European Community Directive
on the Conservation of Natural Habitats
and of Wild Fauna and Flora
(92/43/EEC)

Second Report by the United Kingdom under Article 17

on the implementation of the Directive
from January 2001 to December 2006

Conservation status assessment for :

H3170: Mediterranean temporary ponds

H3170 Mediterranean temporary ponds

Audit trail compiled and edited by JNCC and the UK statutory nature conservation agencies Freshwater Lead Coordination Network.

This paper and accompanying appendices contain background information and data used to complete the standard EC reporting form (Annex D), following the methodology outlined in the commission document "Assessment, monitoring and reporting under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive, Explanatory Notes and Guidelines, Final Draft 5; October 2006". The superscript numbers below cross-reference to the headings in the corresponding Annex D reporting form. This supporting information should be read in conjunction with the UK approach for habitats (see 'Assessing Conservation Status: UK Approach').

1. National-biogeographic level information

1.1 General description and correspondence with National Vegetation Classification (NVC) and other habitat types

Table 1.1.1 provides a summary description of H3170 and its relations with UK classifications.

Mediterranean temporary ponds consist of winter-flooded areas, which dry out to give vegetation rich in annuals; many of these are nationally rare species of southern European distribution, which are principally confined to this habitat type, for example pygmy rush *Juncus pygmaeus*, pennyroyal *Mentha pulegium* and yellow centaury *Cicendia filiformis*. There are two main pool types: a more acid pool community of trampled and grazed areas, often found on flooded track ways, and a basic type associated with seepages on serpentine rock of The Lizard, Cornwall. The rarity and limited range of this habitat in the UK means that it is not adeqately reflected in national habitat or vegetation classification schemes.

Within the EU, Mediterranean temporary ponds are found in France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Greece and the UK. The UK examples must be considered to be at the limit of the European range. Only one site in the UK, The Lizard in Cornwall, has widespread examples of this habitat type which support the rich assemblages of the rare and local species which characterise the habitat type. Temporary pools in the New Forest support elements of this assemblage, but are not considered to be fully characteristic of the Annex I type.

Table 1.1.1 Summary description of habitat H3170 and its relations with UK vegetation/habitat classifications

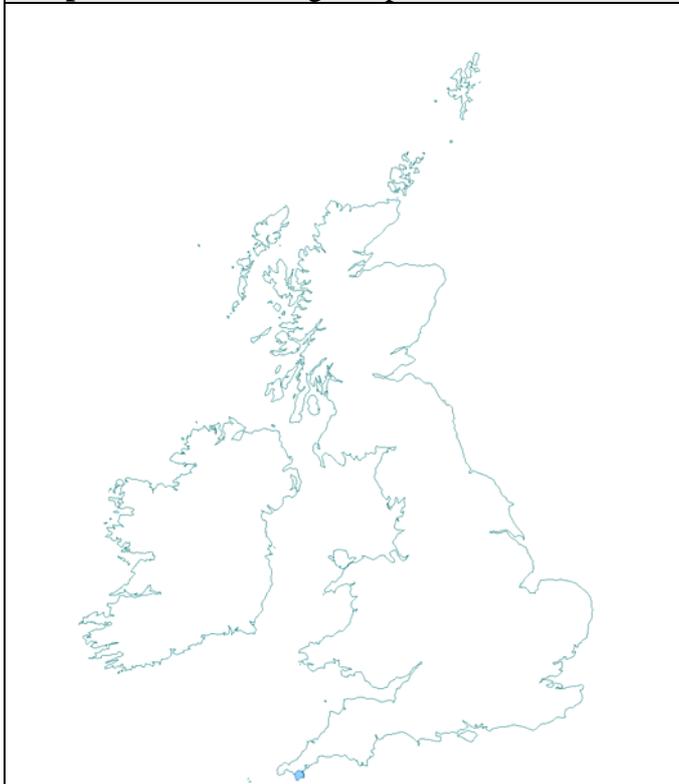| Classification	Correspondence with Annex I type	Comments
Phase 1 Habitat Classification	G1.3 Standing water (part), B5 Marshy grassland (part) and F2.2 Marginal/ inundation (part).	These Phase 1 types represent fairly widespread habitats and do not correspond well with H3170 which a rare and unique habitat in the UK.
BAP	Broad reporting category: Standing open water and canals. Priority habitat type: none	There is a poor correlation between this very broad BAP category and H3170.
EU Interpretation Manual	PAL.CLASS.: 22.34 Description: Very shallow temporary ponds (a few centimetres deep) which exist only in winter or late spring, with a flora mainly composed of Mediterranean therophytic and geophytic species belonging to the alliances *Isoetion, Nanocyperion flavescentis, Preslion cervinae, Agrostion salmanticae, Heleochloion*	PAL.CLASS: Palaearctic codes from the classification of Palaearctic habitats, based upon the CORINE classification.

