

# Seagrass beds

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## 1. Status of the habitat / species

Please give your most accurate assessment of the status of your species or habitat for the UK and for each country. Leave the row blank where the species or habitat does not occur in that country.

	Amount:	Units:	Year:	Accuracy:	Reference for data:
UK	100	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	Informed guess	JNCC 10km square data, MNCR data, Davison and Hughes (1998)
E	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
NI	15	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	Informed guess	Portig (1994) & NI Sublittoral Survey
S	63	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	Partial or sample survey	Cleater, B. 1993. The status of the genus Zostera in Scottish coastal waters. SNH Review No. 22, Edinburgh, Scottish Natural Heritage ISSN 1350 3111.

<b>W</b>	150		2002	Partial or sample survey	CCW Phase 1 survey; volunteer surveys at Skomer MNR; contracted sublittoral dive surveys; SEASEACH dives.

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## 2. Trend in Biological Status

Please give your best estimate of the current trend for your species or habitat for the UK, and each appropriate country, using the following categories. Please give an estimate unless there is absolutely no information on which to assess status.

	Trend:	Accuracy:	Reference for data:
<b>UK</b>	Not know n	Informed guess	MNCR data, Kay 1998, Davison and Hughes 1998
<b>E</b>	Not know n	Best guess	
<b>NI</b>	Fluctuating / No clear trend	Best guess	
<b>S</b>			

<b>W</b>	Fluctuating / No clear trend	Informed guess	Review of the status of seagrass beds in Wales, (Kay, 1998).

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### 3. Status of knowledge

To what extent is our scientific knowledge of the habitat / species (e.g research information, autecological knowledge, knowledge for effective re-introduction or habitat restoration/re-creation) sufficient to deliver the plan targets?

Please give an assessment for the UK overall but if there is significant difference in knowledge between different countries this should be noted.

<b>Status of knowledge:</b>	Know ledge insufficient but research currently under way.
<b>Notes:</b>	National distribution and fluctuations in status not adequately assessed. Detailed local study and monitoring programmes in some areas.

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## 4. Progress on targets

Each of the revised targets from the 2001 Targets Review is listed below.

For each one please give a qualitative assessment of progress for the UK and each country. You can also enter quantitative information on progress by entering data in each of the target boxes and entering the current amount in the amount box. For more information see Help.

### T1: Maintain extent and distribution of seagrass beds in UK waters.

<b>Target start date:</b>	1995
<b>Target end date:</b>	ongoing
<b>Target units:</b>	<input type="text"/>

	Progress	Target	Current	Accuracy	Monitoring
<b>UK</b>	<input type="text" value="Unknown"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Unknown"/>	<input type="text" value="Under active development"/>
<b>E</b>	<input type="text" value="Unknown"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<b>NI</b>	<input type="text" value="No progress"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Best guess"/>	<input type="text" value="Under consideration"/>
<b>S</b>	<input type="text" value="No progress"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Best guess"/>	<input type="text" value="Under consideration"/>

<b>W</b>	Unknown			Informed guess	Under consideration
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**T2: Assess feasibility of restoration of damaged or degraded seagrass beds. Until surveys assess the extent of the seagrass resource, it will not be possible to assess whether restoration is necessary, or to specify a final target. An interim target of 1,000 ha has been costed.**

<b>Target start date:</b>	1995
<b>Target end date:</b>	
<b>Target units:</b>	

	Progress	Target	Current	Accuracy	Monitoring
<b>UK</b>	No progress				
<b>E</b>	No progress			Informed guess	
<b>NI</b>	No progress			Informed guess	
<b>S</b>					
<b>W</b>	No progress			Informed guess	

## 5. Current factors affecting the habitat

When your plan was published the factors (threats) that were thought to be causing loss or decline were listed (in section 2). Re-assessing the current situation may help prioritise actions for your species or habitat. In addition, this enables identification of the main threats to biodiversity across all plans. It is useful to assess whether the importance of different factors is changing and whether there are new issues emerging.

