

Guidance for UK BAP Priority Species and Habitats Review

Stage 1/2

TERRESTRIAL AND FRESHWATER HABITATS

APRIL 2005



**Guidance for UK BAP Priority Species and Habitats Review – Stage 1
TERRESTRIAL AND FRESHWATER HABITATS**

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Appendix A : details of ‘gaps’ review 1999-2001

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This information note explains the purpose and process of the Review of UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority species and habitats. The principal aim of the review is to ensure that the UK BAP remains focussed on the correct priorities for action, and that all specialists and interested parties are invited to contribute. This note explains how you can get involved, what is required and sets out the review timetable. The review is being coordinated by the Biodiversity Reporting and Information Group (BRIG), in association with the Review of Marine Nature Conservation and JNCC's Species Status Assessment programme, on behalf of the UK Biodiversity Partnership's Standing Committee.

This review of UK BAP priority marine, terrestrial and freshwater species and habitats is divided into three stages, of which the first only is set out in detail in this guidance note. Stage 1 uses scientific criteria to produce a candidate list of potential priority species and habitats. Subsequent stages will investigate what can be done to conserve these species and habitats and examine the best ways to achieve results. This note introduces the entire review but only gives full details for Stage 1 for terrestrial and freshwater habitats. Equivalent guidance notes exist that give complete details of the review processes for terrestrial and freshwater species and for marine species and habitats. To obtain these other guidance notes, please refer to section 4 "Links and further information".

1.2 Why are the priority species and habitats being reviewed?

The original UK BAP lists of priority species and habitats are 10 years old. Given the importance of the UK BAP in stimulating action and mobilising resources, it is important that these lists are periodically reviewed to ensure that they continue to focus on the right priorities. This is the first full review of the UK BAP list and it is an opportunity to take into account emerging priorities, conservation successes, and the large amount of new information that has been gathered over the past decade.

1.3 Scope and guiding principles of the Review

These are summarised below and elaborated for terrestrial and freshwater species in Section 3.

1.3.1 Scope of terrestrial, freshwater and marine species

All species occurring in the UK, including current UK BAP priority species, are eligible for consideration. The criteria developed in the Review of Marine Nature Conservation (RMNC) will be used in the assessments for marine species.

1.3.2 Scope of terrestrial, freshwater and marine habitats

For terrestrial and freshwater habitats, the main focus of the habitat review is in establishing if there are gaps in the existing HAP series. The review also provides an opportunity to consider whether any habitat types need to be merged or re-defined to achieve better clarity and aid delivery. For marine habitats, a more comprehensive review will be carried out, using the Marine Habitat Classification for Britain and Ireland.

1.3.3 Audit trail of decisions

A strict audit of the process and all decisions will be kept to ensure transparency and facilitate any re-assessment or revisions, if required.

- 1.3.4 Any revision of the priority species list must be based on best available information. There will be a presumption against adding data-deficient species to the priority list but it is important to record those species that are considered to have a data deficiency.
- 1.3.5 The Review will be inclusive. The priority lists Review will invite full participation from species and habitat specialists, BAP practitioners at national and local levels, Country Groups¹, Agencies and Lead Partners.
- 1.3.6 Links to Targets Review and BAP reporting. Consultees who are Lead Partners and individual BAP steering group members will also be involved in the 2005 BAP Reporting round and the BAP Targets Review. The UK Standing Committee and BRIG are acutely aware that these three reviews will contribute significantly to work loads, and have therefore sought to achieve synergy across all three. As set out in the Targets Guidance note, Lead Partners who will be recommending the removal of species from the current list of BAP priorities need not set new targets for these species. The information on species status required for the 2005 BAP reporting round is largely compatible with the information requested for current BAP species in this Review. For further information on the Target Review and BAP reporting go to the UK BAP website (<http://www.ukbap.org.uk/>) and follow the links.
- 1.3.7 First of three stages in priority listing. Stage 1 simply recommends potential species and habitats for priority listing, based on scientific criteria. There will be two further stages in the review process before the priority list is finalised.

