

Report under The Conservation of Habitats and
Species Regulations 2017 (as amended),
Regulation 9A

2019-2024

Conservation status assessment for the habitat:

**H6170 - Alpine and subalpine calcareous
grasslands**

Wales



**Cyfoeth
Naturiol
Cymru
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Wales**



JNCC

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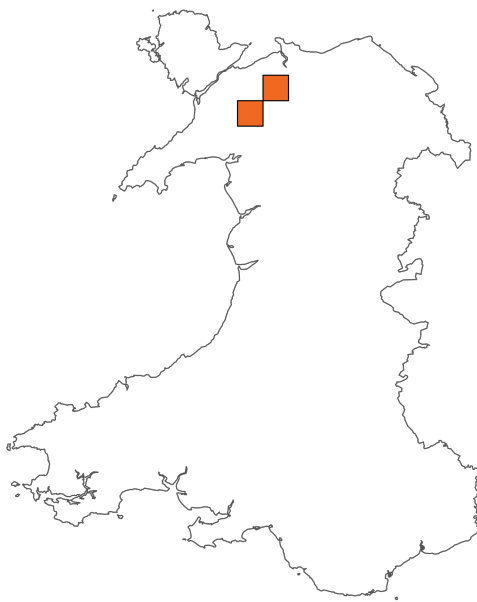
Important note - Please read

- The information in this document represents Wales Report under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), Regulation 9A, for the period 2019-2024.
- It is based on supporting information provided by Natural Resources Wales, which is documented separately.
- The Habitats Regulations reporting 2019-2024 Approach Document provides details on how this supporting information contributed to the UK Report and the fields that were completed for each parameter.
- Maps showing the distribution and range of the habitat are included.
- Explanatory notes (where provided) are included at the end. These provide additional audit trail information to that included within the assessments. Further underpinning explanatory notes are available in the related country reports.
- Some of the reporting fields have been left blank because either: (i) there was insufficient information to complete the field; (ii) completion of the field was not obligatory; and/or (iii) the field was not relevant to this habitat (section 11 National Site Network coverage for Annex I habitats).

Further details on the approach to the Habitats Regulations Reporting 2019-2024 are available on the [JNCC website](#).

Assessment Summary: Alpine and subalpine calcareous grasslands

Distribution Map



Range Map

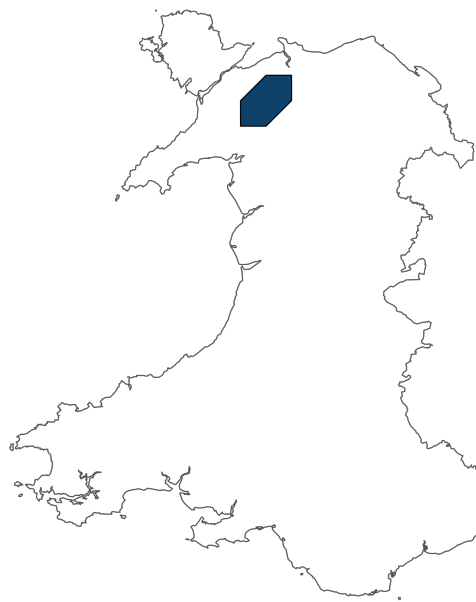


Figure 1: Wales distribution and range map for H6170 - Alpine and subalpine calcareous grasslands. Coastline boundary derived from the Oil and Gas Authority's OGA and Lloyd's Register SNS Regional Geological Maps (Open Source). Open Government Licence v3 (OGL). Contains data © 2017 Oil and Gas Authority. The 10km grid square distribution map is based on available habitat records within the current reporting period.

Table 1: Table summarising the conservation status for H6170 - Alpine and subalpine calcareous grasslands. Overall conservation status for habitat is based on assessments of range, area covered by habitat, structure and functions, and future prospects.

