



# Cynllun Gweithredu Thematig Natura 2000: Pysgodfeydd Morol

## Natura 2000 Thematic Action Plan: Marine Fisheries

Rhaglen Natura 2000 LIFE yng Nghymru  
LIFE Natura 2000 Programme for Wales



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## Contents

1. Cyflwyniad .....	4
2. Introduction.....	6
3. Background .....	8
4. Issues and risks.....	10
5. Policy and legislative context.....	14
6. Current mechanisms and planned actions on sites to 2020 .....	16
7. Rationale for strategic actions .....	18
8. Development of strategic actions .....	19
9. Strategic actions for Natura 2000 in Wales: Marine fisheries .....	20
Appendix A: .....	22

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In particular thanks go to the following specialists who reviewed and refined the strategic actions: Colin Charman and Maggie Hatton-Ellis.

October 2015

# 1. Cyflwyniad

## Rhaglen Natura 2000 LIFE yng Nghymru

Mae 92 Ardal Cadwraeth Arbennig (ACA) ac 20 Ardal Gwarchodaeth Arbennig (AGA) Cymru'n cynnwys 123 o nodweddion cynefinoedd a rhywogaethau dynodedig. Gyda'i gilydd, y rhain yw rhwydwaith Natura 2000.

Mae Rhaglen Natura 2000 LIFE yng Nghymru wedi datblygu blaen-gynllyn strategol i reoli ac adfer Natura 2000 yng Nghymru. Drwy weithio â rhanddeiliaid mae wedi pennu'r prif heriau sy'n wynebu'r safleoedd, y rhywogaethau a'r cynefinoedd hyn a warchodir gan Ewrop, a nodi'r camau gweithredu sydd eu hangen, y blaenoriaethau, y costau a'r cyfleoedd cyllido i fynd i'r afael â nhw. Cafodd y rhaglen ei chynnal gan Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru a'i hariannu gan gynllun LIFE+ Nature yr Undeb Ewropeaidd.

Y pwrpas yw galluogi Cymru i wneud cynnydd sylweddol tuag at sicrhau bod rhywogaethau a chynefinoedd Natura 2000 mewn cyflwr ffafriol a helpu i gyflawni ei hymrwymiaidau o dan Gyfarwyddeb Cynefinoedd ac Adar yr Undeb Ewropeaidd. Mae'r Rhaglen yn ceisio darparu llwyfan hefyd i sicrhau rhagor o gyllid ar gyfer prosiectau sy'n gysylltiedig â Natura 2000 o bob ffynhonnell bosibl, ac i integreiddio cyllid Natura 2000 mewn offerynnau ariannol a meysydd polisi eraill.

Mae manylion llawn Rhaglen Natura 2000 LIFE a rhwydwaith Natura 2000 yng Nghymru yn Ffeithiau a Ffigurau, Rhaglen Natura 2000 LIFE yng Nghymru: Adroddiad 1.

## Cynlluniau Gweithredu Thematig

Mae Rhaglen Natura 2000 LIFE wedi creu 11 Cynllun Gweithredu Thematig, pob un yn ymdrin â chamau gweithredu strategol blaenoriaeth i fynd i'r afael â'r prif broblemau a'r risgiau<sup>1</sup> a nodwyd fel y rhai sy'n cael effaith andwyol ar nodweddion Natura 2000 ledled y rhwydwaith.

Y Cynlluniau Gweithredu Thematig yw:

- Mynediad a hamdden
- Llygredd aer: Gwaddodi nitrogen
- Newid yn yr hinsawdd a chwalu cynefinoedd
- Llygredd dŵr gwasgaredig
- Rheoli perygl llifogydd ac erydu arfordirol
- Rheoli pori a da byw
- Rhywogaethau a phathogenau estron goresgynnol
- Newidiadau gan ddyn i amodau hydrolog
- Sbwriel y môr
- Pysgodfeydd morol
- Rheoli coetiroedd

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<sup>1</sup> Problemau (neu bwysau) yw adweithiau andwyol i nodweddion Natura 2000 sy'n digwydd ar hyn o bryd ar neu yng nghyffiniau ACA neu AGA sy'n rhwystro'r rhywogaeth neu'r cynefin dynodedig rhag cyrraedd cyflwr ffafriol. Risgiau (neu fygythiadau) i nodweddion Natura 2000 sy'n debygol o ddigwydd erbyn 2020.

Y brif gynulleidfa ar gyfer y Cynlluniau Gweithredu yw rheolwr, pobl sy'n gwneud penderfyniadau a chyllidwyr yn Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru, Llywodraeth Cymru a sefydliadau partner allweddol.