¹ Throughout this Guidance document, the terms “Country Groups” and “Country Biodiversity Groups” refer to the biodiversity decision-making mechanisms or authorities in each country.

2. OVERVIEW OF THE REVIEW PROCESS

The Review of species and habitats comprises three stages. Stage 1 looks at the scientific evidence for selecting candidate priority species and habitats while Stage 2 examines our ecological knowledge-base to identify the feasibility and appropriateness of taking conservation action. Stage 3 considers the means of implementing conservation action for both species and habitat priorities. Stages in this process are likely to be iterative. The process is summarised in Figure 1.

Stages 1 and 2 of this Review for terrestrial and freshwater habitats are addressed further in Section 3 of this guidance note and relevant specialists are being asked to contribute towards this important process. Details of Stage 3 will be sent out in late 2005.

2.1 Stage 1: Scientific Assessment of Conservation Status

The priority species and habitats should be those most in need of conservation action and it is important that this assessment is based on good scientific practice. Thus an emphasis is made here on gathering as much quantitative data as possible. In general, this should be the best available information that could pass an accepted level of scientific scrutiny.

2.1.1 Terrestrial and Freshwater species

The first stage of the *Terrestrial and Freshwater species* Review involves taxonomic specialist groups using the best available data to assess each species against objective criteria and specific thresholds. The four scientific criteria are:

- international threat
- international responsibility + moderate decline in the UK
- marked decline in the UK
- other important factor(s)

Applying these criteria will produce a candidate list of potential priority species. All birds and diadromous fish are included in the Terrestrial and Freshwater species review. To obtain full information about the Terrestrial and Freshwater Species review see section 4 (“Links and further information”).

2.1.2 Terrestrial and Freshwater habitats

The aim for *Terrestrial and Freshwater habitats* is to review how the existing habitat series (covered by existing HAPs) complies with the principles established by the last review in 1999. The focus will be on assessing whether there are any remaining gaps in terrestrial and freshwater priority habitats, building on the work done for the 1999 review: validating its conclusions and taking account of new data. Since the original HAPs were published, new information has emerged regarding the biodiversity importance and rate of decline of other semi-natural habitats. Proposals for new habitats will be assessed against the following criteria:

