

**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  
Species:  
S1363 - *Felis silvestris* - Wildcat**

The information in this assessment corresponds to the "species fact sheet" submitted by the UK to the European Union in February 2008 (second and final submission). Please note that this is a section of the UK's report. For the complete report visit <http://www.jncc.gov.uk/article17>

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**Species Name: *Felis silvestris***

| <b>1. National level</b>                                |   |
|---|---|
| Species Code  | S1363   |
| Member State  | United Kingdom  |
| Biogeographic regions concerned within the Member state | ATL   |
| 1.1 Range map   |  A map of the United Kingdom showing the distribution of the species <i>Felis silvestris</i> . The distribution is indicated by a grey shaded area covering the Scottish Highlands and the Scottish Islands. A small square symbol is located in the central part of the Great Britain island. The map shows the outlines of the British Isles, including Great Britain and Ireland. |

## 1.2 Distribution map



## 2. Biogeographic level

### 2.1 Biogeographic region

ATL

### 2.2 Published sources and/or websites

BALHARRY, E.M. and DANIELS, M. 1998. Wild living cats in Scotland. Scottish Natural Heritage, Research, Survey and Monitoring Report No. 23.

CORBETT, L.K. 1979. Feeding ecology and social organisation of wildcats (*Felis silvestris*) and domestic cats (*Felis catus*) in Scotland. PhD Thesis, University of Aberdeen.

DANIELS, M. 1997. The biology and conservation of the wildcat in Scotland. PhD Thesis, University of Oxford.

DANIELS M.J., BALHARRY D., HIRST D., KITCHENER A.C. and ASPINALL R.J. 1998. Morphological and pelage characteristics of wild living cats in Scotland: implications for defining the 'wildcat'. *Journal of Zoology* 244, 231-247.

EASTERBEE, N., HEPBURN, L.V. and JEFFERIES, D.J. 1991. Survey of the status and distribution of the wildcat in Scotland, 1983–1987. Nature Conservancy Council for Scotland, Edinburgh.

HAINES-YOUNG, R.H., BARR, C.J., BLACK, H.I.J., BRIGGS, D.J., BUNCE, R.G.H.,  
 CLARKE, R.T., COOPER, A., DAWSON, F.H., FIRBANK, L.G., FULLER, R.M., FURSE, M.T., GILLESPIE, M.K., HILL, R., HORNUNG, M., HOWARD, D.C., McCANN, T.,  
 MORECROFT, M.D., PETIT, S., SIER, A.R.J., SMART, S.M., SMITH, G.M., STOTT, A.P., STUART, R.C. and WATKINS, J.W. 2000. Accounting for nature: assessing habitats in the UK countryside. Countryside Survey 2000. DETR, HMSO, London.

HARRIS, S., MORRIS, P., WRAY, S. and YALDEN, D. 1995. A review of British Mammals: population estimates and conservation status of British mammals other than cetaceans. JNCC, Peterborough.

KITCHENER, A.C. YAMAGUCHI, N. WARD, J.M. and MACDONALD, D.W. 2005. A diagnosis for the Scottish wildcat (*Felis silvestris*): a tool for conservation action for a critically-endangered felid. Animal Conservation, 8, 223-237.

MACDONALD, D.W., DANIELS, M.J., DRISCOLL, C., KITCHENER, A. and YAMAGUCHI, N. (2004) The Scottish Wildcat, Analyses for Conservation and an Action Plan. Wildlife Conservation Research Unit, Oxford.

MACDONALD, D.W. and TATTERSALL, F.T. 2001. Britain's Mammals: The Challenge for Conservation. Mammals Trust UK/WildCru.

TAPPER, S. 1992. Game heritage- an ecological review from shooting and gamekeeping records. Game Conservancy Ltd., Fordingbridge.

Map Data Sources

Biological Records Centre - Mammals & Irish Otter Databases; Highland Biological Recording Group - Mammals dataset (via NBN Gateway).

