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 :

H91J0: *Taxus baccata* woods of the British Isles

H91J0 *Taxus baccata* woods of the British Isles

Audit trail compiled and edited by JNCC and the JNCC Woodland Lead Coordination Network

This paper and accompanying appendices contain background and data used to complete the standard EC reporting form (Annex D), following the methodology outlined in the document entitled "Assessment, monitoring and reporting under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive, Explanatory Notes & 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 NVC and other habitat types

Table 1.1.1 provides a summary description of H91J0 *Taxus* woodland and its relations with UK classifications. *Taxus baccata* or yew woodland occurs on shallow, dry soils usually on chalk or limestone slopes, but in a few areas stands on more mesotrophic soils are found. The habitat is classified as NVC type W13 *Taxus baccata* woodland (Rodwell 1991). Within this community yew tends to be overwhelmingly dominant and is usually associated with a very sparse shrub and tree layer. Only a few species, such as dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis*, can survive beneath the dense shade cast by the canopy of mature yew trees.

Table 1.1.1 Summary description of habitat H91J0 and its relations with UK vegetation/habitat classifications.

Classification	Correspondence with Annex I type	Comments
EU Interpretation Manual	= H91J0	*Taxus baccata* woods with *Sorbus aria* or *Mercurialis perennis* of dry valleys and scarps of the chalk of south-east England, very locally of the Durham Magnesium limestone, Morecambe Bay and elsewhere. They also occur in the forest of Muckross, Killarney, Ireland.
National Vegetation Classification (NVC) (see Rodwell 1991, Hall 1997)	H91J0 = NVC type W13 *Taxus baccata* woodland	All of H91C0 corresponds to NVC type W13 woodland, which has two recognised sub-communities W13a-b. The NVC suggests that northern yew stands might be considered as part of the W8/W9 ashwood complex, but there is no clear phytosociological reason not to also treat distinct stands here as W13.
BAP priority habitat type	H91J0 forms part of the Lowland Beech and Yew woodland priority habitat type and part of the Upland Mixed Ash Woodland priority habitat type	Yew stands in the south form part of the Lowland Beech and Yew priority habitat type; in the north they form a minority component of Upland Mixed Ash Woodland priority habitat type.

Taxus baccata is a broadly Atlantic tree with a wide, but local distribution through western and central Europe. It was probably much commoner and better represented in a wider range of woodland types in the past. Association in Britain with beech *Fagus sylvatica* and holly *Ilex aquifolium* is less common than in mainland Europe. The commonest situations in which yew survives in some abundance across Europe are in beech woods of one sort or another, particularly those on more calcareous or neutral soils. It is mentioned as a particular feature of the acidic Annex I H9120 Beech forests with *Ilex* and *Taxus* woodlands, which are well represented in the UK. It also figures in, and through Europe as a whole is rather more characteristic of, various forms of the dry, calcareous H9150 Medio-European limestone beech forests of the *Cephalanthero-Fagion*.

Ecological variation in H91J0 in the UK arises according to the stage of development and locality. In the south, this type may be either the senescent phase of beech woodland supporting clusters of yew after the fall of beech, or primary woodland developing on unstable slopes. Very locally box *Buxus sempervirens* may occur below the yew. Eventually individual ash *Fraxinus excelsior* or beech trees may grow through in gaps to recreate an overstorey. More northerly examples tend to be associated with ash and elm *Ulmus* spp.: in these situations yew is more likely to remain as the main overstorey species. Yew stands frequently form mosaics with calcicolous scrub and grassland.
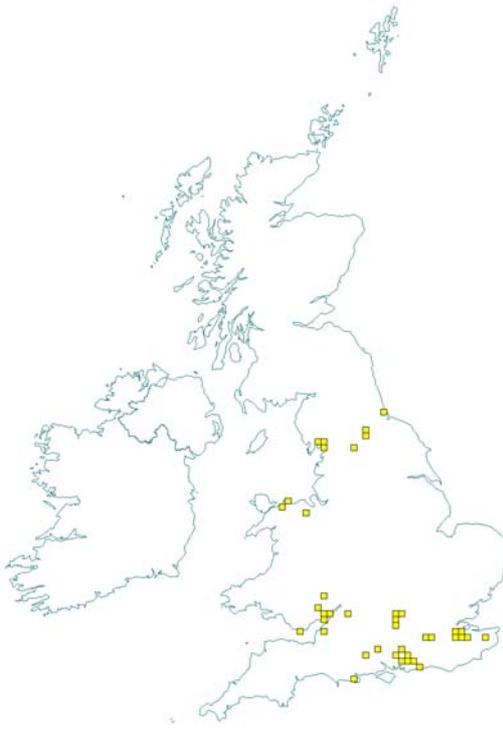
2. Range [2.3]