- International obligation
- Risk
- Importance for key species

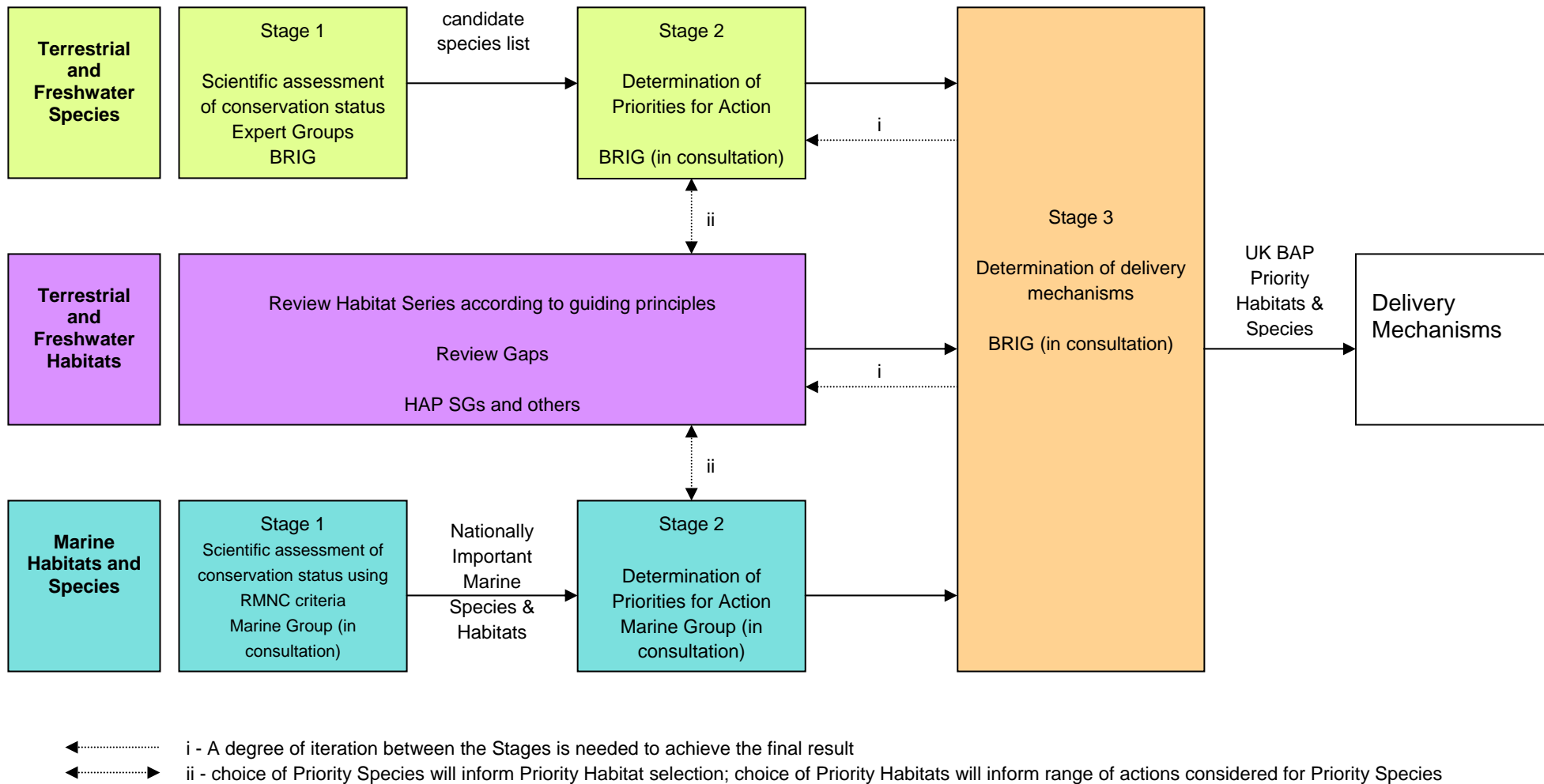


Figure 1. Overview of the elements of the Species and Habitat Priority Review

The review also allows a reconsideration of issues surrounding habitat definition and classification. Although there is broad consensus that the habitat types covered by our existing HAPs remain priorities for conservation action, some confusion exists over the habitat definitions and how they relate to other habitat classification systems and certain lists such as Annex I of the Habitats Directive. Some problems also arise because the current priority HAP types overlap, or lack a consistent hierarchical level (for example, reedbeds have their own HAP despite being a sub-type of fen which is itself another priority habitat). The UK BAP list review is an opportunity to re-assess our existing HAPs to improve clarity and delivery.

Proposals and supporting data will be sought from HAP steering groups and habitat specialists and analysed by broad habitats working groups in conjunction with BRIG. This is broadly equivalent to Stages 1 and 2 for Terrestrial and Freshwater species. Further details are given in Section 3.

2.1.3 Marine species and habitats

For *marine species*, the RMNC criteria of rarity, proportional importance, decline and threat of decline will be used. For *marine habitats* a comprehensive review of the conservation priority status of marine habitats is to be undertaken by applying the RMNC criteria, and making use of the recently revised Marine Habitat Classification for Britain and Ireland. Note that all birds, including seabirds, and diadromous fish are included in the Terrestrial and Freshwater species review. To obtain full information about the Marine Species and Habitats review see section 4 (“Links and further information”).

2.1.4 The output from Stage 1 is a critical product for the Review process, and this candidate list of species and habitats will be published on the JNCC website. It may then be used to update the SoCC list.

2.2 Stage 2: Determining the need for action

2.2.1 Supported by further guidance, Stage 2 will involve a further consultation to identify the practical considerations which apply to the candidate list of terrestrial and freshwater species, and marine species and habitats. These will be assessed to select priorities for conservation action by examining how feasible or appropriate it is to conserve them. Examples of practical issues to be considered include: limitations in knowledge of the species’ ecology and causes of decline, our ability to control the threats, and the feasibility of taking action. This stage will involve consultation with the Country Groups and other BAP stakeholders. At the same time consultees will be asked to complete a pro-forma of questions relating to implementation issues and options to inform Stage 3. For candidate Terrestrial and Freshwater Habitats, Stage 1 and Stage 2 issues will be considered jointly.