Mae'r camau gweithredu i'w gweld yn y tabl yn Adran 9. Camau yw'r rhain y gellir eu cyflawni ar lefel genedlaethol neu ranbarthol, i ategu camau gweithredu ar safleoedd o fewn Cynlluniau Gwella â Blaenoriaeth. Maent yn ceisio mynd i'r afael â rhwystrau sylfaenol, a'u hachosion lle bo'n bosibl, a datblygu fframwaith strwythurol sy'n cefnogi ac yn hyrwyddo trefniadau rheoli priodol yn lleol. Mae'r camau gweithredu'n cynnwys y rhai sydd eu hangen i fynd i'r afael â bylchau mewn tystiolaeth sy'n atal dealltwriaeth lawn o anghenion rheoli.

Gall rhai camau gweithredu strategol gynnig ffrydiau gwaith newydd a mentrau mawr; mae eraill yn cyd-fynd i raddau helaeth â pholisïau, strategaethau a rhaglenni gwaith sy'n bodoli eisoes neu sydd wrthi'n cael eu datblygu.

Cafodd y camau gweithredu strategol eu nodi yn ystod gweithdai a gynhaliwyd gyda gweithwyr proffesiynol arbenigol yn y maes, o Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru a sefydliadau eraill. Roeddynt yn seiliedig hefyd ar grynodedau o gamau gweithredu ar safleoedd a oedd yn deillio o'r Cynlluniau Gwella â Blaenoriaeth a'r Gronfa Ddata Camau Gweithredu (gweler isod). Cafodd y rhain eu hadolygu a'u dilysu gan weithgor bychan a buont yn destun proses ymgysylltu a thrafod gyda rhanddeiliaid hefyd. Gweler Adran 8 am ragor o fanylion.

Y camau gweithredu strategol yw'r rhai a nodwyd sydd eu hangen i gael y nodweddion i gyflwr ffafriol. Maent yn amodol ar y graddau y mae adnoddau ar gael ac ar gytundeb rhanddeiliaid. Nid ydynt yn cynrychioli cynllun gweithredol sydd wedi'i ariannu'n llawn nac wedi ymrwymo'n llawn iddo. Fodd bynnag, y bwriad yw defnyddio'r camau gweithredu i lywio amrywiaeth o gynlluniau gweithredol a rhaglenni gwaith yn y dyfodol.

Er bod y camau gweithredu strategol yn canolbwyntio ar gyfres Natura 2000, gellir defnyddio llawer ohonynt yn eang a gallent fod o fudd i Safleoedd o Ddiddordeb Gwyddonol Arbennig a helpu i warchod bioamrywiaeth a chryfhau'r ecosystem yn yr amgylchedd ehangach.

### **Cynlluniau Gwella â Blaenoriaeth a Chronfa Ddata Camau Gweithredu**

Mae Rhaglen Natura 2000 LIFE wedi cynhyrchu Cynlluniau Gwella â Blaenoriaeth ar gyfer pob safle Natura 2000 yng Nghymru. Mae'r cynlluniau hyn yn nodi'r prif broblemau a risgiau sy'n effeithio ar nodweddion Natura 2000 ac yn disgrifio'r camau gweithredu â blaenoriaeth, wedi'u costio, sydd eu hangen i gael a chynnal nodweddion y safle mewn cyflwr ffafriol. Mae'r cynlluniau'n defnyddio gwybodaeth o Gronfa Ddata Camau Gweithredu Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru sy'n cynnwys yr holl gamau gweithredu (blaenoriaeth uchel, canolig, isel) ar gyfer safleoedd Natura 2000. Datblygwyd y camau gweithredu gan Swyddogion Cadwraeth Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru ar y cyd â rhanddeiliaid a phartneriaid. Cafodd cynnwys y Gronfa Ddata ei ymestyn a'i ddiweddarau'n llawn yn ystod 2014/5.

## 2. Introduction

### LIFE Natura 2000 Programme for Wales

There are 123 designated habitat and species features on the 92 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and 20 Special Protection Areas (SPAs) in Wales. Together these comprise the Natura 2000 network.

The LIFE Natura 2000 Programme for Wales has developed a strategic forward plan to manage and restore Natura 2000 in Wales. Working with stakeholders it has determined the key challenges facing these European protected sites, species and habitats and identified the actions required, priorities, costs and funding opportunities to address them. The Programme was run by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and funded by the European Union scheme LIFE+ Nature.