and *Lythrion tribracteati.*	

2. Range [2.3]

2.1 Current range

Range surface area [2.3.1]:   **170 km²**
Date calculated [2.3.2]:   **May 2007**
Quality of data [2.3.3]:   **Good**

The surface area estimate was calculated within alpha hull software, using extent of occurrence as a proxy measure for range (see Map 2.1.1). The value of alpha was set at 25 km; the alpha was clipped to include inland areas only.

Maps 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 show the range and distribution of H3170 in the UK. They are a good indication of the range as the habitat is well known and only found in The Lizard, Cornwall.
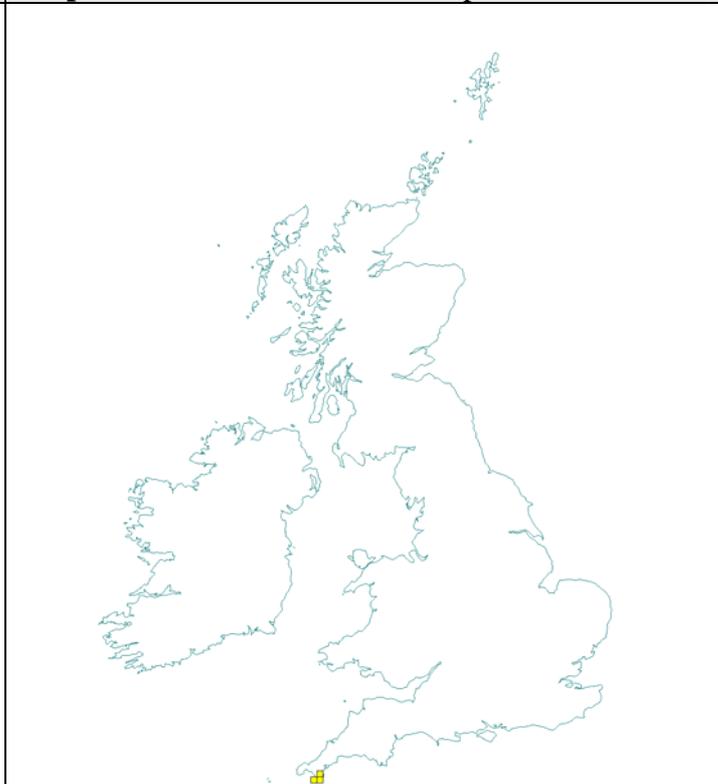
Map 2.1.1 Habitat range map [1.1] for H3170	**Map 2.1.2** Habitat distribution map [1.2] for H3170
Range envelope shown in blue/grey shade in above map is a minimum convex polygon constructed using JNCC Alpha Shapes tool (see Technical note I for details of methodology).	Each yellow square represents a 10x10km square of the National Grid and shows the known and/or predicted occurrence of this habitat. 10-km square count: 3

See Section 7.1 for map data sources

2.2 Trend in range since c.1994

Trend in range[2.3.4]:   **Stable**
Trend magnitude[2.3.5]:   **Not applicable**
Trend period[2.3.6]:   **1994-2006**
Reasons for reported trend[2.3.7]:   **Not applicable**

This habitat has a restricted distribution within the UK and is at the edge of its European range. There has been some debate about whether or not there are examples in the New Forest. The consensus view is that

although temporary ponds in the New Forest have similarities to H3170 the only examples of H3170 are found on the Lizard peninsula in Cornwall. The range is considered to have remained stable since 1994.