Overall Conservation Status (see section 10)

Unfavourable-bad (U2)

Breakdown of Overall Conservation Status

Range (see section 4)

Favourable (FV)

Area covered by habitat (see section 5)

Favourable (FV)

Structure and functions (see section 6)

Favourable (FV)

Future prospects (see section 9)

Unfavourable-bad (U2)

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National Level

1. General information

1.1 Country	Wales
1.2 Habitat code	H6170 - Alpine and subalpine calcareous grasslands

2. Maps

2.1 Year or period	1996-2005
2.2 Distribution map	Yes
2.3 Distribution map; Method used	Complete survey or a statistically robust estimate

2.4 Additional information

No additional information

Biogeographical Level

3. Biogeographical and marine regions

3.1 Biogeographical or marine region where the habitat occurs	ATL
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3.2 Sources of information

See section 13 References

4. Range

4.1 Surface area (km ²)	300
4.2 Short-term trend; Period	2013-2024
4.3 Short-term trend; Direction	Stable
4.4 Short-term trend; Magnitude	

a) Estimated minimum

b) Estimated maximum

c) Pre-defined range

d) Unknown

e) Type of estimate

f) Rate of decrease

4.5 Short-term trend; Method used Complete survey or a statistically robust estimate

4.6 Long-term trend; Period

4.7 Long-term trend; Direction

4.8 Long-term trend; Magnitude

a) Minimum

b) Maximum

c) Rate of decrease

4.9 Long-term trend; Method used

4.10 Favourable Reference Range (FRR)

a) Area (km²)

b) Pre-defined increment Current range is less than 2% smaller than the FRR

c) Unknown No

d) Method used Reference-based approach

e) Quality of information moderate

4.11 Change and reason for change in surface area of range

a) Change No

b) Genuine change

c) Improved knowledge or more accurate data

d) Different method

e) No information

f) Other reason

g) Main reason

4.12 Additional information

No additional information

5. Area covered by habitat

5.1 Year or period 1996-2005

5.2 Surface area (km²)

a) Minimum

b) Maximum

c) Best single value 0.017

5.3 Type of estimate Best estimate

5.4 Surface area; Method used Complete survey or a statistically robust estimate

5.5 Short-term trend; Period 2005-2017

5.6 Short-term trend; Direction Stable

5.7 Short-term trend; Magnitude

a) Estimated minimum

b) Estimated maximum

c) Pre-defined range

d) Unknown

e) Type of estimate

f) Rate of decrease

5.8 Short-term trend; Method used Complete survey or a statistically robust estimate

5.9 Long-term trend; Period	1996-2016
5.10 Long-term trend; Direction	Stable
5.11 Long-term trend; Magnitude	
a) Minimum	
b) Maximum	
c) Confidence interval	
d) Rate of decrease	
5.12 Long-term trend; Method used	Complete survey or a statistically robust estimate
5.13 Favourable Reference Area (FRA)	
a) Area (km²)	
b) Pre-defined increment	Current area is less than 2% smaller than the FRA
c) Unknown	No
d) Method used	Reference-based approach
e) Quality of information	moderate
5.14 Change and reason for change in surface area of range	
a) Change	No
b) Genuine change	
c) Improved knowledge or more accurate data	
d) Different method	
e) No information	
f) Other reason	
g) Main reason	
5.15 Additional information	

No additional information

6. Structure and functions

6.1 Condition of habitat (km²)

Area in good condition

ai) Minimum	0.017
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aii) Maximum	0.017
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Area not in good condition

bi) Minimum	0
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bii) Maximum	0
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Area where condition is unknown

ci) Minimum	0
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cii) Maximum	0
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6.2 Condition of habitat; Method used	Complete survey or a statistically robust estimate
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6.3 Short-term trend of habitat area in good condition; Period	2005-2016
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6.4 Short-term trend of habitat area in good condition; Direction	Stable
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6.5 Short-term trend of habitat area in good condition; Method used	Complete survey or a statistically robust estimate
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6.6 Typical species

Has the list of typical species changed in comparison to the previous reporting period?	No
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6.7 Typical species; Method used

6.8 Additional information

Typical species were not used directly in the assessment of conservation status for habitat structure and function as a comprehensive list of typical species for each habitat was not available. However, the status of typical species was considered when the

condition of individual sites was assessed using Common Standards Monitoring Guidance. Common Standards Monitoring (CSM) data was used to assess the area of habitat in 'good' and 'not good' condition (field 6.1). Species were a component of the attributes assessed under CSM. Therefore, an assessment of species is considered to have formed part of the reporting under field 6.1 which supported the Habitats Structure and Function assessment (field 10.3).

7. Main pressures

7.1 Characterisation of pressures

Table 2: Pressures affecting the habitat, including timing and importance/impact ranking. Pressures are defined as factors acting currently and/or during the reporting period (2019–2024). Rankings are: High (direct/immediate influence and/or large spatial extent) and Medium (moderate direct/immediate influence, mainly indirect and/or regional extent).