The purpose is to enable Wales to make significant progress towards bringing Natura 2000 species and habitats into favourable condition and help meet its commitments under the European Habitats and Birds Directives. The Programme also aims to provide a platform to seek further funding for Natura 2000 related projects from all potential sources, and to integrate Natura 2000 funding into other financial instruments and policy areas.

Full details about the LIFE Natura 2000 Programme and the Natura 2000 network in Wales can be found in the *LIFE Natura 2000 Programme for Wales: Fact and Figures Report*.

### Thematic Action Plans

The LIFE Natura 2000 Programme has created 11 Thematic Action Plans, each of which detail priority strategic actions to address major issues and risks<sup>2</sup> which have been identified as having an adverse impact on Natura 2000 features across the network.

The Thematic Action Plans are as follows:

- Access and recreation
- Air pollution: Nitrogen deposition
- Climate change and habitat fragmentation
- Diffuse water pollution
- Flood and coastal erosion risk management
- Grazing and livestock management
- Non-native invasive species and pathogens
- Man-made changes to hydraulic conditions
- Marine litter
- Marine fisheries
- Woodland management

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<sup>2</sup> Issues (or pressures) are adverse impacts to Natura 2000 features which are currently taking place on or around SACs or SPAs which act as barriers to the designated habitat or species features reaching favourable condition. Risks (or threats) are impacts to Natura 2000 features which are likely to occur by 2020.

The primary audience for the Actions Plans are managers, decision makers and fund holders within Natural Resources Wales, the Welsh Government and key partner organisations.

The strategic actions are set out in the table in Section 9. These are actions which may be delivered at national or regional level, to complement the site-level actions within Prioritised Improvement Plans (PIPs). They seek to address fundamental barriers and where possible their root causes, and to develop a structural framework which supports and promotes appropriate management at a local level. Actions include those needed to address evidence gaps which are hindering full understanding of management needs. Some strategic actions may propose new work streams and larger-scale initiatives; others align closely to existing or developing policies, strategies and work programmes.

The strategic actions were identified during workshops held with professionals with expertise in the field, from Natural Resources Wales and other organisations. These were also informed by summaries of site level actions derived from the PIPs and Actions Database (see below). These were reviewed and validated by a small working group and also subject to a process of engagement and discussion with stakeholders. See Section 8 for more details.

The strategic actions are those which have been identified as being required to bring features into favourable condition. They are subject to resource availability and stakeholder agreement. They do not represent a fully funded or committed operational plan. However, the intention is that the actions will be used to inform a range of operational plans and work programmes in the future.

While the strategic actions are focused on the Natura 2000 series, many have a broad applicability and may also be of benefit to Sites of Special Scientific Interest and other biodiversity conservation and ecosystem resilience work in the wider environment.

### **Prioritised Improvement Plans and Actions Database**

The LIFE Natura 2000 Programme has produced Prioritised Improvement Plans (PIPs) for all Natura 2000 sites in Wales. The PIPs identify the main issues and risks affecting the Natura 2000 features on the site and describe costed, prioritised actions required to achieve and maintain the site features in favourable condition.

The PIPs draw information from the Natural Resources Wales Actions Database which hold all actions (high, medium, low priority) for Natura 2000 sites. Actions were developed by Natural Resources Wales Conservation Officers in association with stakeholders and partners. The content of the Database was fully extended and updated during 2014/5.

### 3. Background

Marine fisheries is an economically and socially important sector utilising Wales' marine resources. Management responsibilities for marine fisheries in Welsh waters have changed significantly in recent years. The key driver for change was the UK's Marine and Coastal Access Act (MCAA) 2009, which gave Welsh Ministers new powers for inshore fisheries management (under 6 nautical miles). In 2010, the responsibilities of the two Sea Fisheries Committees that had been active in Wales were transferred to Welsh Government, and the establishment of the Welsh Zone significantly extended the area of sea over which Welsh Ministers had jurisdiction<sup>3</sup>. The creation of the Welsh Zone transferred all existing UK fisheries legislation to Welsh Ministers, to enable more effective and coherent management of fisheries off the Welsh Coast<sup>4</sup>. Wales was given primary law making powers for fisheries in 2011. Administrative responsibilities for fisheries licensing and quota management followed in 2012.

In 2013, the Welsh Government published the Wales Marine and Fisheries Strategic Action Plan for Wales, which provides “*a framework for clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse seas whilst supporting a sustainable marine economy*”<sup>5</sup>. The Strategic Action Plan highlights the value of and commitment to a more collaborative approach to fisheries management, focussed on ensuring that the “*underlying ecosystems are sustained in a healthy, functioning way*”.