2.1 Current range

Range surface area [2.3.1]: 14,024 km²
Date calculated [2.3.2]: May 2007
Quality of data [2.3.3]: Moderate

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 and the alpha hull was clipped to include inland areas only.

Maps 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 show the range and distribution of H91J0 *Taxus* woodland in the UK. These are based on available records for the habitat type as extracted from the JNCC Database of Woodland Community Types. Included are all known stands that conform to NVC type W13, including the sub-communities W13a and W13b.

Map 2.1.1 Habitat range map [1.1] for H91J0	**Map 2.1.2** Habitat distribution map [1.2] for H91J0
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: 40

See Section 7.1 for data sources

The main concentrations of the habitat are shown in southern England, around the Severn Estuary, in North Wales, and across central northern England. However, the maps are likely to under-represent the distribution of small patches of yew woodland, for example on limestone in the Peak District and elsewhere. Although yew as a tree is virtually ubiquitous through England and Wales and lowland Scotland, this distribution includes many planted and individual trees: the probable distribution of native yew is considerably less (see Figs. 2 and 3 in Tittensor 1980) and is not taken to include Scotland or Northern Ireland.

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**

The broad range of H91J0 *Taxus* woodland appears to have not changed since 1994.

2.3 Favourable reference range

Favourable reference range[2.5.1]:   **Approx. 14,000 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, which was approximately 14,000 km^2, has been set as the favourable reference area. Reasons for this discussed below.

Available evidence suggests that the current range of H91J0 is both sufficiently large and reasonably compact not to raise any major concerns about the viability of the habitat on these accounts. The coloured area in Map 2.1.1 covers c.14,000 km^2 in four main blocks, though this certainly under-represents the actual range of H91J0 (see Section 2.1.).

The internal distribution of the habitat within its range is rather fragmentary, but this partly reflects natural limitations. Solid stands of yew tend to occur only on free-draining, usually base-rich and often slightly disturbed soils, notably on steep to moderate dry valley slopes and scarps of limestone or chalk (Rodwell 1991). On most other types of soil yew is at most prominent only in the under-storey.

The broad range of yew woodland has probably remained stable for the last 300 years. There is little evidence to suggest this habitat was significantly more extensive in historic times or that there have been major losses (Tittensor 1980). Some expansion and new sites have grown up on the Downs in southern England, but only within its historical range (see Watt 1926, Williamson 1978, Tittensor 1980).

The current range is therefore considered to be viable and at least equal in area to that of the favourable reference range area.

2.4 Conclusions on range

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

The area covered appears sufficiently large not to raise any major concerns as regards viability. The range has remained stable since 1994 and broadly so over the last 300 years. The distribution of the habitat within the range is rather fragmentary, but this partly reflects natural limitations imposed by the availability of suitable site conditions. The current range area can therefore be taken as approximately equal to that of the favourable reference range.

3. Area [2.4]

3.1 Current area

Total UK extent [2.4.1]:   **13.25km^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]:   **Moderate**

Table 3.1.1 provides information on the area of H91J0 in the UK. There is no inventory of sites supporting this habitat, so the values are based on expert opinion. The total extent is estimated at 1325 ha, much of which occurs in scattered, relatively small woods or patches therein. Most of the resource is thought to occur in England, with a small part in Wales.

Table 3.1.1 Area of H91J0 in the UK.

