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

2019-2024

Conservation status assessment for the species:

S1409 - Bog-mosses

(*Sphagnum* spp.)

Wales

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Important note - Please read

- The information in this document represents the 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 species 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 species (section 12 National Site Network coverage for Annex II species).

Further details on the approach to the Habitats Regulations Reporting 2019-2024 are available on the JNCC website.

Assessment Summary: Bog-mosses

Distribution Map

Range Map

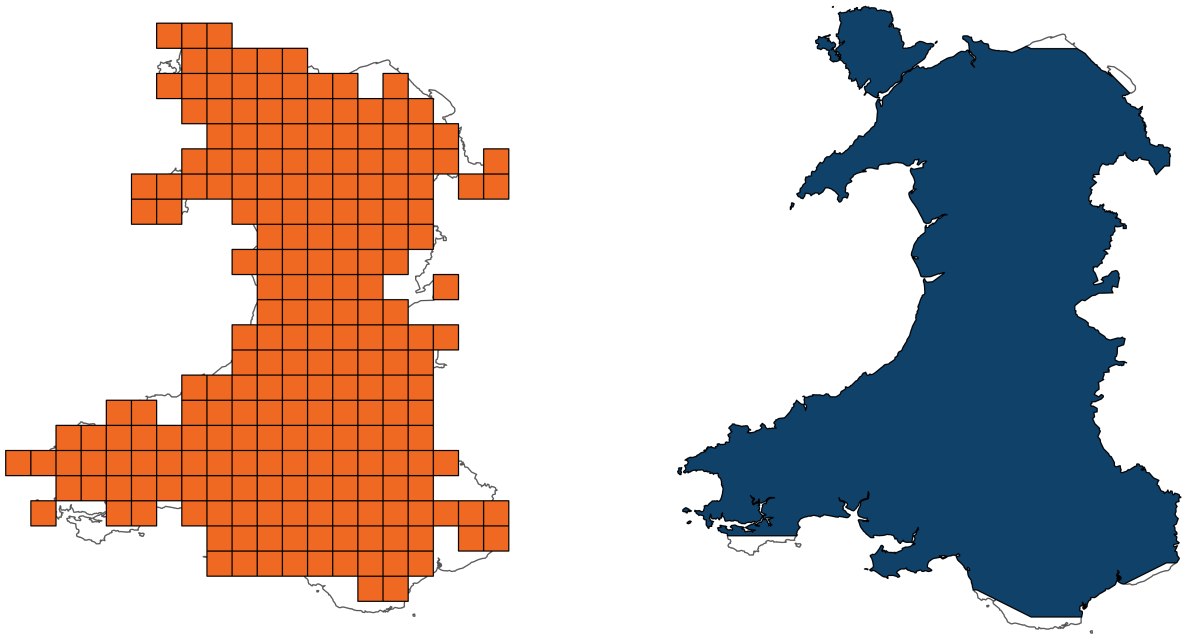

Figure 1: Wales distribution and range map for S1409 - Bog-mosses (*Sphagnum* spp.). Coastline boundary derived from the Oil and Gas Authority's OGA and Lloyd's Register SNS Regional Geological Maps (Open Source). Open Government Licence v3 (OGL). Contains data © 2017 Oil and Gas Authority. The 10km grid square distribution map is based on available species records within the current reporting period.

Table 1: Table summarising the conservation status for S1409 - Bog-mosses (*Sphagnum* spp.). Overall conservation status for species is based on assessments of range, population, habitat for the species, and future prospects.