2.3 Favourable reference range [2.5.1]

Favourable reference range: 170 km^2

Section 3.2.1.3 of 'Assessing Conservation Status: UK Approach' sets out how favourable reference range estimates for habitats have been determined in the UK. Based on this approach, the current surface area, 170 km^2, has been set as the favourable reference area.   Reasons for this are discussed below.

The nature of this habitat type is such that the potential range is limited by biogeography and as such it is unlikely that H3170 was ever present outside of the Lizard. The Lizard is unusually rich floristically supporting many species with a more southerly distribution, hence the presence of what is otherwise a Mediterranean habitat type or species assemblage. Although very limited, the 1994 range is considered to be viable and thus equal to the potential natural range.

2.4 Conclusions on range

Conclusion[2.6.i]:   Favourable

This habitat type appears to be limited by biogeography and coincides with the distribution of its characteristic species in the UK (many of which are at the edge of their range). The range is considered to have been historically very limited and the 1994 range occupies most or all of its potential natural range. The current range is equal to the favourable reference range.

3. Area [2.4]

3.1 Current area

Total UK extent [2.4.1]:   <0.1km^2
Date of estimation [2.4.2]:   May 2007
Method [2.4.3]:   1 = only or mostly based on expert opinion
Quality of data [2.4.4]:   Poor

Table 3.1.1 Area of H3170 in the UK.

	Area (ha)	Method [2.4.3]	Quality of data [2.4.4]
England	<10	1	Poor
Scotland	Not present	-	-
Wales	Not present	-	-
Northern Ireland	Not present	-	-
Total UK extent [2.4.1]	<10	1	Poor

Method used to estimate the habitat surface area: 1 = only or mostly based on expert opinion; 2 = based on remote sensing data; 3 = ground based survey. Only the most relevant class is given if more than one applies.
Quality of habitat surface area data: 'Good' e.g. based on extensive surveys; 'Moderate' e.g. based on partial data with some extrapolation; 'Poor' e.g. based on very incomplete data or on expert judgement

3.2 Trend in area since c.1994

Trend in area[2.4.5]:   Stable
Trend magnitude[2.4.6]:   Not applicable
Trend period[2.4.7]:   1994-2006
Reasons for reported trend[2.4.8]:   Not applicable

It is likely that some examples of H3170 have been lost through conversion of historic track ways to surfaced roads and through drainage of track ways. Additionally, the area of heath on the Lizard has been reduced by the encroachment of settlements and various developments although losses have been less

than in other areas of heathland in the UK. This heath would have supported further examples of Mediterranean temporary ponds. The area is considered to have remained broadly stable since 1994.

3.3 Favourable reference area

Favourable reference area[2.5.2]:   Unknown

The potential area of this habitat type can be defined by the extent of semi-natural habitat (mainly heath) on the Lizard. Mediterranean temporary ponds are associated with natural depressions and track ways in these areas. These hydro-geomorphological features are located according to local topography and historic land use, it is not possible to estimate the potential area covered by such features.

The favourable reference area for H3170 might be considered to be that which is sufficient to support metapopulations of the key characteristic species. The nature of the habitat is such that the exact area and location of ponds will vary from year to year with species exploiting new ponds as they are formed. The favourable reference area is therefore impossible to define with confidence but will reflect the extent of open ground (grazed, trackways, scrapes) within the wider heathland habitat and the opportunities for new pond creation.

3.4 Conclusions on area covered by habitat

Conclusion[2.6.ii]:   Favourable

The absence of data on the historic extent of H3170 makes it difficult to assess changes in area. The ephemeral and transitory nature of this habitat makes estimates of area difficult. Potential area is related to the extent of heathland and the presence of topographical features within this matrix. Historically there would have been more examples of this habitat type associated with track ways across the Lizard peninsula but there is still a significant network of track ways that support H3170.