Work carried out by the LIFE Natura 2000 Programme for Wales in 2014/15 has identified marine fisheries activities as a priority issue/risk affecting the condition of Natura 2000 features in Wales<sup>6</sup>. Significant effort has been invested by NRW operational site officers and Marine Protected Areas and Marine Fisheries colleagues in the last two years, to review and update data on marine fisheries issues and risks affecting Natura 2000 features. This work has been undertaken in consultation with the Welsh Government's Marine and Fisheries Branch, and the outputs have been shared with representatives from the marine fishing industry.

An approach has been developed to prioritise marine fisheries issues and risks at the site level based on an evidence based matrix, to help to identify actions that can be used to address those issues or risks. This approach has fed into the LIFE Natura 2000 Programme, and the development of Prioritised Improvement Plans (PIPs) for Wales's marine Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protected Areas (SPAs), which outline the actions required to achieve and maintain the site features in favourable condition.

This Thematic Action Plan (hereafter “Plan”) builds upon the site level actions identified in the PIPs. It seeks to outline and improve understanding of the potential consequences and scale of impacts on SAC and SPA features, to improve the management of marine fisheries where they affect Natura 2000 sites in Wales. It considers issues currently

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<sup>3</sup> Wales Marine and Fisheries Strategic Action Plan.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.assembly.wales/en/bus-home/Pages/PlenaryItem.aspx?category=Ministerial%20Statement&itemid=661>

<sup>5</sup> <http://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/marineandfisheries/strategy/?lang=en>

<sup>6</sup> Summary of conclusions & qualifiers – 3<sup>rd</sup> UK Habitats Directive Reporting 2013 (JNCC 2013); 10th Report by the United Kingdom under Article 12 on the implementation of the Directive on the conservation of wild birds (2009/147/EC) from January 2008 to December 2012 (JNCC 2013).



affecting the condition of Natura 200 features now as well as risks that have the potential to affect the condition of features in the future. This Plan mainly focusses on commercial marine fisheries activities (and related access), although some recreational aspect of fisheries (e.g. bait collection) are also incorporated. The full breadth of activities considered are outlined in Box 1.

The Plan considers the direct (e.g. physical interactions between fishing and SAC habitat features) and indirect (e.g. the removal of typical species) impacts on marine and coastal Natura 2000 features. Impacts of recreational activities targeting marine resources are also considered in *Access and Recreation Thematic Action Plan*.

**Box 1: Marine fisheries activities considered within the LIFE Natura 2000 Programme**

- Access for commercial fishing activities – this refers to issues and risks connected to vehicular and foot access to the shoreline, generally related to physical damage to habitats and disturbance to species.
- Different methods of commercial fishing and gathering of fish or shellfish including:
  - Hand gathering
  - Netting - various types
  - Potting (crab, lobster, prawn, whelk)
  - Trawling – various types
  - Bait collection (commercial)
  - Commercial angling – marine rod and handline
  - Long lining
  - Dredging – various types
  - Molluscan farming and associated structures
  - Wild stock enhancement / ranching /restocking (e.g. sea bed lays)
  - Shellfish media laying (i.e. Cultch laying)
  - Electrofishing

This issue or risk may relate to direct physical damage of a habitat, depletion of key species from a habitat, loss of prey species or disturbance.
- Different methods recreational fishing and gathering including:
  - Sea angling
  - Hand gathering
  - Bait collection

## 4. Issues and risks

Of the 112 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) that make up the Natura 2000 network in Wales, 21 sites (11 SACs and 10 SPAs) have marine features (habitats and species)<sup>7</sup>. Under the Habitats Regulations 1994, Habitats Directive Annex I “marine” includes both subtidal and intertidal habitats, and Annex II “marine” species are defined as those dependent on the marine environment for all or part of their lifecycle<sup>8</sup>; there are 10 marine habitats and 6 marine species in Wales. SPAs with marine components are defined as sites with qualifying Birds Directive Annex I species or regularly occurring migratory species that are dependent on the marine environment for all or part of their lifecycle, where these species are found in association with intertidal or subtidal habitats<sup>9</sup>; there are 30 marine bird species in Wales.

Under the Habitat Regulations 2010 (as amended), the term 'European Marine Site' (EMS) refers to those marine areas of both SACs and SPAs which are protected under the EC Habitats and Birds Directives. These areas range from entirely subtidal to exclusively intertidal, and vary in size from large (e.g. Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau SAC) to relatively small (e.g. Kenfig SAC)<sup>10</sup>. The network of EMSs in Wales is outlined in Table 1; three of these EMSs are cross-border sites with England: the Severn Estuary, Dee Estuary and Liverpool Bay.

