can directly threaten it. Scrub invasion, agricultural improvement, fire and changes in hydrological regime are the most common threats.
<i>Typicalness</i>	This relates to the quality of the habitat in terms of how good an example it is of a recognised type.
<i>Position in an ecological/geographical unit</i>	The relationship of a site to adjacent areas of nature conservation value. It is important to recognise the important and characteristic formations, communities and species of a district.
<i>Recorded history</i>	The extent to which a site has been used for scientific study and research is a factor of some importance.
<i>Potential wildlife value</i>	The likely quality of the habitat for birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates if it is managed for wildlife. If appropriate habitat management is undertaken, it is possible for an increase in the diversity and nature conservation value of an area.
<i>Intrinsic appeal</i>	The knowledge of the distribution and numbers of popular groups of species such as birds, is greater than for obscure groups. Similarly, colourful wild flowers and rare orchids arouse more enthusiasm than liverworts. It is pragmatic to give more weight to some groups than to others.
Criteria are based on Ratcliffe, D.A. (1977). <i>A Nature Conservation Review</i> , Cambridge University Press	