STATUTORY RULES OF NORTHERN IRELAND

2026 No. 116

NATURE CONSERVATION

The Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026

Made - - - -	*17th June 2026*
Coming into operation	*8th July 2026*

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in exercise of the powers conferred by section 14(1), (2) and (7) of the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023 makes the following Regulations ("the 2023 Act")(**a**).

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs is a relevant national authority for the purposes of section 14(1) and (2) of the 2023 Act(**b**).

Citation, commencement and interpretation

1.—(1) These Regulations may be cited as the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026 and come into operation on 8th July 2026.

(2) The Interpretation Act (Northern Ireland) 1954 applies to these Regulations as it applies to an Act of the Assembly.

Amendments to the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995

2.—(1) The Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995(**c**) are amended as follows.

(2) In regulation 6, after paragraph (9) add—

"(10) Where a site which is designated under paragraph (1) is a European Site, the Department may not designate that site without the agreement of the Secretary of State.".

(3) In regulation 8A(6), for subparagraph (b), substitute—

"(b) where a site which is classified under paragraph (1) is a European marine site, the Department may not classify that site without the consent of the Secretary of State.".

(4) Omit regulation 8B(5).

(**a**) 2023 c. 28

(**b**) The term "relevant national authority" is defined in section 21(1) of the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023

(**c**) S.R. 1995 No. 380; relevant amending Regulations are S.R. 2004 No. 435; S.R. 2007 No. 345; S.R. 2009 No. 8; S.R. 2011 No. 216; S.R. No. 368; S.I. 2019/582

(5) Omit Regulation 9A(5).

(6) In regulation 28, in each place where it occurs (including in the heading), for "Secretary of State" substitute "Department".

(7) In regulation 29—

(a) in paragraph (1), omit ", the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development";

(b) omit paragraph (4).

(8) In regulation30(1) and (3), for "The Secretary of State, or persons authorised on his behalf," substitute "The Department or persons authorised on its behalf".

(9) In regulation 30(2)—

(a) in each place where it occurs, for "Secretary of State" substitute "Department".

(b) omit subparagraph (d).

(10) Omit regulation 36A(4).

(11) In regulation 66(1) omit "or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State".

Sealed with the Official Seal of the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs on 17th June 2026

L.S.

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17th June 2026

Neelia Lloyd
A senior officer of the
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This Note is not part of the Regulations)

These Regulations amend the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (S.R. 1995 No. 380).

These Regulations make amendments to the role of the Secretary of State in designating or classifying European Marine sites, aligning with the procedure in the Marine Act (Northern Ireland) 2013 regarding the designation of Marine Conservation Zones.

An impact assessment has not been produced for this instrument as no, or no significant, impact on the private, voluntary or public sector is foreseen.

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