	Area (ha)	Method [2.4.3]	Quality of data [2.4.4.]
England	1000-1500	1	Moderate
Scotland	Not present		
Wales	50-100	1	Moderate
Northern Ireland	Not present		
Total UK extent [2.4.1.]	1,325 (1050-1600)	1	Moderate

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**

The area of H91J0 *Taxus* woodland has probably remained more-or-less stable since 1994, but precise figures on this trend are not available.

3.3 Favourable reference area

Favourable reference area[2.5.2]:   **Approx. 13.25 km^2**

Section 3.2.2.3 of 'Assessing Conservation Status: UK Approach' sets out how favourable reference area estimates have been determined in the UK. Based on this approach, the current extent, 13.25 km^2, has been set as the favourable reference area. Reasons for this are discussed below.

The current area of H91J0 *Taxus* woodland seems to be large enough to not raise any major concerns about the viability of the habitat. The total area is admittedly rather limited. There is, nonetheless, little evidence to suggest yew woodland was much more extensive in historic times or that it has declined in a major way (see Tittensor 1980). Because individual yew trees can survive for many centuries, yew stands often tend to be very stable. There is in fact clear evidence that on a number of locations on the Downs in southern England the area of yew woodland has increased considerably, with new patches of yew having grown up during the last century or so in response to reductions in grazing (see Watt 1926, Fig. 8 in Tittensor 1980). This has been well-documented at Kingley Vale SAC (see Williamson 1978). On the other hand, some yew stands may have been lost in the general clearance and replanting of ancient woodland over the period 1935-1985 (Spencer and Kirby 1992). Although figures for this type cannot be separated out, it is probable that the area lost was not great because yew woodland is a minority component of ancient woodland.

Another consideration is that H91J0 *Taxus* woodland is naturally limited to particular sites (see Section 2.3.), upon which it occurs sporadically. This is partly because some sites support other woodland and open habitat types (notably H6210/6211 Calcareous grassland and H9180 Tilio-Acerion and H9130 Asperulo-Fagetum) that are of greater nature conservation value (given that the insect fauna and ground flora associated of yew-dominated stands is naturally species-poor).

The habitat does have a rather fragmentary occurrence and some effort is being made to restore and expand it as part of the UK BAP habitat action plan for lowland beech and yew woodland (see http://www.ukbap.org.uk). Nevertheless, fragmentation does not appear as a major problem and the scope and case for expansion seem limited. The current area of H91J0 is therefore considered to be viable and at least equal in area to that of the favourable reference range.

3.4 Conclusions on area covered by habitat
Conclusion[2.6.ii]:   **Favourable**
Although the habitat area is limited to only about 1325ha, this appears sufficiently large. The area has remained stable since 1994 and largely so over the last 400 years. In fact, during the last century or so some localised expansion took place in southern England. In addition, the localised and rather fragmentary occurrence of the habitat is in part due to natural limitations and the fact that some suitable sites are occupied by other open and woodland habitat types of greater nature conservation value. Fragmentation is not given as a major problem and the scope and case for expansion of yew woodland is rather limited. The current area of H91J0 is therefore considered to be viable and at least equal in area to that of the favourable reference range.

4. Specific Structures and Functions ^(including typical species)

4.1 Main pressures[2.4.10]
The main pressures affecting H91J0 are listed below. These are derived from the UK BAP Habitat Action Plan for lowland beech and yew woodland and via the adverse features listed in Common Standards Monitoring condition assessments (see Section 4.2.1). The related EC codes are shown in brackets.

- Deer browsing (**969 other forms or mixed forms of interspecific faunal competition**)
Several species of deer occur in the lowland landscape of Britain. In some cases, stands of H91J0 are adversely affected by deer browsing, which limits the capacity for natural regeneration via seedlings and saplings. Despite having a reputation as a toxic plant, yew is frequently browsed by deer (Thomas & Polwart 2003), as are other palatable plants associated with yew woodland.

- Lack of diversity of stand structure (**950 Biocenotic evolution**)
Many stands of H91J0 are in older age classes that are relatively uniform in composition. This is a quasi-natural characteristic, with many existing yew woods having spontaneously regenerated en masse when conditions were Favourable during the 19th and early 20th century, albeit within a semi-natural landscape (Watt 1926). However, because of the dense, dry and shady under-storey conditions below such stands, there is a lack of regeneration and little ground vegetation. This, and the lack of structural diversity, limits their potential value for wildlife. This is compounded because there is a lack of interest, resources, expertise or incentives to carry out appropriate management.

