

Leicestershire and Rutland - key facts summary

Area: 2,553 sq.km (986 sq.miles)

Distance between boundaries: 72 km (44 miles) N-S; 93 km (57 miles) E-W

Altitude: mostly between 61 m and 183 m (200-600 ft)

Highest point: Bardon Hill 278 m (912 ft)

Lowest point: confluence of Rivers Soar and Trent at 27 m (90 ft)

Human population in 2001: 924,062 with 279,921 in the City

Land use:

- Farming – 84% of L&R is farmland, 82% of which is Grade 3 quality; 52% of farmland in 1992 grew cereals, oil seed rape etc
- Woodland – 4% of L&R is covered in woodland, 2% of the counties is ancient woodland, with c 50% of that semi-natural
- Urban – 6% was urban in 1992; between 1945 and 1990 the area of urban land doubled; W.Leics is much more developed than E.Leics & Rutland
- Mineral extraction – Leics, Derbys & Somerset are the 3 biggest mineral producing counties in Britain

Sites of Special Scientific Interest: 92 (80 biological) covering 5,096 ha (ca 2% of counties, national av. ca 6%; SSSI cover of Leics is only ca 1.3%)

Nature Conservation Review sites: Cribb's Meadow; Leighfield Forest; Muston Meadows; River Eye; Rutland Water; Swithland Wood

Geological Conservation Review sites: Charnwood Lodge + others

Special Areas of Conservation: 1 (River Mease)

Special Protection Areas: 1 (Rutland Water)

Ramsar Sites: 1 (Rutland Water)

Environmentally Sensitive Areas: None

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty: None

National Parks: None

Community Forests etc: 1 (The National Forest)

National Nature Reserves: 3 [Charnwood Lodge, Cribb's Meadow (LRWT); Muston Meadows (NE)].

Local Nature Reserves: 8+

Other nature reserves: Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust has 34 reserves covering 1,173 ha (2,898 acres); 20 are SSSIs; Seaton Meadows SSSI is a Plantlife reserve; the Woodland Trust manages 20 sites covering ca 315 ha.

Local Wildlife Sites: over 1,100 of these had been selected by the end of December 2010 (the total is likely to be 1500+). They perhaps cover ca 2% of counties.

Main reasons for decline in biodiversity:

- Modern farming methods
- Development (housing, roads, mineral extraction)
- Recreational activities
- Drainage schemes
- Tidying up and destruction of rough ground and 'brown-field' land

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