Overall Conservation Status (see section 11)

Unfavourable-inadequate (U1)

Breakdown of Overall Conservation Status

Range (see section 5)	**Favourable (FV)**
Population (see section 6)	**Unfavourable-inadequate (U1)**
Habitat for the species (see section 7)	**Unfavourable-inadequate (U1)**
Future prospects (see section 10)	**Unfavourable-inadequate (U1)**

List of Sections

National Level

1. General information

1.1 Country	Wales
1.2 Species code	S1409
1.3 Species scientific name	*Sphagnum* spp.
1.4 Alternative species scientific name	
1.5 Common name	Bog-mosses
Annex(es)	V

2. Maps

2.1 Sensitive species	No
2.2 Year or period	2000-2024
2.3 Distribution map	Yes
2.4 Distribution map; Method used	Based mainly on extrapolation from a limited amount of data

2.5 Additional information

No additional information

3. Information related to Annex V Species

3.1 Is the species taken in the wild / exploited?	Yes

3.2 What measures have been taken?

a) Regulations regarding access to property	Yes
b) Temporary or local prohibition on the taking of specimens in the wild and exploitation	Yes
c) Regulation of the periods and/or methods of taking specimens	No
d) Application of hunting and fishing rules which take account of the conservation of such populations	No

e) Establishment of a system of licences for taking specimens or of quotas	No
f) Regulation of the purchase, sale, offering for sale, keeping for sale, or transport for sale of specimens	No
g) Breeding in captivity of animal species as well as artificial propagation of plant species	No
Other measures	
Other measures description	

3.3: Hunting bag or quantity taken in the wild for Mammals and Acipenseridae (Fish)

a) Unit No unit - not reported

Table 2: Quantity taken from the wild during the reporting period (see 3.3a for units). For species with defined hunting seasons, Season 1 refers to 2018/2019 (autumn 2018 to spring 2019), and Season 6 to 2023/2024. For species without hunting seasons, data are reported by calendar year: Year 1 is 2019, and Year 6 is 2024.

	Season/ year 1	Season/ year 2	Season/ year 3	Season/ year 4	Season/ year 5	Season/ year 6
b) Minimum	-	-	-	-	-	-
c) Maximum	-	-	-	-	-	-
d) Unknown	-	-	-	-	-	-

3.4: Hunting bag or quantity taken in the wild; Method used

3.5: Additional information

No additional information

Biogeographical Level

4. Biogeographical and marine regions

4.1 Biogeographical or marine region where the species occurs ATL

4.2 Sources of information

See section 14 References

5. Range

5.1 Surface area (km²)	20,452.23
5.2 Short-term trend; Period	2013-2024
5.3 Short-term trend; Direction	Stable
5.4 Short-term trend; Magnitude	
a) Estimated minimum	
b) Estimated maximum	
c) Pre-defined range	
d) Unknown	No
e) Type of estimate	Best estimate
f) Rate of decrease	
5.5 Short-term trend; Method used	Based mainly on extrapolation from a limited amount of data
5.6 Long-term trend; Period	2001-2024
5.7 Long-term trend; Direction	Stable
5.8 Long-term trend; Magnitude	
a) Minimum	
b) Maximum	
c) Rate of decrease	Decreasing <=1% (one percent or less) per year on average

5.9 Long-term trend; Method used	Based mainly on extrapolation from a limited amount of data

5.10 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

5.11 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	

5.12 Additional information

No additional information

6. Population

6.1 Year or period	2000-2024

6.2 Population size (in reporting unit)

a) Unit	number of map 10x10 km grid cells
b) Minimum	197
c) Maximum	231

d) Best single value	224
6.3 Type of estimate	Best estimate
6.4 Quality of extrapolation to reporting unit	moderate

6.5 Additional population size (using population unit other than reporting unit)

a) Unit	
b) Minimum	
c) Maximum	
d) Best single value	
e) Type of estimate	
6.6 Population size; Method used	Based mainly on extrapolation from a limited amount of data
6.7 Short-term trend; Period	2013-2024
6.8 Short-term trend; Direction	Decreasing
6.9 Short-term trend; Magnitude	
a) Estimated minimum	
b) Estimated maximum	
c) Pre-defined range	Decreasing 0 - 12%
d) Unknown	No
e) Type of estimate	Pre-defined range
f) Rate of decrease	Decreasing <=1% (one percent or less) per year on average
6.10 Short-term trend; Method used	Based mainly on expert opinion with very limited data
6.11 Long-term trend; Period	2001-2024
6.12 Long-term trend; Direction	Decreasing