The threat section from the original plan is duplicated below, and a first attempt at categorising the threats has been made. Please confirm that you agree with the categorisation of the original threats identified in the plan (by deleting any wrongly categorised threats and adding the correct category). Please also add to the list any significant threats that have emerged recently, being mindful of environmental issues that have increased in profile or been recognised since plan publication (e.g. climate change). Once you are happy that the list contains all the threats identified in the published plan together with any new ones, please rank them in order of severity (1= highest threat). If the situation has changed and one of the published threats is no longer significant, please leave this in the list but give this rank = 0.

### Current factors affecting the habitat from the original publication:

- 2.1 Disease. A wasting disease was responsible for die-back of large areas of seagrass in the UK in the 1930s. The fungus and slime mould which colonised the weakened seagrass have recently reappeared in seagrass beds around the Isles of Scilly.
- 2.2 Natural cycles . The extent of seagrass beds may change as a result of natural factors such as severe storms, exposure to air, and freshwater pulses. Grazing by wildfowl can have a dramatic seasonal effect with more than 60% reduction in leaf cover reported from some sites. Warm sea temperatures coupled with low level of sunlight may cause significant stress and die back of seagrass.
- 2.3 Physical disturbance, for example by trampling, dredging, and use of mobile bottom fishing gear, land claim and adjacent coastal development through the construction of sea defences and potential for changes in the hydrological regime.
- 2.4 Introduction of, and competition from, alien species such as *Spartina anglica* and *Sargassum muticum*
- 2.5 Increased turbidity reducing photosynthesis.

2.6 Nutrient enrichment , at low levels, may increase production in Zostera while high nitrate concentrations have been implicated in the decline of mature Z. marina Phytoplankton blooms, resulting from nutrient enrichment, have been shown to reduce biomass and depth penetration of eelgrass. Eutrophication can also result in a shift to phytoplankton epiphyte or macroalgal dominance.

2.7 Marine pollution. Eelgrass is known to accumulate Tributyl, tin and possibly other metals and organic pollutants. Several heavy metals and organic substances have been shown to reduce nitrogen fixation which may affect the viability of the plant, particularly in nutrient poor conditions. Accumulated pollutants may become concentrated through food chains.

## Keyworded factors:

To add factors click the add button, to delete factors check the delete box and then click the delete button.

Delete:	Rank:	Keyword:
<input type="checkbox"/>	3	Changes in native species dynamics   Disease (pathogens / parasites)
<input type="checkbox"/>	2	Habitat loss / degradation - fisheries   Damage from bottom-trawling fishing gear
<input type="checkbox"/>	5	Habitat loss / degradation - infrastructure development   Coastal defence works
<input type="checkbox"/>	6	Habitat loss / degradation - infrastructure development   Dredging (coastal)
<input type="checkbox"/>	12	Habitat loss / degradation - infrastructure development   Housing infrastructure
<input type="checkbox"/>	7	Habitat loss / degradation - infrastructure development   Port infrastructure
<input type="checkbox"/>	9	Human disturbance   Interference / displacement

- Invasive/non-native species (directly affecting species) | Competition
- Natural disasters | Storms / flooding
- Pollution - atmospheric | Global warming / sea-level rise
- Pollution - freshwater | Agricultural (nutrient enrichment)
- Pollution - freshwater | Industrial / commercial

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## 6. Constraints (optional)

Select the three most significant constraints to achieving the targets of the plan, and indicate the order of priority (1-3 with 1 being the most significant constraint). Only include constraints that are acting as a real blockage to delivering the plan targets or leading to a substantial delay in their delivery. For each constraint, please indicate whether you feel that it is within the ability of the lead partner or steering group to resolve the constraint.

<b>Constraint 1:</b>	
<b>Constraint keyword:</b>	<b>Country:</b>
Research, survey and information   Habitat inventory compilation - required	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UK <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> E <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NI <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> W

<b>Solution:</b>	<b>Solution type:</b>
Complete baseline survey for this habitat	Funding and incentive schemes
<b>Able to resolve:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Constraint 2:</b>	
<b>Constraint keyword:</b>	<b>Country:</b>
Action plan process   Unrealistic timescale for targets	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UK <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> E <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NI <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> W
<b>Solution:</b>	<b>Solution type:</b>
Restoration targets to be reviewed in connection with LBAP actions	Management
<b>Able to resolve:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Constraint 3:</b>	
<b>Constraint keyword:</b>	<b>Country:</b>
Action plan process   Local-national links - insufficient	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UK <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> E <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NI <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> W