2.3 Stage 3: Determination of Species and Habitat Delivery Mechanisms

2.3.1 This stage is primarily concerned with identifying a suite of implementation mechanisms that will facilitate effective and efficient delivery of conservation objectives for the suite of priority species and habitats considered collectively. A key purpose of this stage is to seek an improved series of implementation mechanisms through a collective approach to all species and habitats. Delivery mechanisms could include species plans, cross-cutting plans, mechanisms that focus on ecological function or similarity, and direct links to policies, strategies or existing biodiversity action plans.

- 2.3.2 The delivery of the conservation actions has a significant Country dimension, hence the involvement of the Country Groups is essential in developing Stage 3. It is also important to learn from recent experience and deliver the UK BAP through the most effective means of implementation.

2.4 What happens next?

- 2.4.1 This Stage 1/2 Guidance Note (and associated forms for data collection) is being sent out to specialists and individual contributors via the co-ordinating network (identified by the contacts). Each of the specialist groups is asked to follow the process set out in Section 3. Completed proformas should be returned to the relevant contacts, via the coordinators for each taxonomic group by 30 September 2005. The contacts should then complete the summary table that they have been sent and return it, together with relevant proformas, to BRIG by 15 November 2005. Any proposals for new priority habitats should also be sent to BRIG by 30 September 2005. It will be up to BRIG and the contacts to quality assure the data. Contact details for each of the groups are given at the end of this note (section 5). It will be up to the contacts to identify and get in touch with the coordinators.
- 2.4.2 Up to 30 September 2005, (the end-date for submissions), there may well be queries and issues that need further discussion between species groups and BRIG. Please get in touch with any of the relevant contacts (details in Section 5) if you need to resolve any difficulties. From November 2005 BRIG will collate and review submissions, and publish a provisional list of priorities by March 2006 for wider consultation. Any contentious proposals will be discussed further with the relevant species or habitat specialist groups.
- 2.4.3 This list, together with the information received through Stages 2 and 3 will be forwarded to BRIG and the Country Biodiversity Groups to consider the proposals and assess the recommended actions. Results from the 2005 BAP reporting round will also be helpful in assessing the degree to which BAPs have been successful compared to other conservation mechanisms (such as sectoral strategies and policies e.g. agri-environment). BRIG will provide further assistance to Country Groups if required. It is possible at this stage that the Countries may additionally consider their own (non UK) priorities.
- 2.4.4 The aim is to complete this process by end 2006.

3. ASSESSMENT OF TERRESTRIAL AND FRESHWATER HABITATS: STAGE 1/2

3.1. Background

3.1.1 There are currently 49 agreed BAP Priority Habitats in the UK (Table 1). Habitat Action Plans (HAPs) have been published for 47 of these, with HAPs for two woodland habitats awaiting approval. 34 of these habitats are terrestrial or freshwater types (listed in bold in the table) and are encompassed by this part of the review. The other fifteen habitats (including coastal saltmarsh and saline lagoons) are being assessed as part of the marine component of the review (see Section 4).

3.1.2 The purpose of the review for terrestrial and freshwater priority habitats is described in Section 2.1.2 above. There are two elements to the review:

- Assessing gaps in the existing priority habitat series, to identify whether any other habitats currently merit priority status. Details are given in Section 3.2.
- Reviewing the current priority habitats, to determine whether any changes in scope or definition are justified. Details are given in Section 3.3.

3.1.3 Sections 3.2 and 3.3 include details of how those specific elements of the review will be taken forward and by whom. Section 3.4 refers to the Broad habitat classification and the Broad habitat statements. Section 3.5 explains the subsequent process, highlights some cross-cutting issues which need to be considered, and outlines some options for Stage 3.

