



## 6 Responses

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## 6.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 described the pressures acting upon the natural environment. This chapter deals with the responses that have been implemented to reduce or remove the impact of those pressures and also describes the effectiveness of these responses where the evidence is available. The responses examined here are those in which Natural England and its founding bodies have been involved. There have of course been further responses to the pressures upon the natural environment in which other bodies have played a leading role. This chapter begins by providing a brief history of the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment in England.

A number of approaches or levers have been used to conserve or enhance our natural environment depending on the nature and scale of the challenge: regulation, incentives, advice, policy advocacy, and practical action. In practice, a combination of these levers has generally been employed to deal with pressures and risks and, in some cases, all five mechanisms have been required to successfully reduce the impacts of pressures. Our responses have evolved as challenges have changed over time, and as we have learned what is effective. Each section in this chapter concludes with a case study that shows how our responses are currently developing, and demonstrates the more integrated and larger scale approaches required to meet current and emerging challenges.

Assessing and evaluating the effectiveness of the mechanisms that are used to protect the natural environment is critical if we are to demonstrate the effectiveness of hard-won legislation and other policies. Indeed, for some mechanisms monitoring is actually required by the legislation. For example, the funding from the EU for agri-environment schemes under the Rural Development Programme requires recipient states to monitor impacts. Similarly, the EC Directives require member states to provide periodic information on the condition of protected sites. The monitoring of other responses is often less comprehensive. Furthermore, the monitoring often does not provide explicit evidence of cause and effect – that is, there are measures of the inputs (for example number of applications or money spent) but not the outcomes in terms of evidence of impacts on the natural environment.