Pressure	Timing	Ranking
PA07: Intensive grazing or overgrazing by livestock	Ongoing and likely to be in the future	Medium (M)
PK04: Atmospheric N-deposition	Ongoing and likely to be in the future	High (H)
PJ01: Temperature changes and extremes due to climate change	Ongoing and likely to be in the future	Medium (M)
PJ03: Changes in precipitation regimes due to climate change	Ongoing and likely to be in the future	Medium (M)
PJ10: Change of habitat location, size, and / or quality due to climate change	Only in future	Medium (M)

7.2 Sources of information

See section 13 References

7.3 Additional information

No additional information

8. Conservation measures

8.1: Status of measures

a) Are measures needed? Yes

b) Indicate the status of measures	Measures identified and taken
8.2 Main purpose of the measures taken	Maintain the current range, surface area or structure and functions of the habitat type
8.3 Location of the measures taken	Only inside National Site Network
8.4 Response to measures	Medium-term results (within the next two reporting periods, 2025–2036)

8.5 List of main conservation measures

Table 3: Key conservation measures addressing current pressures and/or anticipated threats during the next two reporting periods (2025–2036). Measures are ranked by importance/impact: High (direct/immediate influence and/or large spatial extent) and Medium (moderate direct/immediate influence, mainly indirect and/or regional extent).

Conservation measure	Ranking
MA05: Adapt mowing, grazing and other equivalent agricultural activities (e.g. burning)	Medium (M)
MF03: Reduce impact of outdoor sports, leisure and recreational activities (incl. restoration of habitats)	Medium (M)
MK01: Reduce impact of mixed source pollution	High (H)

8.6 Additional information

No additional information

9. Future prospects

9.1a Future trends of parameters

ai) Range	Overall stable
bi) Area	Overall stable
ci) Structure and functions	Very negative - important deterioration

9.1b Future prospects of parameters

aii) Range	Good
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bii) Area	Good
cii) Structure and functions	Bad

9.2 Additional information

No additional information

10. Conclusions

10.1 Range	Favourable (FV)
10.2 Area	Favourable (FV)
10.3 Specific structure and functions (incl. typical species)	Favourable (FV)
10.4 Future prospects	Unfavourable-bad (U2)
10.5 Overall assessment of Conservation Status	Unfavourable-bad (U2)
10.6 Overall trend in Conservation Status	Stable

10.7 Change and reason for change in conservation status

This field is not reported as the period 2019-2024 marks the first instance in which conservation status has been assessed at the national level, meaning no comparisons to previous reports can be drawn.

10.7 Change and reason for change in conservation status trend

This field is not reported as the period 2019-2024 marks the first instance in which conservation status has been assessed at the national level, meaning no comparisons to previous reports can be drawn.

10.8 Additional information

No additional information

11. UK National Site Network (pSCIs, SCIs, SACs) coverage for Annex I habitat types

11.1 Surface area of the habitat type inside the pSCIs, SCIs and SACs network (km²)

a) Minimum

b) Maximum

c) Best single value 0.017

11.2 Type of estimate Best estimate

11.3 Habitat area inside the network; Method used Complete survey or a statistically robust estimate

11.4 Short-term trend of habitat area within the network; Direction Stable

11.5 Short-term trend of habitat area within the network; Method used Complete survey or a statistically robust estimate

11.6 Short-term trend of habitat area in good condition within the network; Direction Stable

11.7 Short-term trend of habitat area in good condition within the network; Method used Complete survey or a statistically robust estimate

11.8 Additional information

No additional information

12. Complementary information

12.1 Justification of percentage thresholds for trends

No justification information

12.2 Other relevant information

No other relevant information

13. References

Biogeographical and marine regions

3.2 Sources of information

- Averis, A., 2002. Vegetation survey of the eastern part of the Carneddau SSSI and cSAC, Conwy, Summer 2001. CCW Science Report 535.
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Welsh Government. 2024a. The Clean Air Plan for Wales 2024. Available from: <https://www.gov.wales/clean-air-plan-wales-healthy-air-healthy-wales>

Welsh Government. 2024b. The Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) (Wales) Act 2024. Available from: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asc/2024/2/contents>

