

Appendix 11.1: Nature Conservation Agreements and Conventions

The UK (and therefore Scotland) is committed to conserving habitats and species through a number of international conventions and agreements in addition to European and national legislation. These include:

The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention or Wetlands Convention)

The Ramsar Convention was adopted in 1971 and the UK ratified the Convention in 1976. The Convention designates wetlands of international importance as Ramsar sites. In the UK many Ramsar sites are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and are afforded statutory protection under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004. In addition, because Ramsar sites have been selected for their importance to waterbirds many are also Special Protection Areas (SPAs) as designated under the EC Birds Directive and the transposing legislation.

The Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (World Heritage Convention)

The World Heritage Convention was adopted in 1972 and was ratified by the UK in 1984. The Convention seeks to protect both cultural and natural heritage by defining the kind of sites which can be considered for inscription of the World Heritage List. Ancient monuments, museums, biodiversity and geological heritage all fall within the scope of the Convention.

The Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention)

The Bern Convention was adopted in 1979 and was ratified by the UK in 1982. The principal aims of the Convention are to ensure conservation and protection of wild plant and animal species and their natural habitats (listed in Appendix I and Appendix II of the Convention), to increase cooperation between Contracting Parties, and to regulate the exploitation of those species (including migratory species) listed in Appendix III. Legal obligations are imposed on Contracting Parties of the Bern Convention, protecting over 500 wild plant species and 1000 wild animal species.

The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn Convention or CMS)

The Bonn Convention was adopted in 1979 and ratified by the UK in 1985. The Convention obliges Contracting Parties to conserve migratory species and their habitats by providing strict protection for endangered migratory species (listed in Appendix I of the Convention), concluding multilateral Agreements for the conservation and management of migratory species which require or would benefit from international cooperation (listed in Appendix II), and undertaking co-operative research activities.

Convention on Biological Diversity (Biodiversity Convention or CBD)

The Biodiversity Convention was adopted in 1992 and the UK ratified the Convention in 1994. The Biodiversity Convention is the first treaty to provide a legal framework for biodiversity conservation through the establishment of three main goals; the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of the components of biological diversity, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources (this encompasses the use of resources from plant, animal or micro-organisms in scientific

research, technological development including biotechnological research activities, and the commercialisation of products based on genetic resources).

The Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR Convention)

The OSPAR Convention was initiated in 1972 with the Oslo Convention for the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping from Ships and Aircraft and was broadened to cover land-based sources and the offshore industry by the Paris Convention for the Prevention of Marine Pollution from Land-Based Sources of 1974. The OSPAR Convention was adopted in 1992 replacing both the Oslo and Paris Conventions, and ratified by the UK in 1998. The OSPAR Convention aims to provide a comprehensive and simplified approach to the prevention and elimination of all sources of marine pollution in addition to the protection of the marine environment. An OSPAR Commission (based in the UK) was established to administer the OSPAR Convention and to develop policy and international agreements. The UK has agreed to establish an 'ecologically coherent network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) by 2012' in line with OSPAR Recommendation 2003/3 as amended by OSPAR Recommendation 2010/2. The OSPAR Commission has also established a list of threatened and/or declining species and habitats in the North-East Atlantic.

The Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA Convention or Espoo)

The Espoo (EIA) Convention was adopted in 1991 and was ratified by the UK in 1997. The Convention requires Contracting Parties to assess the environmental impact of certain activities at an early stage of planning. It also obliges Contracting States to notify and consult one another on all major projects under consideration that are likely to have a significant adverse environmental impact across boundaries.