4. Specific structures and functions [including typical species]

4.1 Main pressures [2.4.10]

The main pressures affecting H3170 are listed below. The related EC codes are shown in brackets.

- Lack of management (**950 Biocenotic evolution**)

The majority of Mediterranean temporary ponds on the Lizard are within land designated and managed for nature conservation. The current condition and future of these habitats is dependent upon two levels of management – holistic heathland management through grazing and micro-management of track ways, creating ruts and depressions and preventing encroachment (Wheeler & Byfield, 2005). The management of track ways presents a particular challenge as moderate level of use is required to create open ground and the micro-topography for these features to develop but more intensive use may lead to direct damage and also encourage surfacing or levelling of track ways with the subsequent loss of habitat. Wheeler and Byfield (2005) surveyed the track way network of the Lizard to identify key areas for the Mediterranean temporary pond habitat and indicative species. This survey data has been used to identify and prioritise management requirements for different areas.

- Grazing (**140 Grazing**)

The long term maintenance of H3170 is dependent upon disturbance and grazing to prevent encroachment and seasonal inundation. Mediterranean temporary ponds may occur naturally in depressions on the Lizard but most examples are artificial in origin. The ephemeral nature of the ponds necessitates a landscape scale approach to their conservation. Many of the typical species are likely to persist as metapopulations across relatively large areas of habitat. Important aspects of species and habitat function are consequently associated with overall landuse patterns.

- Air pollution (**702 Air pollution**)

Atmospheric deposition of nutrients has the potential to change the floristic composition of H3170 but there is no clear evidence of this.

4.2 Current condition

4.2.1 Common Standards Monitoring (CSM) condition assessments
Condition assessments based on CSM (see http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-2199) provide a means to assess the structure and functioning of H3170 in the UK. The following attributes were examined for all CSM assessments relevant to the habitat:
- Extent.
- Composition of macrophyte community.
- Macrophyte community structure.
- Water quality.
- Hydrology.

SAC condition assessments
Table 4.2.1 and Map 4.2.1 summarise the CSM condition assessments for UK Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) supporting habitat H3170. These data were collated in January 2007. The maps give an impression of the overall spread of where unfavourable and favourable sites exist (summary statistics for the map are given in Section 7.2). The combined assessments show that of the SACs assessed:
- 0% of the area and 0% of the number of assessments was unfavourable; and
- none of the total UK habitat area was in unfavourable condition.

Table 4.2.1 CSM condition assessment results for UK SACs supporting H3170. See notes below table for details. Information on the coverage of these results is given in Section 7.2

Condition	Condition sub-categories	Area (ha)	Number of site features
Unfavourable	Declining		
	No change		
	Unclassified		
	Recovering		
	Total		0
	% of all assessments	*0%*	*0%*
	% of total UK resource	*0%*	*unknown*
Favourable	Maintained		
	Recovered		
	Unclassified	10	1
	Total	10	1
	% of all assessments	*100%*	*100%*
	% of total UK resource	*100%*	*unknown*

Notes
1. Data on features that have been partly-destroyed have been excluded from this table because they are not relevant to the consideration of present condition.
2. The data included are from CSM assessments carried out between April 1998 and December 2006. NB: these include additional and some up-date data form those used in the six year report produced by JNCC. (Williams, J.M., ed. 2006. *Common Standards Monitoring for Designated Sites: First Six Year Report*. Peterborough, JNCC).
3. Only assessments made for qualifying interest features on SAC have been included in this analysis.
4. Area figures for CSM assessments have been calculated using the data presented on the standard Natura 2000 data forms submitted to the EU.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)/Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) condition assessments

SSSI/ASSIs CSM condition assessments are not relevant as most or all the resource is on SACs.