Table 1. Current list of UK BAP Priority habitats (Non-marine priority habitats are given in bold. M = Marine Broad habitat type)

Broad Habitat type	Priority habitat type	Notes
Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland	Upland oakwood	
	Lowland beech and yew woodland	
	Upland mixed ashwoods	
	Wet woodland	
	Lowland wood-pasture and parkland	See note 1
	Lowland mixed deciduous woodland	See note 2
	Upland birchwoods	See note 2
Coniferous woodland	Native pine woodlands	
Boundary and linear features	Ancient and/or species-rich hedgerows	
Arable and horticultural	Cereal field margins	
Improved grassland	Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh	See note 1
Neutral grassland	Lowland meadows	
	Upland hay meadows	
Calcareous grassland	Lowland calcareous grassland	
	Upland calcareous grassland	
Acid grassland	Lowland dry acid grassland	
Dwarf shrub heath	Lowland heathland	
	Upland heathland	
Fen, marsh and swamp	Purple moor grass and rush pastures (<i>Molinia-Juncus</i>)	
	Fens	

Broad Habitat type	Priority habitat type	Notes
	Reedbeds	
Bogs	Lowland raised bog	
	Blanket bog	
Standing open water and canals	Mesotrophic lakes	
	Eutrophic standing waters	
	Aquifer fed naturally fluctuating water bodies	
Rivers and streams	Chalk rivers	
Inland rock	Limestone pavements	
Supralittoral rock	Maritime cliff and slopes	
Supralittoral sediment	Coastal vegetated shingle	
	Machair	
	Coastal sand dunes	
Littoral rock (M)	Littoral chalk	See note 3
	<i>Sabellaria alveolata</i> reefs	
Littoral sediment (M)	Coastal saltmarsh	
	Seagrass beds (<i>Zostera noltii</i>)	See note 3
	Mudflats	
	Sheltered muddy gravels	
Inshore sublittoral rock (M)	Tidal rapids	
	<i>Modiolus modiolus</i> beds	
	sublittoral chalk	See note 3
	<i>Sabellaria spinulosa</i> reefs	
Inshore sublittoral sediment (M)	Saline lagoons	
	Maerl beds	
	Seagrass beds (<i>Zostera marina</i>)	
	Mud habitats in deep water	
	Serpulid reefs	
	Sublittoral sands and gravels	See note 1
Continental shelf slope (M)	<i>Lophelia pertusa</i> reefs	

Notes

1. Several priority habitats occur in more than one Broad habitat, or are habitat complexes, but for simplicity are listed against only one Broad habitat in this table. These include Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, Lowland wood pastures and parkland, and Sublittoral sand and gravels.
2. These new woodland priority habitats have been approved but the plans are awaiting ministerial approval
3. Littoral chalk and sublittoral chalk and included in a single HAP, as are the two types of Seagrass beds.

3.2 Assessing gaps in the priority habitat series

3.2.1 The main thrust of the review for terrestrial and freshwater habitats is to assess gaps in the existing priority series, building on the earlier review undertaken in 1999-2001. Details of the conclusions of that review are given in Appendix A.

3.2.2 Proposals for new priority habitats should be assessed against the following criteria, adapted from those used in the original selection process in 1995:

1. *Habitats for which the UK has international obligations*

2. Natural and semi-natural habitats at risk, such as those with a high rate of decline in extent and/or quality, especially over the last 20 years, or which are rare

3. Habitats important for assemblages of key species

A habitat may qualify for any one of these criteria, though in practice more than one is likely to be relevant in most cases. The fourth of the '1995 criteria', concerning habitats which are 'functionally critical' i.e. those 'essential for organisms inhabiting wider ecosystems', may be useful in some cases as a supporting criterion but is unlikely to be a qualifying criterion in its own right.

3.2.3 For the previous gaps review it was a requirement that priority status should only be considered for a particular habitat if the production of a separate UK HAP was seen as necessary. Certain important types were ruled out because it was felt that actions under existing HAPs or SAPs would suffice. This is **not** the approach being taken for this review since it prejudices consideration of delivery mechanisms in Stage 3 (see section 2.3). The aim of Stage 1/2 is to agree a list of priority habitats (and species) **prior** to consideration of how their conservation needs should best be met.