- Air pollution (**702 air pollution**)
Based on an assessment of the exceedence of relevant critical loads (see Technical Note III), air pollution is considered to be a potentially significant pressure to the structure and function of this habitat. This conclusion is uncertain because research to establish critical loads is based on other woodland communities and may not be strictly applicable to yew woodland. However, it may well be the case that nitrogen loading is encouraging nitrophile species, such as bramble, to develop strongly in more open

parts of such woodland.

4.2 Current condition

4.2.1 Common Standards Monitoring condition assessments
Condition assessments based on Common Standards Monitoring (see http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-2199) provide a means to assess the structure and functioning of H91J0 in the UK. The following attributes were examined for all CSM assessments relevant to the habitat:
- Extent
- Structure and natural processes
- Regeneration potential
- Composition (trees and shrubs)
- Indicators of local distinctiveness

SAC condition assessments
Table 4.2.1 and Map 4.2.1 summarise the Common Standards Monitoring condition assessments for UK SACs supporting habitat H91J0. 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 85% of the area and 62% of the number of assessments was Unfavourable. This means that at least 44% of the total UK habitat area was in Unfavourable condition. The majority of the Unfavourable assessments were classed as recovering, though one was declining.

Table 4.2.1 Common Standards Monitoring condition assessment results for UK SACs supporting H91J0. See notes below table for details. Information on the coverage of these results is given in Section 7.2
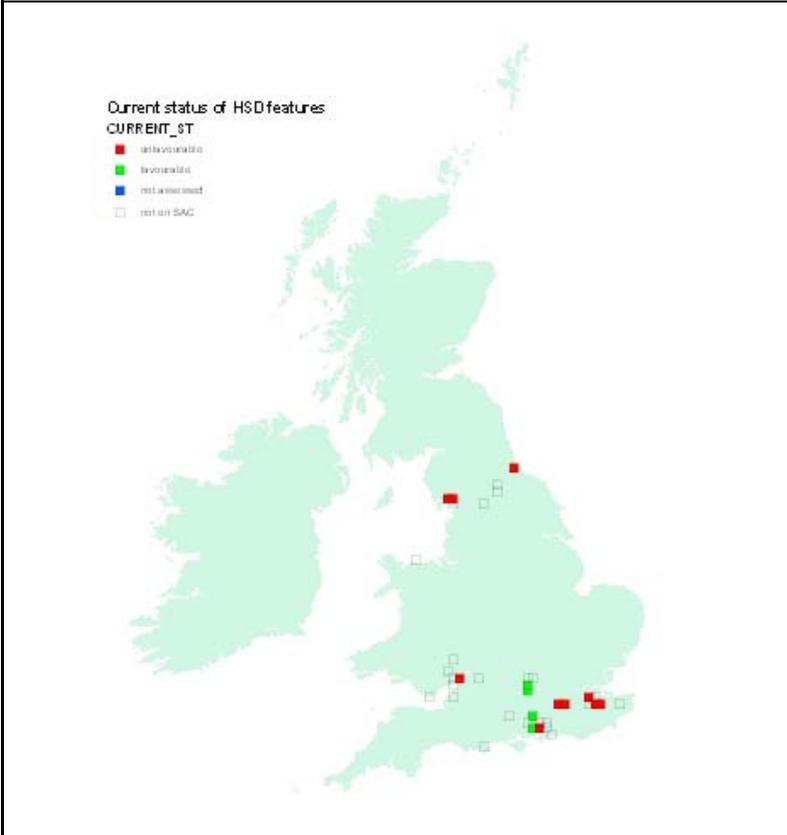
Condition	Condition sub-categories	Area (ha)	Number of site features
Unfavourable	Declining	21	1
	No change	70	2
	Unclassified	0	0
	Recovering	490	5
	Total	581	8
	% of all assessments	*85%*	*62%*
	% of total UK resource	*44%*	*unknown*
Favourable	Maintained	7	1
	Recovered	0	0
	Unclassified	92	4
	Total	99	5
	% of all assessments	*15%*	*38%*
	% of total UK resource	*8%*	*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.