Current Condition of H3170 based on CSM condition assessments (See Sections 4.2 and 7.2 for further information)		
Map 4.2.1 SAC assessments	**Map 4.2.2** Assessments strongly indicative of the condition on SSSI/ASSIs	**Map 4.2.3** Assessments weakly indicative of the condition on SSSI/ASSIs
Current status of HSD features CURRENT_ST ■ unfavourable ■ favourable ■ not assessed □ not on SAC	Not applicable	Not applicable
Key Red = unfavourable, i.e. the square contains at least one SAC where this habitat feature is present and has been judged to be unfavourable Green = favourable, i.e. the square contains at least one SAC where this habitat feature is present and has been assessed as favourable but there are no unfavourable SAC features Blue = SAC not assessed, i.e. the square contains at least one SAC supporting this habitat feature but no assessment has been reported Transparent = SAC feature not present, i.e. the square does not contain any SAC features of this habitat type	Key* Green – 80 – 100% of assessed features on 10km square are favourable Yellow - 50 – 80% of assessed features on 10km square are favourable Orange - 20 – 50% of assessed features on 10km square are favourable Red - 0 – 20% of assessed features on 10km square are favourable *This is the same key as was used for JNCC CSM Report 2006	

4.3 Typical species

Typical species[2.5.3]:   **None used**
Typical species assessment[2.5.4]:   **Not applicable**
H3170 being restricted to one site in Cornwall, using UK trends for typical species is not relevant.

4.4 Conclusions on specific structures and functions (including typical species)

Conclusion[2.6.iii]:   **Favourable**
The EC Guidance states that where "structures and functions are in good condition and no significant pressures exist", the conclusion should be Favourable. In the UK, this was generally taken to mean that less than 5% of the habitat area was in unfavourable condition.

The functions associated with the maintenance of H3170 and associated species are generally the result of historic landuse practices. It is important that the potential network of ephemeral ponds is retained and that there are sufficient metapopulations of the key species. Present management is thought to be appropriate to ensure that these functions persist and SAC condition indicates that current examples are 100% favourable.

5. Future prospects

5.1 Main factors affecting the habitat

5.1.1 Conservation measures

- Protection within designated sites

All the resource of H2110 lies within SACs with management measures specifically aimed at maintaining and enhancing the features for which they are designated, and to address some of the pressures listed within section 4.1 and the future threats listed in section 5.1.2. A significant proportion of the resource of this habitat also lies within the SSSI/ASSI series where similar management measures are in place.

- Water Framework Directive

In addition to the drive for improvement generated by the SAC and SSSI network, the Water Framework Directive (WFD) is adding considerable impetus for widespread action on issues affecting the resource of this habitat such as abstraction licences and pollution.

- UK BAP

The habitat is covered by the *Standing open water and canals action plan* under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (see http://www.ukbap.org.uk), as well as under country and local biodiversity action plans and strategies, with targets to maintain, improve, restore and expand the resource.

- Management

As outlined in section 4 the major challenge in safeguarding the long-term future of this habitat type is to ensure that the appropriate management regime is identified and implemented. Recent initiatives funded through Heritage Lottery Fund and the Interreg HEATH project has instigated extensive grazing over large areas of the Lizard SAC which have not been grazed for some years. This new grazing regime is expected to benefit both the wider heath habitat and the micro-scale features that are important for maintaining H3170.

5.1.2 Main future threats[2.4.11]

The most obvious major future threats to H3170 are listed below, several of which are referred to in section 4.1. The related EC codes are shown in brackets.

- Air pollution (**702 Air pollution**)

Atmospheric deposition of nutrients has the potential to change the floristic composition of H3170 but there is no clear evidence of this.

- Climate change (**920 Drying up, 950 Biocenotic evolution**)

Based on the literature review (Technical note IV) climate change is considered a major threat to the future condition of this habitat especially in the long term. Climate change has considerable potential to alter the range and extent of the habitat. Changing patterns of precipitation may alter frequency and duration of inundation but as this is a habitat of southern Europe it is unlikely that a reduction in rainfall will lead to losses of surface-fed variants of the habitat on the Lizard which is at the northern extent of the habitat range. There is a risk that those examples fed by groundwater seepages will dry up or experience shorter periods of inundation with climate change. However, it is possible that other heathland areas of England could support this habitat type if the key species were able to extend their range in the UK and colonise suitable sites. Climate change could also increase the risk of colonisation by non-native invasive species. A number of invasive plant species now widely distributed in the UK (*Crassula helmsii, Myriophyllum aquaticum*) have the potential to significantly affect this habitat by out-competing typical plant species; this is most likely to affect the more permanent water bodies.

