

What are the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations?

The EIA Regulations are designed to protect land that is uncultivated or semi-natural from changes in agricultural activities. Recent amendments to the regulations have clarified that upland waders, heritage features and flower-rich grasslands are covered by the Regulations.

What are upland waders and why are they important?

Around 50% of England's lapwing, curlew and snipe breed in grasslands on upland farms, most often in rush pastures and on rough grazing land.

Lapwing and curlew are considered birds of principle importance for conservation. Fields that support breeding pairs are covered by the EIA Regulations.



Heritage features

Fields that include historic or archaeological features of regional importance are covered by the Regulations. These features do not have to be designated (e.g. Scheduled Ancient Monument) to be covered by the Regulations.

This could include fields with heritage features such as ridge and furrow, remains of limestone or lead workings, significant field boundaries, and pre-historic features such as burial mounds and settlement sites.



Flower-rich grasslands



Traditional hay meadows and pastures, flower-rich fields with rush, grasslands on dalesides, rough grassland on the moorland edge, and sites associated with old mineral workings, e.g. lumps and bumps left from lead workings can all be covered by the EIA Regulations.

What do I need to do and when?

If you wish to increase agricultural productivity* on fields which support breeding curlew or lapwing, on areas with heritage features or on flower-rich sites, you need to apply for a screening decision from Natural England. Advice and the screening application form can be accessed from the following website:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/eia-agriculture-regulations-apply-to-make-changes-to-rural-land>

* Examples of increasing agricultural productivity can include cultivation, re-seeding, fertilisation, increased stocking rates, adjustments to drainage and scrub removal.

On already agriculturally improved grassland that supports upland waders, some activities will be permissible outside the bird breeding season (15th March—31st July), but a screening application is still required.

Still unsure?

Contact the Peak District National Park Authority Farm Advisers on 01629 816 270. They will be able to help with how to make a screening application, as well as provide advice on conservation management and environmental schemes.

The Environmental Impact Assessment unit helpline number is free on 0800 028 2140 or you can contact them via email on eia.england@naturalengland.org.uk

Carrying out work that is covered under the EIA Regulations without seeking advice from Natural England could affect your agricultural support payments and you may be required to restore the site.



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