Current Condition of H91J0 based on Common Standard Monitoring 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 an SAC	SSSI condition monitoring % of features that are favourable ■ 0 - 20% ■ 20 - 50% ■ 50 - 80% ■ 80 - 100%	Not applicable
Key <u>Red = Unfavourable</u>, i.e. the square contains at least one SAC where this habitat feature is present and has been judged to be Unfavourable <u>Green = Favourable</u>, 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 <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 contains some examples of the habitat type but none are SAC features	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	

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SSSI/ASSI condition assessments

Table 4.2.2.and Maps 4.2.2 and 4.2.3 summarise the Common Standards Monitoring condition assessments that were judged to be either strongly or weakly indicative of the condition of the Annex I habitat on SSSI/ASSIs (see Technical Note II for details of methodology behind this). 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 maps are given in Section 7.2.). The combined condition assessments show that, of the SSSI/ASSI assessments considered, 68% of strongly indicative assessments were Unfavourable. Almost half of these were reported as recovering, but a few were declining. The results are similar to those for the SACs, not surprisingly because many of the SSSIs are also SACs. The map for SSSIs provides a fairly complete picture of the spread of condition: nearly all northerly sites are Unfavourable.

Table 4.2.2 Common Standards Monitoring condition assessment results for UK SSSI/ASSIs that were judged to be either strongly or weakly indicative of the condition of H91J0 on SSSI/ASSIs. See notes below table and Technical Note II for further details.

Condition	Condition sub-categories	Number of assessments	
		Strongly indicative assessments (Category 1)	**Weakly indicative assessments (Category 2)**
Unfavourable	Declining	2	
	No change	5	
	Unclassified	0	
	Recovering	6	
	Total	13	
	% of all assessments	*68%*	
Favourable	Maintained	0	
	Recovered	0	
	Unclassified	6	
	Total	6	
	% of all assessments	*32%*	

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)

4.3 Typical species

Typical species[2.5.3]:   **None used**

Typical species assessment[2.5.4]:   **Not applicable**

Amongst the characteristic ground flora plants listed in EU Interpretation Manual for H91J0, only *Buxus sempervirens* and *Mercurialis perennis* are native to the UK. These are widespread and neither are especially faithful to yew woodland, so available trend data at the UK-level or even the GB-woodland-level is not particularly meaningful and has not been utilised here. Without more specific information, no firm conclusions can be drawn about the status of typical species for this habitat.

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

Conclusion[2.6.iii]:   **Unfavourable – Bad but improving**

The EC Guidance states that where "more than 25% of the area of the habitat is Unfavourable as regards its specific structures and functions", the conclusion should be Unfavourable – Bad. In the UK this was generally taken to mean that more than 25% of the habitat area in Unfavourable condition.

The main pressures are deer browsing, lack of diversity of stand structure, and air pollution. Condition assessments for SACs and SSSIs show that a large part of H91J0 is in Unfavourable condition. The value

for assessed SACs was 62-85%, whilst for relevant SSSIs it was 68%. A considerable number of assessments were reported as recovering and only a few were declining. There is no reason to expect the condition of the non-designated resource to be better. It is clear that much more than the 25% of the habitat area is subject to significant deteriorations/pressures and in Unfavourable condition. There is, nonetheless, evidence of a recovery in condition.

5. Future Prospects

5.1 Main factors affecting the habitat

5.1.1 Conservation measures
This habitat forms part of a national action plan for lowland beech and yew woodland under the UK BAP (see http://www.ukbap.org.uk) that has targets to maintain, improve, restore and expand this resource.