Main pressures

7.2 Sources of information

No sources of information

14. Explanatory Notes

Field label	Note
2.3: Distribution map; Method used	<p>The distribution (and extent) is based on the results of three individual National Vegetation Classification (NVC) (Rodwell (ed.), 1992) surveys: Turner, unpublished a; Turner, unpublished b; Averis, 2002.</p> <p>These surveys include all known stands of NVC CG12 and CG14 of any size in Wales. A GIS-based inventory for the habitat was produced using these data sources (Stevens & Smith, 2012). In the absence of any more recent survey information, these data are considered to accurately reflect the current distribution of the habitat, which, in Wales, is not thought to occur outside of northern Snowdonia.</p> <p>Although the underpinning habitat survey work was conducted before 2007, the continued presence of the habitat within the individual 10km grid squares was confirmed during SAC monitoring in 2011 and 2016 (Surry, 2012; Harrison, 2017) and the overall distribution map is considered to probably be still accurate.</p> <p>Six localities for the habitat within Eryri SAC are marked by point locations – each of these is thought to be very small in extent.</p>
4.3: Short-term trend; Direction	See 4.11
4.11: Change and reason for change in surface area of range	There has been no additional survey in the intervening period and no reported changes to range during SAC monitoring in the last reporting round.
5.3: Type of estimate	<p>The extent is based on the results of three individual NVC (Rodwell, 1992) surveys: Turner, unpublished a; Turner, unpublished b; Averis, 2002.</p> <p>These surveys include all known stands of NVC CG12 and CG14 of any size in Wales. A GIS-based inventory for the habitat was produced using these data sources (Stevens &</p>

	<p>Smith, 2012). These data are considered likely to reflect the current extent of the habitat, albeit there being a lack of recent extent data. Although there are six additional localities for the habitat within Eryri SAC marked only by point locations, each of these is considered to be very small in extent.</p> <p>Although the underpinning habitat survey work was conducted before 2007, no changes in extent were recorded during SAC monitoring in 2011 and 2016 (Surry, 2012; Harrison, 2017). There has been no monitoring of the habitat in the current reporting round.</p>
5.5: Short-term trend; Period	The intervening dates between the past three monitoring visits (no visit in the current reporting round).
5.8: Short-term trend; Method used	All of the H6170 habitat in Wales falls within Eryri SAC and was monitored in 2005, 2011 and 2016 (Lewis, 2005; Surry, 2012; Harrison, 2017). Monitoring included the principal stands of the habitat. No changes in the extent of any habitat patches have been recorded between monitoring cycles, although the full extent of the habitat is not assessed during monitoring due to its fragmentary nature. No additional monitoring has taken place in the current reporting round.
5.9: Long-term trend; Period	The dates between the original survey work and the last monitoring.
5.12: Long-term trend; Method used	All of the habitat in Wales falls within Eryri SAC. Monitoring of the habitat in Eryri SAC was undertaken in 2005, 2011 and 2016 (Lewis, 2005; Surry, 2012; Harrison, 2017). The monitoring included the principal stands of the habitat. No changes in the extent of any habitat patches have been recorded since the original surveys (Turner, unpublished a; Turner, unpublished b; Averis, 2002) or between monitoring cycles, although the full extent of the habitat is not assessed during monitoring due to its fragmentary nature and there has been no monitoring in the current reporting round.

5.14: Change and reason for change in surface area	There has been no additional survey in the intervening period and no reported changes to extent during SAC monitoring.
6.2: Condition of habitat; Method used	<p>Assessment of structure and function is based on the results of common standards monitoring (JNCC, 2004) undertaken in Eryri SAC in 2011 (Surry, 2012) and 2016 (Harrison, 2017). Both reports concluded that the habitat was in favourable condition overall. Although previous monitoring results (Lewis, 2005) reported unfavourable condition for the habitat, Surry (2012) considered that this was largely due to non-representative sampling and that it was not possible to conclude that there had been a significant change in condition between 2005 and 2011.</p> <p>Eryri SAC has 100% of the habitat extent in Wales.</p>
6.3: Short-term trend of habitat area in good condition; Period	These are the years between the most recent three monitoring visits covering Eryri SAC (Lewis, 2005; Surry, 2012; Harrison, 2017).
6.5: Short-term trend of habitat area in good condition; Method used	See 6.2
7.1: Characterisation of pressures	<p>Information on pressures and threats was largely taken from conclusions in the SAC monitoring reports (Lewis, 2005; Surry, 2012; Harrison 2017), supplemented by interrogation of data held in NRW's Special Sites Actions Database (NRW, 2017), which provided information on 'issues' affecting habitats and species within the protected sites series in Wales (NRW, 2018). NRW's current sites database SAFLE (NRW, 2024) was interrogated for any more recently reported issues.</p> <p>Two pressures were identified as relevant to the habitat from interrogation of the Actions Database: over-grazing (PA07) and recreation (PF05). Interrogation of SAFLE identified only overgrazing as an issue, on just one management unit. Grazing by sheep was noted as having a negative impact on the habitat by Lewis (2005), but Surry (2012) concluded that there was no evidence of high</p>