<b>Solution:</b>	<b>Solution type:</b>
Work plan to make links between LBAP, lead partner as well as information and advice sources. Work plan to establish mechanism for contact and co-ordination of LBAP actions and provision of adequate advice and information	<input type="checkbox"/> Links to other plans
<b>Able to resolve:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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## 7. Steering Group

Please list all organisations that are represented on the steering group for your species/habitat (include all organisations that have contributed either directly or by correspondence within the last 3 years). Where a steering group does not exist please leave this form blank.

To add organisations click the add button, to delete organisations check the delete box and then click the delete button.

Delete:	Organisation:
<input type="checkbox"/>	Association of Sea Fisheries Committees
<input type="checkbox"/>	British Ports Association (Milford Haven Ports Authority)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Chairman Saline Lagoon Steering Group

- Chairman, Coastal HAPs Coordinating Group
- Chairman, Common Scoter Steering Group
- Chester College
- Countryside Council for Wales
- Crown Estate
- Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
- Department of Trade and Industry
- English Nature
- Environment Agency
- Environment and Heritage Service
- Fisheries Research Services
- Joint Nature Conservation Committee
- Marine Conservation Society

- Ministry of Defence
- Scottish Executive
- Scottish Natural Heritage
- Sea Fish Industry Authority
- Shark Trust
- Shellfish Association of Great Britain
- UK Major Ports Group (Associated British Ports)
- Wildlife Trusts
- World Wide Fund for Nature

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## 8. Other Groups/Organisations

Please list any additional groups/organisations that are actively involved in implementing your action plan. (This is to try to assess which groups are involved where there is no steering group and any additional contributors). If you do not have any other organisations involved, [click here](#).

To add organisations click the add button, to delete organisations check the delete box and then click the delete button.

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## 9. Linkages to LBAPs

a) Which of the following most accurately describes your interaction with LBAPs, up to now?

Little or no contact with LBAPs.

b) If you have been in contact with LBAPs how was it initiated?

By LBAP

c) Irrespective of current contact, how important do you consider LBAP co-ordinated action will be in achieving the targets of the plan? Select from category:

Important

d) If you consider LBAP action to be anything other than unimportant, which of the following forms of engagement do you think would be appropriate? (Note, you may tick more than one category.)

- Indirect contact (e.g. posting information on UKBAP website, sharing work programmes, meeting schedules, articles in Biodiversity News, newsletter)
- Provision of generic information on habitat and/or species (e.g. advice and guidance on habitat/species ecology and management)
- Direct provision of advice (e.g. proactive approach to LBAP, response to consultations from LBAPs, advice on LBAP target setting)

Reciprocal attendance at meetings

Development of collaborative projects

**Other (please specify):**

Provision of web site with resources, provision of access to academic expertise, provision of good practise from UK and abroad

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## 10. Successes (optional)

Have there been key successes in the implementation of your plan that should be drawn to the attention of government, the wider BAP partnership, or the public? Please give a brief description (i.e. 2-3 sentences) of up to three successes and allocate a topic area to each of them:

**Success 1:**

<b>Description:</b>	<b>Country:</b>
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Inclusion of extensive areas of seagrass beds within European sites

UK  E  NI  S  W

**Keyword:**

Policy, legislation and designation | Improved protection through site designation - international (SPA, SAC, RAMSAR)

## Success 2:

**Description:**

**Country:**

UK  E  NI  S  W

**Keyword:**

## Success 3:

**Description:**

**Country:**

UK  E  NI  S  W

**Keyword:**

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Thankyou for answering the questions. You have not yet completed all of the questions. You can go back and answer the additional ones or edit the ones you have already answered whenever you want.

**Sign-off:**

When you have completed all of the questions that you are able to, you must sign off your reporting.

I agree that the steering group (if present) have agreed the information in this report and that the following contact point has also signed it off:

<b>Contact point:</b>	UK Marine BA	<b>email:</b>	martin.bradley
<b>Your name:</b>	Martin Bradley		
<b>Date:</b>	2nd January		

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