However, there is a high degree of uncertainty in defining future climate threats on habitats and species due to uncertainty in: future greenhouse gas emissions; the consequential changes in climatic features (for instance temperature, precipitation CO_2 concentrations); the responses of habitats and species to these changes (for instance location, phenology, community structure) and the role of other socio-economic drivers of environmental change. The scale of change in habitats and species as a result of climate change will vary across ecosystems. Small changes in the climate are more likely to have a substantial impact on habitats and species which exist within a narrow range of environmental conditions. The future impacts of climate change on UK biodiversity will be exacerbated when coupled with other drivers of environmental change.

5.2 Future condition (as regards range, area covered and specific structures and functions)

5.2.1 CSM condition assessments

The CSM condition assessments reported in Sections 4.2.1-2 provide a basis to predict the potential future condition of H3170 in the UK. This involved treating all assessments currently identified as either favourable or unfavourable recovering as future-favourable: remaining categories were treated as future-unfavourable – see Table 5.2.1.1. There are a number of caveats to this approach, which are set out beneath this table.

Table 5.2.1 Predicted future condition of UK SACs supporting H3170 based on current CSM condition assessments. See notes below table for details. Information on the coverage of these results is given in Section 7.2

Future condition	Present condition	Area (ha)	Number of site features
Future-unfavourable	Unfavourable declining		
	Unfavourable no change		
	Unfavourable unclassified		
	Total		
	% of assessments	*00%*	*00%*
Future-favourable	Favourable maintained		
	Favourable recovered		
	Unfavourable recovering		
	Favourable unclassified	10	1
	Total	10	1
	% of assessments	*100%*	*100%*

Note that the scenario presented above is based on the same information as used to construct the Table in section 4.1. It is based on the following premises:
   (i) the unfavourable-recovering condition assessments will at some point in the future become favourable;
   (ii) all unfavourable-unclassified sites will remain unfavourable, which is probably overly pessimistic;
   (iii) sympathetic management will be sustained on sites already classified as favourable and these will not be seriously damaged by any unforeseen events.
IMPORTANT NOTE: We do not have information on the timescale of the predicted recovery, which may be influenced by many past, natural and human related factors. A sustained, sympathetic management regime is more likely to result in 'favourable' condition being attained.

SAC condition assessments
Table 5.2.1 and Map 5.2.1 summarise the predicted potential future condition of H3170 on UK SACs. This is based on the approach described above. The maps give an impression of the overall spread of where future-unfavourable and future-favourable sites are predicted to occur (summary statistics for the map are given in Section 7.2). The combined assessments show that of the SACs assessed:
- 100% of the area and 100% of the number of assessments fall within the future-favourable category;
- 100% of the total UK habitat area falls within the future-favourable category.

SSSI/ASSI condition assessments
SSSI/ASSIs CSM condition assessments are not relevant as most or all the resource is on SACs.

Predicted Future Condition of H3170 based on CSM condition assessments (See Sections 5.2 and 7.2 for further information on these maps)		
Map 5.2.1 SAC assessments	**Map 5.2.2** Assessments strongly indicative of the condition on SSSI/ASSIs	**Map 5.2.3** Assessments weakly indicative of the condition on SSSI/ASSIs
Future status of HSD features FUTURE_STA ■ unfavourable ■ favourable ■ not assessed □ not on SAC	Not applicable	Not applicable
Key <u>Red = future-unfavourable</u>, i.e. the square contains one or more SACs where this habitat feature is present and has been predicted to be future-unfavourable <u>Green = future-favourable</u>, i.e. the square contains at least one SAC where this habitat feature is present and has been predicted to be future-favourable <u>Blue = SAC not assessed</u>, i.e. the square contains at least one SAC supporting this habitat feature but no assessment has been reported <u>Transparent = SAC feature not present</u>, i.e. the square does not contain any SAC features of this habitat type	Key* <u>Green</u> – 80 – 100% of assessed features on 10km square are favourable <u>Yellow</u> - 50 – 80% of assessed features on 10km square are favourable <u>Orange</u> - 20 – 50% of assessed features on 10km square are favourable <u>Red</u> - 0 – 20% of assessed features on 10km square are favourable *This is the same key as was used for JNCC CSM Report 2006	