3.2.4 There is no single accepted classification which can be used as a framework for selection of priority habitats, but for clarity and consistency it is recommended that priority habitats should be defined at a broadly consistent hierarchical level, and that new types should fit within a single BAP broad habitat type. Two specific principles (developed as part of the 1999 gaps review) which should be followed for the selection of new types are:

A. Habitat definitions should be clear, mutually exclusive, and where possible defined in terms of existing habitat classifications (e.g. NVC and Phase 1).

B. Priority types should be mappable and should have measurable quantitative or qualitative attributes for monitoring purposes.

3.2.5 The series of priority habitats is intended to be a sub-set of UK habitat types, for which co-ordinated conservation action across the UK is required, rather than a comprehensive list of habitats. The latter role is served by the Broad Habitat classification (see Section 3.4). In practice it is recognised that it may be difficult to define some habitats sufficiently tightly to exclude lower priority components, but that this can be addressed by prioritising action in Stage 3.

3.2.6 In view of the considerable collaborative effort that went into the previous 'gaps' review, it seems sensible that the main findings should be taken forward, subject to checking that any more recent data still support the conclusions; but account should also be taken of the differences in emphasis for this review, in particular the broader approach to delivery mechanisms (stage 3). Those groups that developed the five outstanding proposals for new priority habitats, as approved by Targets Group in 2001, are asked to reassess them in the light of any more recent information, using Form A. The previously proposed category of 'Habitat of conservation concern' (HoCC), specified for Upland fens and Rock and scree habitats, should also be reconsidered by the relevant groups. The previous review also recommended that further consideration should be given to the proposals for 'post-industrial habitats' (see Appendix A, Section 7). The Urban Inter-Agency Working Group (IAWG) is asked to take this forward in liaison with JNCC and relevant specialists.

Groups to review conclusions of 1999 'gaps review'

- Oligotrophic lakes (including dystrophic types) - Joint Lakes HAP steering group
- Ponds of high ecological quality - Freshwater LCN, with EA, SEPA and the Ponds Conservation Trust
- Active shingle rivers, and other river types - Freshwater LCN, with EA and SEPA
- Montane heaths, Upland fens, and rock/scree habitats - JNCC Upland Lead Co-ordination Network (LCN)
- Rock outcrops and mine spoil rich in heavy metals - Lowland grassland LCN, in consultation with Upland LCN and Urban IAWG
- Post-industrial habitats – Urban IAWG in liaison with Invertebrate IAWG

3.2.7 Any other new and/or revised proposals for priority habitats (e.g. Orchards) can also be submitted using Form A, taking careful account of section 2.1 above and the conclusion of the previous review (Appendix A). Anyone wishing to do so is asked to liaise first with the Habitats contact (section 5) to ensure coordination. All revised and new proposals should be submitted to BRIG via the PSHRWG habitats contact by 30 September 2005.

3.2.8 When considering possible new priority habitats, the following points should be taken into account.

1. Habitats for which the UK has international obligations

The UK BAP is seen by Government as an important tool to help achieve favourable conservation status for many of the habitats listed on Annex I of the Habitats Directive. Table 2 lists those Annex I habitats in the UK which are not covered by existing BAP priority habitats. Although inclusion on Annex I is not necessarily sufficient justification on its own for priority habitat status, it is likely to be an important factor. The degree of responsibility which the UK has for a particular type should also be taken into consideration.

2. Natural and semi-natural habitats at risk, such as those with a high rate of decline in extent and/or quality, especially over the last 20 years, or which are rare

It is difficult to set quantitative thresholds for decline in extent, and even more so for decline in quality which is often a more significant issue; for most habitats there are inadequate data to assess either satisfactorily. It is recognised that expert judgement must often be used, but this should be based on as much recent data as possible.

3. Habitats important for assemblages of key species

This criterion should be interpreted widely to include not just BAP priority species but also other species considered to be important in a national or international context, e.g. Red List species and species listed on Annex II of the Habitats Directive. Use of this criterion will inevitably be iterative as the priority species lists are reviewed.