Lowland beech and yew woodland is subject to a number of legal instruments, national policy measures and grant-aid schemes. These prevent clear-felling for conversion to other land uses, and aim to maintain and restore their ecological diversity and expand remnant and new native woods. All woodland is expected to be managed according to the UK Forestry Standard, with ancient and semi-natural woodland receiving special provision. Felling of trees and grant aid are controlled by the Forestry Authority and are conditional upon management achieving these aims in accordance with published guidance. The Woodland Grant Scheme provides finance for regenerating, planting and other management activities. Approximately 50% of yew woodland has been designated as an SSSI under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Some sites have been designated as SACs for H91J0 in response to the EC Habitat Directive (see http://www.jncc.gov.uk/ProtectedSites/SACselection/habitat.asp?FeatureIntCode=H91J0). Various other measures and initiatives have been put in place to help conserve such woodland, including published guides on their management and creation.

5.1.2 Main future threats[2.4.11]
The most obvious major threats to H91J0 over the next 10-15 years are listed below. The related EC codes are shown in brackets.

- Deer browsing (**969 other forms or mixed forms of interspecific faunal competition**)
Deer browsing is currently impacting on some stands of H91J0.

- Lack of diversity of stand structure (**950 Biocenotic evolution**)
Many stands of H91J0 are in older age classes that are relatively uniform in composition. This is compounded because there is a lack of interest, resources, expertise or incentives to carry out appropriate management.

- Air pollution (**702 air pollution**)
Based on an assessment of the exceedence of relevant critical loads (see Technical Note III), air pollution is considered to be a potentially significant threat to the future condition of this habitat.

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

5.2.1 Common Standards Monitoring condition assessments
The Common Standards Monitoring condition assessments reported in Sections 4.2.1-2. provide a basis to crudely predict the potential future condition of H91J0 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. There are a number of caveats to this approach, which are set out beneath this table.

SAC condition assessments

Table 5.2.1 and Map 5.2.1 summarise the predicted potential future condition of H91J0 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 87% of the area and 77% of the number of assessments fall within the future-Favourable category. This means that at least 44% of the total UK habitat area falls within this category.

Table 5.2.1 Predicted future condition of UK SACs supporting H91J0 based on current Common Standards Monitoring 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	21	1
	Unfavourable no change	70	2
	Unfavourable unclassified	0	0
	Total	***91***	***3***
	% of assessments	*13%*	*23%*
	% of total UK extent	*7%*	*Unknown*
Future-Favourable	Favourable maintained	7	1
	Favourable recovered	0	0
	Unfavourable recovering	490	5
	Favourable unclassified	92	4
	Total	589	10
	% of assessments	*87%*	*77%*
	% of total extent	*44%*	*Unknown*

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.
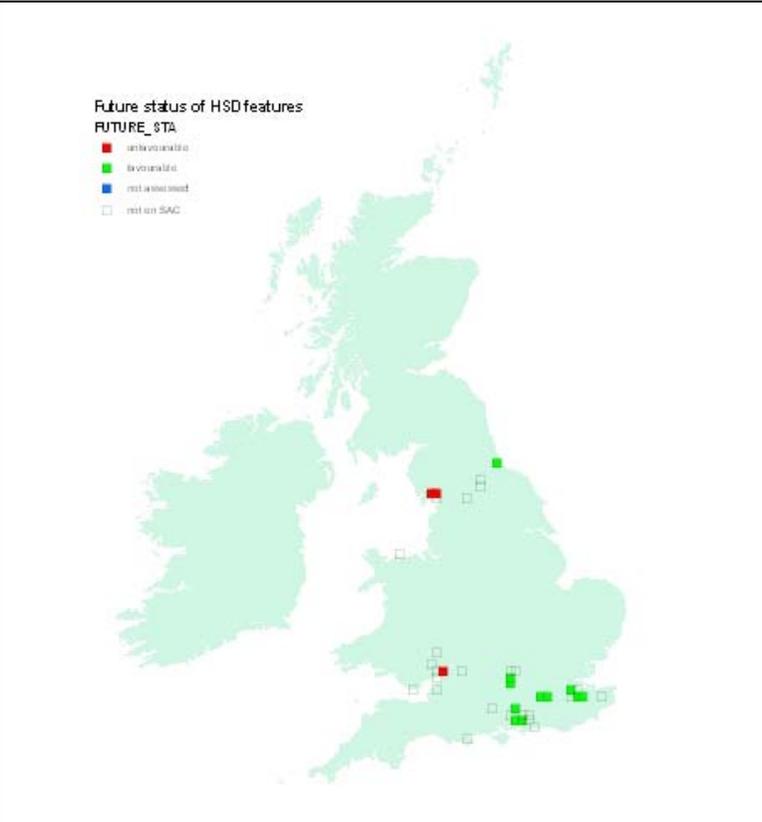
IMPORTANT NOTE: we do not have information on the timescale of the predicted recovery, which may be influenced by many past, natural and human related factors. A sustained, sympathetic management regime is more likely to result in 'Favourable' condition being attained.