**2.3 Range of species in the biogeographic region or marine region**

|  |                |
|--|----------------|
| 2.3.1 Surface range of the species (sq km) | 43842          |
| 2.3.2 Date of range determination          | 1980-2003      |
| 2.3.3 Quality of data concerning range     | Moderate       |
| 2.3.4 Range trend                          | Unknown (X)    |
| 2.3.5 Range trend magnitude (%)            | Not applicable |
| 2.3.6 Range trend period                   | 1980-2003      |
| 2.3.7 Reasons for reported trend           | Not applicable |

| <b>2.4 Population</b>   |  |                |         |         |
|---|--|----------------|---------|---------|
| 2.4.1 Population size estimation  | Minimum  | Unknown        | Maximum | Unknown |
|   | Units  | Not applicable |         |         |
| 2.4.2 Date of population estimation   | 2004   |                |         |         |
| 2.4.3 Method used for population estimation                                     | 1 - Based on expert opinion  |                |         |         |
| 2.4.4 Quality of population data  | Poor   |                |         |         |
| 2.4.5 Population trend  | Decreasing (-)   |                |         |         |
| 2.4.6 Population trend magnitude (%)  | Unknown  |                |         |         |
| 2.4.7 Population trend period   | 1980-2004  |                |         |         |
| 2.4.8 Reasons for reported trend  | 3 - Direct human influence; 4 - Indirect anthropo or zoonogenic influence;   |                |         |         |
| 2.4.9 Justification of % thresholds for trends (optional)                       | Not applicable   |                |         |         |
| 2.4.10 Main pressures   | 164 - Forestry clearance; 190 - Agriculture and forestry activities not referred to above; 502 - routes, autoroutes; 960 - Interspecific faunal relations; 964 - genetic pollution;  |                |         |         |
| 2.4.11 Threats  | 190 - Agriculture and forestry activities not referred to above; 502 - routes, autoroutes; 960 - Interspecific faunal relations; 964 - genetic pollution;  |                |         |         |
| <b>2.5 Habitat for the species in the biogeographic region or marine region</b> |  |                |         |         |
| 2.5 Habitats for the species  | <p><i>F. silvestris</i> in Scotland prefer the edge of mountains and moorland with rough grazing, although forest and crops may also be important. They are normally found at low altitudes but may occur up to 600m (Easterbee et al. 1991). Daniels et al. (1998) found that wild-living cats showed significant preference for stream edge and woodland habitat types, while avoiding pasture and heather moorlands within their ranges, and Group 1 cats (i.e. those with characteristics most different to those of domestic cats) were more likely to be found in cold areas and areas deemed to be poor for forestry - mainly in the eastern Highlands (reviewed in Macdonald et al. 2004). Urban infrastructure is thought to pose a physical barrier to movement of current populations into more southern regions of Scotland.</p> |                |         |         |
| 2.5.2 Area estimation (sq km)   | Unknown  |                |         |         |
| 2.5.3 Date of estimation  | 2006   |                |         |         |
| 2.5.4 Quality of data   | Poor   |                |         |         |
| 2.5.5 Trend of the habitat  | Increasing (+)   |                |         |         |
| 2.5.6 Trend period  | 1990-1998  |                |         |         |
| 2.5.7 Reasons for reported trend  | 3 - Direct human influence;  |                |         |         |
| <b>2.6 Future prospects</b>   |  |                |         |         |
| 2.6 Future prospects for the species  | Bad prospects_Species likely to become extinct in the biogeographical region   |                |         |         |
| <b>2.7 Complementary information</b>  |  |                |         |         |
| 2.7.1 Favourable reference range (sq km)  | 43842  |                |         |         |

|   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 2.7.2 Favourable reference population   | 3500                          |
| 2.7.3 Suitable Habitat for the species  | Unknown                       |
| 2.7.4 Other relevant information  |                               |
| <b>2.8 Conclusions</b><br><i>(assessment of conservation status at end of reporting period)</i> |                               |
| (2.3) Range   | (FV) - Favourable             |
| (2.4) Population  | (U2) - Bad                    |
| (2.5) Habitat for the species   | (XX) - Unknown                |
| (2.6) Future prospects  | (U2-) - Bad and deteriorating |
| Overall assessment  | (U2-) - Bad and deteriorating |