

# **COUNTRYSIDE AND RIGHTS OF WAY ACT 2000**

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## **EXPLANATORY NOTES**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Part Iii: Nature Conservation and Wildlife Protection**

##### **Summary**

166. Part III of the Act gives greater protection to wildlife and natural features by making provision for the conservation of biological diversity, and by improving protection for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) in England and Wales and the enforcement of wildlife legislation.
167. SSSIs are areas of land notified by the conservation agencies (English Nature and the Countryside Council for Wales) because they are of special interest arising from their flora, fauna or geological or physiographical features. The provisions enable the conservation agencies to impose permanent restrictions in place of the present temporary 4 month restrictions to prevent damaging operations on SSSIs in England and Wales. There is also a power for the conservation agencies to secure the management of a SSSI. The Act improves procedures for notification and denotification of SSSIs, and gives various rights of appeal to owners and occupiers of land who are affected by its provisions.
168. The Act increases the conservation agencies' powers of entry to land and extends powers of compulsory purchase. There are increased penalties for damage to a SSSI by owners and occupiers and by other persons. There is also a new power for the conservation agencies to make byelaws to protect SSSIs.
169. The Act places new duties on statutory undertakers and public bodies in respect of SSSIs and imposes restrictions on them when carrying out or authorising activities which affect a SSSI.