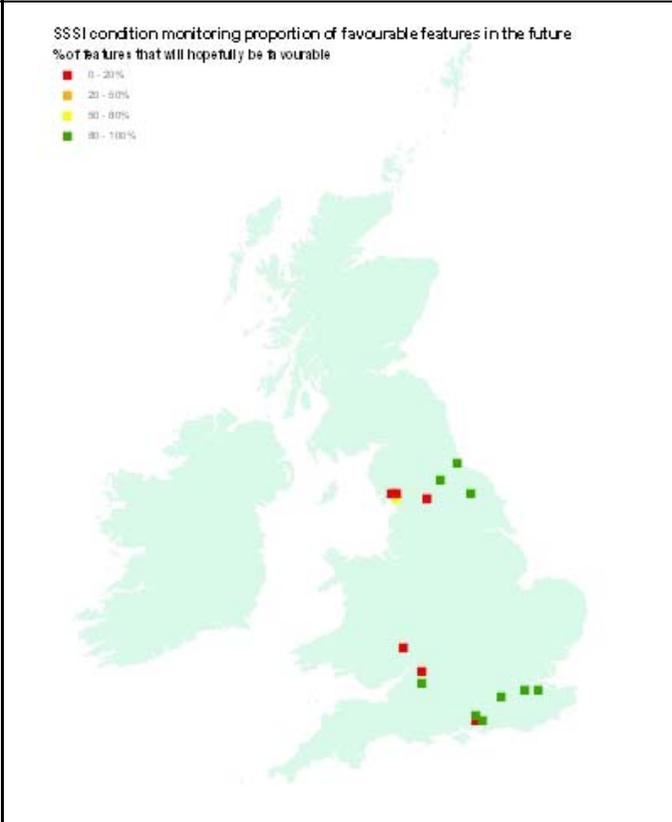**SSSI/ASSI condition assessments**

Table 5.2.2 and Maps 5.2.2 and 5.2.3 summarise the predicted potential future condition of H91J0 on UK SSSI/ASSIs. This is based on the approach described above and utilises condition assessments that were judged to be either strongly or weakly indicative of the condition of the Annex I habitat on SSSI/ASSIs (see Technical Note II for details of methodology behind this). The maps give an impression of the overall spread of where of where future-Unfavourable and future-Favourable sites are predicted to occur (summary statistics for the maps are given in Section 7.2.). The combined condition assessments show that 63% of the strongly indicative assessments fall within the future-Favourable category.

Predicted Future Condition of H91J0 based on Common Standard Monitoring 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
		Not applicable
Key Red = future-Unfavourable, i.e. the square contains one or more SACs where this habitat feature is present and has been predicted to be future-Unfavourable Green = future-Favourable, i.e. the square contains at least one SAC where this habitat feature is present and has been predicted to be future-Favourable 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 contains some examples of the habitat type but none are SAC features	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	

Table 5.2.2 Predicted future condition of H91J0 on SSSI/ASSIs based on Common Standards Monitoring assessments that were judged to be either strongly or weakly indicative of the condition. See notes below table and Technical Note II for further details.

Future condition	Present condition	Number of assessments	
		Strongly indicative assessments (Category 1)	**Weakly indicative assessments (Category 2)**
Future-Unfavourable	Unfavourable declining	2	
	Unfavourable no change	5	
	Unfavourable unclassified	0	
	Total	**7**	
	% of assessments	*37%*	
Future-Favourable	Favourable maintained	0	
	Favourable recovered	0	
	Unfavourable recovering	6	
	Favourable unclassified	6	
	Total	12	
	% of assessments	*63%*	

Note that the scenario presented above is based on the same information as used to construct the Table 4.2.2. 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.

