



Yew *Taxus baccata*,
Kingley Vale National Nature Reserve

The report on Habitats Directive implementation provides detailed updates on the fortunes of 167 UK species and habitats. For example, the report says that there is some 13 km square of yew *Taxus baccata* woodland in parts of England and Wales. Its conservation status is rated as 'Unfavourable – bad', but the situation is improving as appropriate conservation measures are put in place.



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Fen Orchid *Liparis loeselii*,
Ant Broad and Marshes SSSI

The fen orchid *Liparis loeselii* is rated as having an 'Unfavourable – bad' conservation status. The future prospects for the orchid, which is found at just five sites in East Anglia and south Wales, are judged to be poor unless conditions change.



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> European nature conservation advice

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JNCC provides advice on European policies that have an effect on UK conservation of biodiversity and geodiversity

Nature conservation in the UK is strongly influenced by European Community measures, and during the year JNCC has been involved in assisting Government with the development and implementation of policies and legislation that, either directly or indirectly, affect the environment.

We have provided advice on the implementation of the new Environmental Liability Directive, which seeks to prevent and remedy environmental damage by making operators financially liable for damage. Implementation of the new Directive will potentially overlap with other measures that have similar objectives, including the Habitats Directive, Birds Directive, Water Framework Directive and Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

The reporting year saw a major area of our work come to fruition with the second report on implementation of the Habitats Directive in the UK during the period 2001–2006. The report includes the assessment of the conservation status of all habitats and species listed by the Directive that occur in the UK.

The report covering the 167 UK habitats and species was completed by JNCC working closely with colleagues in the country conservation bodies. A further 14 habitats and species occurring in Gibraltar were also included and that part of the report was completed by the Gibraltar Ornithology and Natural History Society on behalf of the Government of Gibraltar.



Ines Marin and Hugh Laxton, UK Nature and Landscape Office, Brussels

The advice and support JNCC gives to Government about the development and implementation of European policy and legislation was enhanced in late 2007 by a move to new offices in Brussels, which provide improved facilities for meetings and more working space for visiting staff.

Since 2001, the UK Nature and Landscape Office has provided intelligence and advice to enable JNCC and the UK conservation bodies to be fully apprised of all relevant EU policy and legislative developments. During 2007, these services, which include policy briefings, urgent 'news' notices and a calendar of events, have been delivered using a new web-based delivery mechanism.

In addition, the office facilitates access for JNCC and UK conservation body colleagues to the European institutions.



In each case a judgement of conservation status was made rating a species or habitat under one of the following headings: Favourable, Unfavourable (inadequate), Unfavourable (bad) or Unknown. It is perhaps unsurprising that a relatively small proportion – just five per cent of UK habitats and 26 per cent of UK species – were rated ‘Favourable’, given that species and habitats have been listed on the Directive because they are rare or endangered. The assessments of conservation status will inform decision-making in a number of areas, including derogations under the Habitats Directive, the setting of conservation and surveillance priorities, and judgement of damage under the Environmental Liability Directive.

Elsewhere on the European agenda, three large estuaries – the Dee, the Humber and the Severn – were submitted to the European Commission for designation as Special areas of Conservation under the Habitats Directive. There has also been significant progress in collecting data and developing the scientific case for marine Special Protection Areas under the Birds Directive.



Climate Action:

Energy for a changing world

The future of biofuels was a high-profile issue during the reporting year. European Commission president **José Manuel Barroso** (middle), Energy Commissioner **Andris Piebalgs** (right) and Environment Commissioner **Stavros Dimas** are pictured at the launch of the European climate change and energy package in January 2008. Part of the package is a proposed Renewable Energy Directive that includes a target for biofuels to form a ten per cent share of fuel consumption by 2020. (See section 3, page 21).



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Juvenile otter

Lutra lutra, Shetland Isles

The otter is a European protected species and has Special Areas of Conservation designated under the Habitats Directive. Protection and improved water quality have resulted in the reversal of severe historic population declines and the species has returned to much of its former range across the UK. As a result it was assessed as in Favourable Conservation Status in the Article 17 Report.



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