grazing pressure to stands of the habitat accessible to sheep. However, three of the six management units with the habitat were noted as having problems with feral goats, which are known to access and graze ledge vegetation; PA07 is therefore given a Medium ranking.

PF05 is limited to human trampling (desire lines), but these cover only a very small part of the feature (Surry, 2012), so PF05 is given Low ranking.

PI02 invasive non-natives is given a low ranking. This refers to *Epilobium brunnescens*, which occurs in some stands of the habitat, but overall at less than 1% cover (Surry, 2012; Harrison, 2017).

No change in the threat level from over-grazing, trampling and invasive non-native species is anticipated in the foreseeable future. Interrogation of data from SAFLE suggests that actions to deal with goat grazing are continuing.

A critical load level of 5 kg ha/year (lower level) of atmospheric nitrogen has been formally allocated to this habitat. Air pollution (N deposition) (PK04) is assessed separately using the agreed approach, using updated deposition data. Using a data overlay method in ARC GIS (2024), 100% of the habitat by area (polygon data) was recorded at or above the lower Critical Load limit and the habitat is given a High ranking.

Montane habitats are listed as having high sensitivity to climate change (Staddon et al., 2023) (PJ01, PJ03, PJ10). As the condition of the habitat is currently considered favourable (Harrison, 2017), these are given Medium rather than High ranking as pressures. PK01: Arctic alpine species are adapted to low temperatures and short growing seasons and could be particularly susceptible to increased levels of competition caused by higher temperatures (Natural England & RSPB, 2014). PJ10: Decline in quality

	<p>or character of the habitat would occur if key arctic-alpine plants were to decline. Some arctic-alpine species are at their southern British limits in Wales. PJ03: Increased or decreased rainfall levels could also adversely affect arctic species (Mitchell et al., 2007; Natural England & RSPB, 2014; Staddon et al., 2023).</p>
8.5: List of main conservation measures	<p>Using data from the Actions Database (NRW, 2017), 100% of Actions relevant to the habitat were listed as either Identified, Underway or Completed. In SAFLE (NRW, 2024), the only flagged issue affecting the habitat is listed as underway. As 100% of the habitat falls within statutory sites, it is concluded that all Conservation Measures directed at site management are therefore identified or taken and should be having an impact or have an impact in the next 12 years.</p> <p>NRWs Actions Database (NRW, 2017) listed 6 management units with H6170 as a key or compatible feature, containing a total of 17 actions; 53% of these were expected to have a positive impact on the habitat over the following 12 years (Actions listed as Completed, Underway, Planned or Agreed in principle).</p> <p>Two categories of action/measures are recorded: MA05, aimed at reducing grazing management, and MF03, aimed at combating/preventing recreational damage. Both of these were listed for 67% of management units in the Actions Database.</p> <p>MA05: Almost the whole habitat area in Wales was covered by a Glastir Advanced option aimed at good or improved grazing management of livestock when this was assessed in 2018, but in 2020-23 none of the habitat was covered by a relevant Glastir Advanced option.</p> <p>Thematic Action Plans have been produced for SACs; these provide priorities for each theme.</p> <p>MK01: There are various air quality strategies and</p>

initiatives in place to protect and enhance biodiversity. Air quality limit values set out in the Air Quality Strategy (AQS) are transposed into national legislation by the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2010. Nitrogen deposition continues to impact semi-natural habitats in Wales. These regulations are not habitat-specific, however with introduction of The Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) (Wales) Act 2024 in Wales, brings in new national targets for air quality pollutants, with the potential of directly influencing habitat protection.

This key legislative advancement requires mandatory targets for fine particulate matter less than 2.5 micrometers in diameter (PM_{2.5}) to be established by February 2027, including new powers for Welsh Ministers to set pollutant-specific targets in future years (e.g., ammonia, nitrogen dioxide) linked to biodiversity outcomes, potentially enabling future habitat-sensitive thresholds.