3.2.9 There is a risk that the list of priority habitats is driven by existing classifications based primarily on vegetation and floristics e.g. NVC, which may not address the needs of specific species groups for which other factors such as habitat structure are critical. This should be addressed by involving species working groups such as the Interagency Invertebrate Working Group in the decision-making process.

Table 2. Terrestrial and freshwater habitats on Annex I of the Habitats Directive which are not covered, or are only partly covered, by existing BAP priority habitats and HAPs. Types with substantial gaps in coverage are shown in bold.

Habitats Directive Annex I type	Gap in coverage/comments
Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the <i>Littorelletea uniflorae</i> and/or of the <i>Isoeto-Nanojuncetea</i>	Mesotrophic examples >1ha only are included in the Mesotrophic lakes priority habitat
Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara</i> spp.	Mesotrophic examples >1ha only are included in the Mesotrophic lakes priority habitat.
Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds	Some dystrophic waterbodies may form part of the two existing bog priority habitats
Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitricho-Batrachion</i> vegetation	Some examples only are covered by the Chalk rivers priority habitat
Alpine and Boreal heaths	Not covered
Sub-Arctic <i>Salix</i> spp. scrub	Not covered
Calaminarian grasslands of the <i>Violetalia calaminariae</i>	Not covered
Siliceous alpine and boreal grasslands	Not covered
Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels	Not covered
Petrifying springs with tufa formations (<i>Cratoneurion</i>)	Lowland examples only are covered by the Fens priority habitat
Alkaline fens	Lowland examples only are covered by the Fens priority habitat
Alpine pioneer formations of <i>Caricion bicoloris-atrofuscae</i>	Not covered
Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (<i>Androsacetalia alpinae</i> and <i>Galeopsietalia ladanii</i>)	Not covered
Calcareous and calcshist screes of the montane to alpine levels (<i>Thlaspietea rotundifolii</i>)	Not covered
Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation	Not covered
Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation	Not covered
Caves not open to the public	Not covered
<i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands	The heaths and grasslands fall within existing priority habitats. Juniper itself is a BAP priority species covered by a Species Action Plan.
Inland salt meadows	Very rare type in UK, only significant example is within an existing SAC
Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletea uniflorae</i>)	Very rare type in UK, most significant examples are within existing SACs
Natural eutrophic lakes with <i>Magnopotamion</i> or <i>Hydrocharition</i>-type vegetation	Mostly included in the Eutrophic waters priority habitat, but very small examples are excluded.
Mediterranean temporary ponds	Very rare type in UK, most significant examples are within existing SACs
Stable xerothermophilous formations with <i>Buxus sempervirens</i> on rock slopes (<i>Berberidion</i> p.p.)	Very rare type in UK, only significant example is within an existing SAC

3.3 Reviewing the existing priority habitat series

3.3.1 The BRIG Priority Species and Habitats Review Working Group considers that no great purpose would be served by carrying out a full review of the existing priority habitat series at the present time, especially bearing in mind the limited progress that has been made on surveillance and monitoring, as indicated in the 2002 reporting round (www.ukbap.org.uk). Although good progress has been made with some of the plans, the available evidence does not suggest that there has been sufficient recovery of any of the habitats to merit a review of status.

3.3.2 Nevertheless there are a number of issues which might usefully be addressed, relating to the scope and definitions of some of the existing types, and the criteria and principles outlined above. It is recognised that a large amount of work has been done on the basis of existing definitions e.g. habitat inventories, and it is not the intention to make changes unless there are clear difficulties and change would yield real benefits. Guidance on some of the possible issues is given below. HAP steering groups are therefore invited to submit proposals for any changes to existing priority habitats which they consider to be appropriate, using Form B, by the 30 September 2005. Views from other consultees are welcome but should be submitted via the relevant HAP group contact as listed on the UKBAP website, and copied to the review group contact (see Section 5).