6.13 Long-term trend; Magnitude	
a) Minimum	
b) Maximum	
c) Confidence interval	
d) Rate of decrease	Decreasing <=1% (one percent or less) per year on average
6.14 Long-term trend; Method used	Based mainly on expert opinion with very limited data

6.15 Favourable Reference Population (FRP)

ai) Population size	
aii) Unit	
b) Pre-defined increment	Current population is less than 5% smaller than the FRP
c) Unknown	No
d) Method used	Reference-based approach
e) Quality of information	moderate

6.16 Change and reason for change in population size

a) Change	Yes
b) Genuine change	No
c) Improved knowledge or more accurate data	No
d) Different method	Yes
e) No information	No
f) Other reason	No
g) Main reason	Use of different method

6.17 Additional information

No additional information

6.18 Age structure, mortality and reproduction deviation	Yes, but not strongly deviating from normal

7. Habitat for the species

7.1 Sufficiency of area and quality of occupied habitat (for long-term survival)

a) Is area of occupied habitat sufficient?	Yes
b) Is quality of occupied habitat sufficient?	No
c) If No or Unknown, is there a sufficiently large area of unoccupied habitat of suitable quality?	No

7.2 Sufficiency of area and quality of occupied habitat; Method used

a) Sufficiency of area of occupied habitat; Method used	Based mainly on extrapolation from a limited amount of data
b) Sufficiency of quality of occupied habitat; Method used	Based mainly on extrapolation from a limited amount of data
7.3 Short-term trend; Period	2013-2024
7.4 Short-term trend; Direction	Decreasing
7.5 Short-term trend; Method used	Based mainly on expert opinion with very limited data
7.6 Long-term trend; Period	2001-2024
7.7 Long-term trend; Direction	Decreasing
7.8 Long-term trend; Method used	

7.9 Additional information

No additional information

8. Main pressures

8.1 Characterisation of pressures

Table 3: Pressures affecting the species, 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
PA05: Abandonment of management/use of grasslands and other agricultural and agroforestry systems (e.g. cessation of grazing, mowing or traditional farming)	Ongoing and likely to be in the future	High (H)
PA07: Intensive grazing or overgrazing by livestock	Ongoing and likely to be in the future	Medium (M)
PA08: Extensive grazing or undergrazing by livestock	Ongoing and likely to be in the future	Medium (M)
PA09: Burning for agriculture	Ongoing and likely to be in the future	High (H)
PA17: Agricultural activities generating pollution to surface or ground waters (including marine)	Ongoing and likely to be in the future	High (H)
PA18: Agricultural activities generating air pollution	Ongoing and likely to be in the future	High (H)
PB01: Conversion to forest from other land uses, or afforestation (excluding drainage)	Ongoing and likely to be in the future	Medium (M)
PC05: Peat extraction	In the past but now suspended due to measures	Medium (M)
PE06: Land, water and air transport activities generating air pollution	Ongoing and likely to be in the future	Medium (M)
PF09: Residential, commercial and industrial activities and structures generating air pollution	Ongoing and likely to be in the future	High (H)
PJ10: Change of habitat location, size, and / or quality due to climate change	Only in future	Medium (M)
PL02: Drainage (mixed or unknown drivers)	Ongoing and likely to be in the future	High (H)

8.2 Sources of information

See section 14 References

8.3 Additional information

No additional information

9. Conservation measures

9.1: Status of measures

a) Are measures needed?	Yes
b) Indicate the status of measures	Measures identified and taken
9.2 Main purpose of the measures taken	Restore the habitat of the species (related to 'Habitat for the species')
9.3 Location of the measures taken	Both inside and outside National Site Network
9.4 Response to measures	Medium-term results (within the next two reporting periods, 2025–2036)