Welsh Government have also introduced The Agriculture (Wales) Act in 2023. It aims to establish a framework of Sustainable Land Management (SLM) objectives to underpin agricultural support, including the Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS). The Act provides Welsh Ministers with the power to provide support (financial or otherwise) for or in connection with 15 purposes, including 'Improving air quality'. Welsh Government published a consultation on the SFS which closed in March 2024. Welsh Ministers will not be making final scheme design decisions until further stakeholder work is undertaken.

9.1:Future trends and prospects of parameters

Range:

Climate change and atmospheric pollution represent long term threats to the altitudinal and geographic range of the habitat in Wales. However, other factors appear largely under control and in the shorter term the habitats range is expected to remain stable.

Area:

The evidence from monitoring of Eryri SAC suggests the habitat has been stable in area over at least the previous two monitoring rounds, although no monitoring has taken place in the current round (see 5.3). This site supports 100% of the habitat in Wales.

Site management factors appear to be under control or having low impact on extent, although the long-term effects of atmospheric pollution and climate change are unclear. An inability to migrate is a major factor in the sensitivity of montane habitats to climate change (Staddon et al., 2023), meaning that the assessment of future prospects in area as 'good' must be tentative.

Structure & function:

The evidence from monitoring of Eryri SAC suggests the habitat has been in favourable condition over the previous two monitoring rounds, with no assessment in the current round (see 5.3). This site supports 100% of the habitat in Wales.

Site management factors appear to be under control or having low impact on condition. However, ongoing exceedance of critical loads for nitrogen deposition, likely exacerbated by the adverse impacts of climate change, represent threats that are not currently addressed by existing management measures and are likely to have a negative impact on the habitats structure and function in the future.

The Future prospects for Structure and functions takes into account that at least 25% of the habitat area is expected to be in unfavourable (not good) condition in c.2035 due to nutrient N critical load exceedance, unless additional measures are taken to reduce N deposition impacts.

10.1: Range

Conclusion on Range reached because: (i) the short-term trend direction in Range surface area is stable; and (ii) the

	current Range surface area is approximately equal to the Favourable Reference Range.
10.2: Area	Conclusion on Area reached because:(i) the short-term trend direction in Area is stable; (ii) the current Area is approximately equal to the Favourable Reference Area; and iii) there is no evidence of significant change in distribution pattern within range.
10.3: Specific structure and functions	Conclusion on Structure and function reached because habitat condition data indicates that less than c.5% of the habitat is in unfavourable (not good) condition.
10.4: Future prospects	Conclusion on Future prospects reached because: (i) the Future prospects for Range are good; (ii) the Future prospects for Area covered by habitat are good; and (iii) the Future prospects for Structure and function are bad.
10.5: Overall assessment of Conservation Status	Overall assessment of Conservation Status is Unfavourable-bad because one or more of the conclusions are Unfavourable-bad.
11.5: Short-term trend of habitat area within the network; Method used	Monitoring of the habitat on Eryri SAC took place in 2005, 2011 and 2016 (Lewis, 2005; Surry, 2012; Harrison, 2017), but there has been no monitoring in the current reporting round. The SAC holds 100% of the habitat extent within Wales.
11.7: Short-term trend of habitat area in good condition within the network; Method used	A stable assessment is given based on the previous three monitoring visits, although no visit occurred within the current reporting period.
5.13: Favourable Reference Area (FRA)	The UK-level FRV for surface area was developed by JNCC using an audit trail based on the year the FRV was first established and any changes made in subsequent reporting rounds. The audit may draw from any combination of the 2007, 2013, or 2019 Habitats Directive reports and reflects the full rationale used for the 2019 Article 17 reporting. This FRV was reviewed by Welsh experts and considered appropriate for use in Wales based on current habitat extent and trends.

4.10: Favourable
Reference Range
(FRR)

The UK-level FRV for range was developed by JNCC using an audit trail based on the year the FRV was first established and any changes made in subsequent reporting rounds. The audit may draw from any combination of the 2007, 2013, or 2019 Habitats Directive reports and reflects the full rationale used for the 2019 Article 17 reporting. This FRV was reviewed by Welsh experts and considered appropriate for use in Wales based on current distribution and trends.