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

Conclusion[2.6.iv]: **Unfavourable – Inadequate but improving**

The EC Guidance states that where habitat prospects are intermediate between "good with no significant impacts from threats expected and long-term viability assured" and "bad with severe impacts from threats expected and long-term viability not assured", the judgement should be Unfavourable – Inadequate. In the UK, this was generally taken to mean that range and/or area are stable or decreasing, and between 75-95% of the habitat area is likely to be in Favourable condition in 12-15 years.

A substantial number of positive conservation measures have been put into place to improve the status of this habitat. The most obvious major threats are deer browsing, lack of diversity of stand structure, and air pollution. Condition assessments for relevant SACs indicate that 77-87% of the habitat may be Favourable in the foreseeable future, which equates to at least 44% of the total habitat area. Relevant condition assessments for SSSIs put 63% within the future-Favourable category. Given that some additional recovery can be expected once further conservation measures are put into place, it seems likely that somewhat less than 25% of yew woodland will be in Unfavourable condition in the next 10-15 years.

6. Overall Conclusions and Judgements on Conservation Status

Conclusion[2.6]: **Unfavourable – Bad but improving**

On the basis of Structure and Function, the overall conclusion for this habitat feature is Unfavourable – Bad but improving.

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.	2
Area covered by habitat type within range	Favourable	Current area is stable and not less than the favourable reference area.	2
Specific structures and functions (including typical species)	Unfavourable – Bad but improving	More than 25% of the habitat area is considered to be unfavourable as regards its specific structures and functions. There is, nonetheless, evidence of a recovery in condition.	2
Future prospects (as regards range, area covered and specific structures and functions)	Unfavourable – Inadequate but improving	Habitat prospects over next 12-15 years considered to be bad, with severe impact from threats expected and long term viability not assured. Given that some additional recovery can be expected once further conservation measures are put into place, it seems likely that somewhat less than 25% of yew woodland will be in unfavourable condition in the next 10-15 years.	2
Overall assessment of conservation status	Unfavourable – Bad but improving	On the basis of Structure and Function, the overall conclusion for this habitat feature is Unfavourable – Bad but improving.	2

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

7. Annexed Material (including information sources used 2.2)

7.1 References

HALL, J. 1997. An analysis of National Vegetation Classification survey data. JNCC Report 272, Peterborough.

RODWELL, J.S. (ed.) 1991. British Plant Communities Volume 1: Woodlands and Scrub. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

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THOMAS, P.A. & POLWart, A. 2003. Biological Flora of the British Isles: Taxus baccata L. Journal of Ecology 91, 489-524.

TITTENSOR, R.M. 1980. Ecological history of yew Taxus baccata in southern England. Biological Conservation 17, 243-265.

WATT, A.S. 1926. Yew communities of the South Downs. Journal of Ecology 14, 282-316.

WILLIAMSON, R. 1978. The Great Yew Forest – The Natural History of Kingley Vale. Macmillan, London.

UKBAP Habitat Action Plan for lowland beech and yew woodland. Available via UKBAP website
http://www.ukbap.org.uk/

Map Data Sources

JNCC International Designations Database. Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

NVC Woodland Community Access Database. Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

7.2 Further information on Common Standards Monitoring 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)	13
Number of SACs with CSM assessments (b)	13
% of SACs assessed (b/a)	100
Extent of feature in the UK – hectares (c)	1,325
Extent of feature on SACs – hectares (d)	680
Extent of features assessed – hectares (e)	680
% of total UK hectarage on SACs (d/c)	51
% of SAC total hectarage that has been assessed (e/d)	100
% of total UK hectarage that has been assessed (e/c)	51

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 4.2.1-2 and 5.2.1-2

Status	Number of squares	Proportion of all squares
Current – Unfavourable (red)	10	26%
Current – Favourable (green)	4	11%
On SAC but not assessed (blue)	0	0%
Not on SAC (transparent)	24	63%
Total Number of 10km squares (any colour)	38	100%
Future – Unfavourable (red)	3	8%
Future – Favourable (green)	11	29%