

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. Find out more about 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



What makes National Parks special?

Every National Park has special qualities – 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.

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.uk/ The central hub of information about the UK's National Parks, including 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, 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://www.nationalparksengland.org.uk/)¹, [National Parks Wales](http://www.nationalparkswales.uk/)² and [NatureScot's National Parks webpage](http://www.nature.scot/enjoying-outdoors/discover-our-national-parks)³. 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](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/land-and-landscapes/areas-outstanding-natural-beauty)⁴.

Campaign for National Parks 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](#)⁵ about the John Muir Award.

Scottish Campaign for National Parks www.scnp.org.uk Supporting Scotland's existing National Parks and actively involved in A Strategy for National Parks (terrestrial and marine) for Scotland.

London National Park City www.nationalparkcity.london In 2019, London became the world's first National Park City. Find out more about the movement, and how you can get involved.

Mission:Explore National Parks <https://secure.nationalparks.uk/visiting/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](#)⁶ – freely available to download from our website or buy a copy for £1.

John Muir Award in our National Parks Film 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.

Climate and nature in Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park www.johnmuirtrust.org/assets/000/001/781/Climate_action_in_LLTPN_final_compressed_original.pdf?1627553749 This resource demonstrates how the John Muir Award helps the National Park engage people with the climate emergency and nature crisis, through encouraging environmental action.

National Parks Week www.nationalparks.uk/discover-national-parks-fortnight/ National Parks Fortnight 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 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 This newsletter highlights examples of the ways John Muir Award participants are engaging with National Parks across the UK.

¹ www.nationalparksengland.org.uk/

² www.nationalparkswales.uk/

³ www.nature.scot/enjoying-outdoors/discover-our-national-parks

⁴ www.daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/land-and-landscapes/areas-outstanding-natural-beauty

⁵ www.cnp.org.uk/blog/john-muir-award

⁶ www.johnmuirtrust.org/john-muir-award/ideas-and-resources/missionexplore-john-muir