5.3 Conclusions on future prospects ^(as regards range, area covered and specific structures and functions)

Conclusion[2.6.iv]: **Favourable**

The EC Guidance states that where "habitat prospects are good with no significant impacts from threats expected and long-term viability assured", the judgement should be Favourable. In the UK, this was generally taken to mean that range and/or area are stable or increasing, and more than 95% of the habitat area is likely to be in favourable condition in 12-15 years.

As most examples of this habitat type are within land managed for nature conservation the long-term security of H3170 is considered good. Recent work has identified the key areas for the habitat and its associated species on the Lizard and there is now much greater awareness of the importance of the track ways and their management and use. Based on CSM assessments for SACs condition and projected condition, H3170 is expected to remain favourable in the UK.

6. Overall conclusions and judgements on conservation status [2.6]

Conclusion[2.6]: **Favourable**

All parameters have been assessed as Favourable.

Table 6.1 Summary of overall conclusions and judgements

Parameter	Judgement	Grounds for Judgement	Confidence in judgement*
Range	Favourable	Current range is stable and not less than the favourable reference range.	3
Area covered by habitat type within range	Favourable	Current extent is stable and not less than the favourable reference area.	1
Specific structures and functions (including typical species)	Favourable	Structures and functions considered to be in good condition with no significant pressures.	2
Future prospects (as regards range, area covered and specific structures and functions)	Favourable	Habitat prospects over the next 12-15 years considered to be good with no significant impacts from threats expected and long-term viability assured.	2
Overall assessment of conservation status	Favourable	All individual judgments are Favourable.	2

Key to confidence in judgement: 1 = High; 2 = Medium; 3 = Low

7. Annexed material ^(including information sources used 2.2)

7.1 References

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Map data sources

JNCC International Designations Database. Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

7.2 Further information on CSM data as presented in Sections 4.2 and 5.2

Table 7.2.1 Summary of the coverage of the data shown in Tables 4.2.1 and 5.2.1

Data	Value
Number of SACs supporting feature (a)	1
Number of SACs with CSM assessments (b)	1
% of SACs assessed (b/a)	100
Extent of feature in the UK – hectares (c)	10
Extent of feature on SACs – hectares (d)	10
Extent of features assessed – hectares (e)	10
% of total UK hectarage on SACs (d/c)	100
% of SAC total hectarage that has been assessed (e/d)	100
% of total UK hectarage that has been assessed (e/c)	100

Notes
1. Extent of features on SACs (d) includes only those features that have been submitted on the official Natura 2000 data form as qualifying features. This figure is based on the habitat extent figures presented on standard Natura 2000 data forms.
2. The data included are from CSM assessments carried out between April 1998 and December 2006. NB: these include additional and some up-date data form those used in the six year report produced by JNCC (Williams, J.M., ed. 2006. *Common Standards Monitoring for Designated Sites: First Six Year Report*. Peterborough, JNCC).

Table 7.2.2 Summary of grid square map data shown in Maps 4.2.1-3 and 5.2.1-3

Status	Number of squares	Proportion of all squares
Current – Unfavourable (red)	0	0%
Current – Favourable (green)	2	67%
On SAC but not assessed (blue)	0	0%
Not on SAC (transparent)	1	33%
Total Number of 10km squares (any colour)	3	100%
Future – Unfavourable (red)	0	0%
Future – Favourable (green)	2	67%