

# RESOURCE GUIDE

## National Parks



Cloud formation over Skiddaw and Bassenthwaite Lake. Credit: Michael Turner

### National Parks and the John Muir Award

Our National Parks are full of opportunities to experience wild places, with big landscapes and a fantastic diversity of nature to explore in many different ways. They are beautiful and inspirational places to walk, cycle, swim, or simply to sit and enjoy nature, and to do your John Muir Award.

#### What are National Parks?

Sometimes known as Britain's 'breathing spaces', National Parks are areas of protected countryside that everyone can visit, and where people live, work and shape the landscape. There are currently 15 National Parks across England, Wales and Scotland, each with its own particular character. Some have spectacular mountains or coast, others have many lakes and rivers or beautiful moors and woodlands - but all are areas with natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage. You can find out more about the National Parks, their history and John Muir's role in founding the National Parks system in America in the John Muir Award Information Handbook on our website: [www.johnmuiraward.org](http://www.johnmuiraward.org)



#### What makes National Parks special?

Every National Park has special qualities – the characteristics that make them the unique and beautiful environments they are. These qualities may be related to the landscapes, views, geology, geography, biodiversity, rare species, archaeology or history. It is the distinctive combination of these special qualities that have led to the designation and protection of these areas as National Parks. You can find out more about the top 10 special qualities of each National Park here: [www.nationalparks.gov.uk/students/whatisanationalpark/specialqualities](http://www.nationalparks.gov.uk/students/whatisanationalpark/specialqualities)

Every wild place, no matter where, has its own special qualities. Why not think about what makes a wild place local to you special and how you can help to protect or enhance these qualities through your John Muir Award? If you visit a National Park, try making your own list of what's special about it before comparing it to the National Park's website.

## Useful websites

**National Parks UK** [www.nationalparks.gov.uk](http://www.nationalparks.gov.uk) The central hub of information about the UK's National Parks. You can find brief introductions to each National Park, along with links to each Park's own website. Key information about visiting National Parks and educational resources can also be found. Follow National Parks UK on social media for news and updates, or search using #breathingspaces to find out how people are engaging with National Parks.

You can also find country-specific information about National Parks by visiting [National Parks England](http://NationalParksEngland.org.uk)<sup>1</sup>, [National Parks Wales](http://NationalParksWales.gov.uk)<sup>2</sup> (available in English and Welsh) and [Scottish Government's National Parks webpage](http://ScottishGovernment.gov.uk)<sup>3</sup>. Northern Ireland is the only country in the UK which currently does not have any National Parks, but has large areas of countryside protected as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Find out more about these protected areas [online](#)<sup>4</sup>.

**8-Point Plan for England's National Parks** [www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-parks-8-point-plan-for-england-2016-to-2020](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-parks-8-point-plan-for-england-2016-to-2020). This plan from DEFRA sets out priorities for protecting, promoting and enhancing National Parks in England up until 2020, including connecting young people with nature and promoting health and wellbeing. Read the John Muir Trust [response](#)<sup>5</sup>.

**Campaign for National Parks** [www.cnp.org.uk](http://www.cnp.org.uk) The national charity dedicated to campaigning to protect and promote National Parks in England and Wales. Find out about key policy issues and campaigns in these National Parks and the engagement initiatives which enable everyone to access National Parks. Read a [blog](#)<sup>6</sup> about the John Muir Award.

**Scottish Campaign for National Parks** [www.scnp.org.uk](http://www.scnp.org.uk) Supporting Scotland's existing National Parks - Loch Lomond & the Trossachs and the Cairngorms - and actively involved in A Strategy for National Parks (terrestrial and marine) for Scotland.

**Greater London National Park City** [www.nationalparkcity.london](http://www.nationalparkcity.london) The campaign to make London the world's first National Park City. Find information about the proposal, along with details of how you can get involved.

**Mission:Explore National Parks** <https://secure.nationalparks.gov.uk/npu/mission-explore-national-parks> 49 fun challenges to help tune into everything that makes National Parks great places to explore and enjoy (£5). Why not also try [Mission:Explore John Muir](#)<sup>7</sup> - freely available to download from our website or buy a copy for £1.

**Conserve Audit 2015 in the UK's National Parks** [www.johnmuirtrust.org/whats-new/conserves-audit-2015](http://www.johnmuirtrust.org/whats-new/conserves-audit-2015) Find out about the positive impact being made by John Muir Award participants in the UK's National Parks as part of the Conserve Challenge. Information specific to the Lake District and Scotland's National Parks is also available.

**John Muir Award in our National Parks Film** [www.youtube.com/watch?v=zUuVdW6DPHE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zUuVdW6DPHE) This 4-minute film explores the links between National Parks and the John Muir Award via teachers, pupils, volunteers and Park staff.

**National Parks Week** [www.nationalparks.gov.uk/visiting/national-parks-week](http://www.nationalparks.gov.uk/visiting/national-parks-week) National Parks Week is a celebration of the beautiful landscapes which have inspired mountaineers, sailors, cyclists, runners, poets, photographers and artists. Find out about annual activities and events online.

**National Perks article** [www.johnmuirtrust.org/about/resources/368-national-perks-article-journal-autumn-2014](http://www.johnmuirtrust.org/about/resources/368-national-perks-article-journal-autumn-2014) This article from the John Muir Trust's Journal in Autumn 2014 outlines the Trust's presence in all 15 of the UK's National Parks, and the opportunities for future partnerships.

### National Parks themed Newsletter Autumn 2014

[https://issuu.com/johnmuirtrust/docs/autumn2014\\_john\\_muir\\_award\\_newslett](https://issuu.com/johnmuirtrust/docs/autumn2014_john_muir_award_newslett) This newsletter highlights examples of the ways John Muir Award participants are engaging with National Parks across the UK.

Many activities you can do in National Parks are just the same as those you might do in other places. See our resource guides on Biodiversity, Campaigning, John Muir, Outdoor Access, Outdoor Learning, Surveys, Sustainability and Wildlife Gardening for more ideas: [www.johnmuirtrust.org/award-resource-guides](http://www.johnmuirtrust.org/award-resource-guides)

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<sup>1</sup> [www.nationalparksengland.org.uk](http://www.nationalparksengland.org.uk)

<sup>2</sup> [www.nationalparkswales.gov.uk/npw](http://www.nationalparkswales.gov.uk/npw)

<sup>3</sup> [www.gov.scot/Topics/Environment/Countryside/16131](http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Environment/Countryside/16131)

<sup>4</sup> [www.nationalparks.gov.uk/students/whatisanationalpark/nationalparksareprotectedareas](http://www.nationalparks.gov.uk/students/whatisanationalpark/nationalparksareprotectedareas)

<sup>5</sup> [www.johnmuirtrust.org/latest/news/960-national-parks-defra-8point-plan-a-john-muir-trust-response](http://www.johnmuirtrust.org/latest/news/960-national-parks-defra-8point-plan-a-john-muir-trust-response)

<sup>6</sup> [www.cnp.org.uk/blog/john-muir-award](http://www.cnp.org.uk/blog/john-muir-award)

<sup>7</sup> [www.johnmuirtrust.org/initiatives/missionexplore-john-muir](http://www.johnmuirtrust.org/initiatives/missionexplore-john-muir)