9.5 List of main conservation measures

Table 4: 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
MA01: Prevent conversion of natural and semi-natural habitats, and habitats of species into agricultural land	High (H)
MA04: Reinstate appropriate agricultural practices to address abandonment, including mowing, grazing, burning or equivalent measures	Medium (M)
MA11: Reduce/eliminate air pollution from agricultural activities	High (H)
MA13: Manage agricultural drainage and water abstraction (incl. the restoration of drained or hydrologically altered habitats)	High (H)
MB01: Prevent conversion of (semi-) natural habitats into forests and of (semi-) natural forests into intensive forest plantation	High (H)

MC03: Adapt/manage renewable energy installation, facilities and operation (excl. hydropower and abstraction activities)	Medium (M)
MF05: Reduce/eliminate air pollution from industrial, commercial, residential and recreational areas and activities	High (H)

9.6 Additional information

No additional information

10. Future prospects

10.1a Future trends of parameters

ai) Range	Overall stable
bi) Population	Negative - decreasing <=1% (one percent or less) per year on average
ci) Habitat for the species	Negative - slight/moderate deterioration

10.1b Future prospects of parameters

aii) Range	Good
bii) Population	Poor
cii) Habitat for the species	Poor

10.2 Additional information

No additional information

11. Conclusions

11.1 Range	Favourable (FV)
11.2 Population	Unfavourable-inadequate (U1)
11.3 Habitat for the species	Unfavourable-inadequate (U1)
11.4 Future prospects	Unfavourable-inadequate (U1)
11.5 Overall assessment of Conservation Status	Unfavourable-inadequate (U1)

11.6 Overall trend in Conservation Status	Deteriorating

11.7 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.

11.7 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.

11.8 Additional information

No additional information

12. UK National Site Network (pSCIs, SCIs, SACs) coverage for Annex II species

12.1 Population size inside the pSCIs, SCIs and SACs network

a) Unit	
b) Minimum	
c) Maximum	
d) Best single value	
12.2 Type of estimate	
12.3 Population size inside the network; Method used	
12.4 Short-term trend of population size within the network; Direction	
12.5 Short-term trend of population size within the network; Method used	

12.6 Short-term trend of habitat for the species inside the pSCIs, SCIs and SACs network; Direction

12.7 Short-term trend of habitat for the species inside the pSCIs, SCIs and SACs network; Method used

12.8 Additional information

No additional information

13. Complementary information

13.1 Justification of percentage thresholds for trends

No justification information

13.2 Trans-boundary assessment

Some of the air pollution affecting Sphagnum and the habitats that it occupies is derived from outside Wales, both from England and the EU (Nitrogen Futures, 2022). However, direct habitat damage and agricultural pollution are the primary pressures on the species and both can be controlled within Wales.

13.2 Other relevant information

No other relevant information

14. References

Biogeographical and marine regions

4.2 Sources of information

APIS. 2025. Ammonia:Bogs. https://www.apis.ac.uk/node/866 [Accessed 4th February 2025]

Blockeel, T.L., Bosanquet, S.D.S., Hill, M.O. & Preston, C.D., 2014, Atlas of British and Irish bryophytes. Pisces Publications, Newbury.

British Bryological Society database, accessed 19th June 2024.

Mellasjungle. 2025. https://www.mellasjungle.com/product-page/ [Accessed 6th February 2025]

Nitrogen Futures. 2022. https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/nitrogen-futures/

project-outputs [Accessed 4th February 2025]

NRW. 2024. New LIFE for Welsh Raised Bogs. https://naturalresources.wales/about-us/what-we-do/our-projects/our-nature-projects/new-life-for-welsh-raised-bogs [Accessed 6th February 2025]

Wong J.L.G., Dickinson B.G. & Thorogood A., 2016, Assessing the scale of Sphagnum moss collection from Wales. NRW Evidence Reports. Report No 185, 38pp, Natural Resources Wales,Bangor.