3.3.3 Proposed changes might involve narrowing or widening the habitat definition e.g. to align with Habitats Directive Annex I habitats; to integrate with the Water Framework Directive; to avoid overlap with other types; to exclude part(s) of the habitat of low intrinsic conservation value; to merge two or more priority habitats (but bearing in mind that priority habitats could be combined under single plans in Stage 3); or for other reasons. Further guidance on possible issues will be provided to HAP groups by JNCC in conjunction with the forthcoming consultation over the BAP Habitats Interpretation Manual (currently in preparation). The proposed changes should be as specific as possible and carefully justified in relation to the criteria and principles set out in section 2.1. The full implications of any changes should also be considered and explained.

3.4 Broad Habitats

3.4.1 The Broad habitat classification was reviewed in 1998 and it is not intended to review it again at this stage. Broad Habitat Statements were published in 1995, describing the individual broad habitats, the issues affecting them and their conservation requirements. For terrestrial and freshwater habitats these were not subsequently revised to reflect revisions to the classification. Views are sought in principle on whether these statements have been useful and effective, whether they should be revised and updated, and if so by whom.

3.5 Next steps

3.5.1 Recommendations and proposals from the processes outlined in Sections 3.2 and 3.3 should be submitted to the Habitats contact (see Section 5) by 30 September 2005. Groups of habitat and species specialists for broad habitat groupings (e.g. freshwaters, upland terrestrial habitats, and lowland terrestrial habitats) will be established to appraise all relevant proposals and comments in conjunction with the PSHRWG, with the aim of making their recommendations to BRIG by 31 December 2005. There will be wide consultation and discussion before final decisions are made.

3.5.2 A key issue which needs to be addressed is how ‘cross-cutting’ habitats, microhabitats and mosaics should be dealt with. The previous ‘gaps’ review recommended that guidance on these should be produced to inform the existing HAPs (see Appendix A). Comments on these elements of the review are welcome, either directly or via the groups referred to above.

3.5.3 Following agreement on the priority habitat and species lists, Stage 3 will involve determining the best way of taking forward the necessary action for these priorities (see Section 2.3). This gives the opportunity to review the effectiveness of HAPs and SAPs and consider a wide range of options to achieve maximum effectiveness. Consultation on this will take place at a later stage but early views would also be welcome.

4. LINKS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

UKBAP website supporting the implementation of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) on behalf of the UK Biodiversity Partnership and the UK Government <http://www.ukbap.org.uk/>

For the full guidance note for the review of Priority Terrestrial and Freshwater Species go to www.ukbap.org.uk

For the full guidance note for the review of Marine Priority Habitats and Species go to www.ukbap.org.uk

Species Status Assessment programme (internet link) <http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-1743> JNCC.

Buglife – The Invertebrate Conservation Trust (internet link) non-marine invertebrates review 2004/5 <http://www.buglife.org.uk> (scroll to bottom of home page)

5. CONTACTS

Contacts have agreed to co-ordinate the review, including providing guidance and collating returns from co-ordinators and contributors across the individual taxonomic groups. However, not all taxonomic sectors (dependent on size) will necessarily require having the co-ordinators role.

Terrestrial and freshwater habitats

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Marine species and habitats

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Vascular plants

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All other plants & fungi

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Birds

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Terrestrial and freshwater invertebrates

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Technical Contact

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Form A. 2005 Review of priority habitats: proposed new priority type

suggested habitat name:
<p>Correspondence with existing habitat/s BAP broad habitat:</p> <p>Phase 1:</p> <p>NVC:</p> <p>Annex I:</p> <p>other:</p>
<p>description biological features (e.g. dominant life forms/species, structure/ notable species)</p> <p>other characteristic features (eg hydrology, management, nutrient status, association with coastal, montane, lowland environment etc)</p>
geographic distribution and extent
<p>reasons for recommendation (indicate relevant criteria and explain how these are met)</p> <p>*habitat for which the UK has international obligations</p> <p>*habitat at risk</p> <p>*habitat important for key species</p>
<p>name of proposer/organisation(s)</p> <p>date</p>

Form B. 2005 Review of priority habitats: proposal for changes to existing priority habitat(s)

Name of habitat/HAP	
Nature of recommended change	
Which groups and/or individuals have been involved in this proposal?	
What would be the benefits of such a change?	
Are there implications for other priority habitats?	