Main pressures

8.2 Sources of information

No sources of information

15. Explanatory Notes

Field label	Note
2.4: Distribution map; Method used	Coverage of Wales by bryophyte recorders has been as complete as possible, but many 10x10 km squares will not have been surveyed since before 2000, so the map is no more than a best estimate. No attempt was made to produce a predictive map, for example by reference to habitat data layers. The distribution map is based on the British Bryological Society dataset, and includes all 10km squares with records since 1990 included, whilst seven 10 km squares with records only from pre-1990 are considered potentially unlikely to hold Sphagnum have not been included.
3.1: Is the species taken in the wild/ exploited	There are restrictions on moss harvesting on the Welsh Government Woodland Estate, but no restrictions on private land except within Sites of Special Scientific Interest.
3.2: Which of the measures in Art. 9a have been taken?	Sphagnum mosses are harvested on a commercial scale in parts of mid and north Wales. Wong et al (2016) interviewed moss harvesters who collect moss from recently planted woodlands in upland Wales. They report an estimate of “between 30,000 and 40,000 bags per year, representing possibly 400 tonnes of damp moss.” However, Sphagnum was seldom the target species in harvesting and “Sphagnum species perhaps account for a few percent of the total moss removed from Wales.” Welsh moss is sold in some garden centres and is also advertised for sale online (e.g. MellasJungle (2025)), with its sustainable, Welsh origin being mentioned prominently. Even this commercial harvesting is considered unlikely to impact on the overall distribution of Sphagnum in Wales, especially when compared with other Pressures, although it does affect Sphagnum abundance locally.
5.11: Change and reason for change in surface area of range	Data suggest that the overall Range of Sphagnum in Wales has not changed significantly in the last 20 years. 197 of the 231 10x10 km squares from which Sphagnum has been recorded in Wales are represented by post-2000 records,

	whilst 27 with records only from the 1990s are in areas of north Wales that are bryologically under-recorded and there is no reason to expect loss of Sphagnum from those squares. There are, however, seven squares on the periphery of the Welsh range of Sphagnum that are only represented by pre-1990 records, and it is possible that these squares have genuinely lost Sphagnum.
6.1: Year or Period	The distribution map represents the population in the current reporting period (2019-2024) but also includes records made between 2000 and 2018 because it is considered likely that most populations recorded in the early 2000s are still present and that a map based solely on records made between 2019 and 2024 would very significantly under-represent the population.
6.2: Population size	The distribution map is based on NBN Gateway data and includes all records of Sphagnum from Wales made since 1970. 10 km squares that only have records of Sphagnum made before 1990 have not been included: there is a reasonable chance that they have genuinely lost Sphagnum. 10 km squares with records of Sphagnum made in the 1990s are strongly concentrated in north-west and north-east Wales and there is no reason why those areas would have suffered more Sphagnum loss than southern Wales: these 27 squares have been included on the map. The largest possible population is 231 squares, if even the pre-1990 records represent extant colonies, whilst the smallest plausible population is the 197 squares with post-2000 records; the best single value for population size is 224 10x10 km squares, which includes all post-1990 records.
6.14: Long-term trend; Method used	There is no strong evidence to indicate a decline in the number of occupied 10x10 km squares in Wales for Sphagnum, but the pressures listed in 8.1 make it reasonable to assume that there has been an overall very slight decrease. However, it is considered unlikely (expert opinion based on field experience) that any decrease has led to loss of Sphagnum from a 10x10 km square since

	2000, merely from some sites within some 10x10 km squares.
6.16: Change and reason for change in population size	Differences in recorded squares between reporting periods is believed (expert opinion based on extensive fieldwork in Wales over 24 years) to be the result of differences in recorder coverage rather than any genuine change. It is questionable whether this really is the use of a different method, or just the same method (bryophyte recording in a semi-random subset of Welsh 10x10 km squares) applied in different periods and targeting different subsets of squares.
6.18: Age structure, mortality and reproduction	Mortality is slightly deviating from normal in some areas because of air pollution and other Pressures. There is no indication that reproduction – which varies substantially between different Sphagnum species anyway – or age structure are deviating at all.
7.2: Sufficiency of area and quality of occupied habitat; Methods used	There is probably enough wet heath, bog, mire and Atlantic woodland habitat in Wales to support a Favourable population of Sphagnum, but there are pressures on these habitats that mean their quality is probably not good enough.
7.4: Short-term trend; Direction	The Wales Lowland Peatland Survey shows that there has been some loss of heathland and peatland habitats in Wales since 2001 due to the pressures listed in 8.1, and also some deterioration in quality of those habitats due to air pollution and dereliction. Decreases in the habitat for Sphagnum are therefore assumed, although the scale of those decreases is largely unknown.
8.1: Characterisation of pressures	Grazing (PA07 & PA08) and burning (PA09) are the main current drivers of Sphagnum population in all major habitats. Abandonment through loss of grazing (PA05) and conversion of land to forestry (PB01) and housing (PF01) are also a significant pressures. Ammonia (PA18) and N (PE06 & PF09) pollution are also considered to be significant pressures (Air Pollution Information System (APIS) http://www.apis.ac.uk/node/866), whilst diffuse water pollution affects some Sphagnum mires (PA17). Peat extraction (PC05) is reducing in Northern Ireland and parts

	of England and Wales, but continues to cause very significant damage to Sphagnum habitats locally. Opencast coal mining (PC04) in Wales has destroyed some Sphagnum sites, and threatens more, and some infrastructure from renewable energy projects (PD01) has also caused local damage. Drainage (PL02) is an ongoing local pressure, especially in bog ecosystems. Although some Sphagnum is collected during moss harvesting (PG10), this is believed to be a minor pressure.
9.5: List of main conservation measures	Measures to prevent loss of Priority Habitats that support Sphagnum (MA01, MB01, MC03) are written into UK and Welsh legislation and without them the habitat for the species could be severely impacted. Measures to reduce air pollution from industry (MF05) are working to some extent, whilst measures to reduce air pollution from agriculture (MA11) are planned as part of the Sustainable Farming Scheme and are urgently needed to prevent ongoing damage to Sphagnum habitats both close to farms and more remotely through 'wet deposition' of N compounds (APIS, 2025). Some measures to reinstate grazing (MA04) and reverse the impacts of peatland drainage (MA13) will be having localised positive impacts, for example as part of the LIFE Welsh Raised Bogs project (NRW, 2024). Measures to reduce N pollution from transport (ME03) might have some localised positive impacts on Sphagnum.
10.1: Future trends and prospects of parameters	There is limited commercial harvesting of Sphagnum in Wales, but there are significant pressures on the species group and its habitat. Evidence for damage to Sphagnum from air pollution is robust, but confidence over whether Measures will actually control that air pollution is moderate at best (Nitrogen Futures, 2022). Theoretically, Measures to control direct damage to peatland and heathland will prevent some losses and air pollution remains the primary threat.
11.1: 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.
11.2: Population	Conclusion on Population reached because:(i) the short-term trend direction in Population size is decreasing by 1% per year or less; (ii) the current Population size is approximately equal to the Favourable Reference Population; and iii) reproduction, mortality and age structure not strongly deviating from normal.
11.3: Habitat for the species	Conclusion on Habitat for the species reached because: i) the area of occupied habitat is sufficiently large for the long-term survival of the species (ii) the quality of occupied habitat is not suitable for the long-term survival of the species; and iii) there is a not a sufficiently large area of occupied and unoccupied habitat of suitable quality for long term survival (iv) the short-term trend in area of habitat is decreasing; and v) expert opinion determines that the habitat quality of occupied and unoccupied habitat is not bad; and vi) expert opinion determines that the habitat area is insufficient, but not clearly so.
11.4: Future prospects	Conclusion on Future prospects reached because: (i) the Future prospects for Range are good; (ii) the Future prospects for Population are poor; and (iii) the Future prospects for Habitat for the species are poor.
11.5: Overall assessment of Conservation Status	Overall assessment of Conservation Status is Unfavourable-inadequate because three of the conclusion conclusions are Unfavourable-inadequate.
6.15: Favourable Reference Population (FRP)	The UK-level FRV for population 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 population trends and abundance.

5.10: 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.