Issues and risks from marine fisheries activities for the Wales only EMSs were identified using a marine fisheries prioritisation approach, and summarised in the site level Prioritised Improvement Plans (PIPs). Issues and risk from marine fisheries activities for the cross-border EMSs were generated through the LIFE Natura 2000 Programme's sister project, IPENS (*Improvement Programme for England's Natura 2000 sites*)<sup>11</sup>, and reported in the Site Improvement Plans (SIPs)<sup>12</sup>.

The LIFE Natura 2000 Programme data shows that marine fisheries activities are having (or have the potential to have) an impact on 21 out of total 123 habitat or species features (17%) and in 9 out of 112 Natura 2000 sites (8%) in Wales. At the EMS level this corresponds to 21 of the 46 marine habitats and species features (45%) (Table 2), and 9 of the 21 sites (43%) with marine features (Table 1). Appendix A provides further details on which features were identified as being affected (or with the potential to be affected) at which sites.

A total of 27 instances of issues and risks related to marine fisheries activities were recorded across the Natura 2000 series, 22 of these instances referred to impacts (or potential impacts) at the whole site scale (rather than for individual management units within sites).

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<sup>7</sup> [http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/pdf/MN2KPG16\\_13\\_MN2KDefs.pdf](http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/pdf/MN2KPG16_13_MN2KDefs.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> [UKSACswithMarineComponents\\_20150727\\_LIVE\\_WEB.xls](#); JNCC website

<sup>9</sup> [UKSPAswithMarineComponents\\_20150518\\_LIVE\\_WEB.xls](#); JNCC website

<sup>10</sup> <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-4215>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improvement-programme-for-englands-natura-2000-sites-ipens/improvement-programme-for-englands-natura-2000-sites-ipens>

<sup>12</sup> <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/category/5458594975711232>

**Table 1. European Marine Sites in Wales, their SAC and SPA components, and those identified as being affected (or likely to be affected) by marine fisheries activities.**

European Marine Sites (EMS)	SAC and SPA components	Identified as affected (or likely to be affected) by marine fisheries activities
Cardigan Bay / Bae Ceredigion*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cardigan Bay / Bae Ceredigion SAC</li> </ul>	✓
Carmarthen Bay & Estuaries / Bae Caeryrddin ac Aberoedd*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carmarthen Bay &amp; Estuaries SAC</li> </ul>	✓
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Burry Inlet SPA</li> </ul>	✓
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carmarthen Bay SPA</li> </ul>	
Dee Estuary / Aber Dyfrdwy*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dee Estuary / Aber Dyfrdwy SAC</li> </ul>	✓
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Dee Estuary SPA</li> </ul>	✓
Liverpool Bay / Bae Lerpwl*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liverpool Bay / Bae Lerpwl SPA</li> </ul>	
Menai Strait and Conwy Bay / Y Fenai a Bae Conwy*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Y Fenai a Bae Conwy / Menai Strait and Conwy Bay SAC</li> </ul>	✓
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Traeth Lafan / Lavan Sands SPA</li> </ul>	
Pembrokeshire Marine / Sir Benfro Forol*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pembrokeshire Marine / Sir Benfro Forol SAC</li> </ul>	✓
Pen Llyn a'r Sarnau / Llyn Peninsula and the Sarnau*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pen Llyn a'r Sarnau / Llyn Peninsula and the Sarnau SAC</li> </ul>	✓
Severn Estuary / Môr Hafren*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Severn Estuary / Môr Hafren SAC</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Severn Estuary SPA</li> </ul>	
Cemlyn Bay / Bae Cemlyn#	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cemlyn Bay / Bae Cemlyn SAC</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ynys Feurig, Cemlyn Bay and The Skerries SPA</li> </ul>	
Glannau Môn: Cors heli / Anglesey Coast: Saltmarsh#	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Glannau Môn: Cors heli / Anglesey Coast: Saltmarsh SAC</li> </ul>	✓
Glannau Aberdaron & Ynys Enlli / Aberdarn Coast and Bardsey Island#	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Glannau Aberdaron &amp; Ynys Enlli / Aberdarn Coast and Bardsey Island SPA</li> </ul>	
Grassholm#	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grassholm SPA</li> </ul>	
Kenfig / Cynffig#	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kenfig / Cynffig SAC</li> </ul>	
Limestone Coast of South West Wales / Arfordir Calchfaen de Orllewin Cymru#	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limestone Coast of South West Wales / Arfordir Calchfaen de Orllewin Cymru SAC</li> </ul>	
Skokholm and Skomer#	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skokholm and Skomer SPA</li> </ul>	

\* Sites with Regulation 35 Advice

# Sites with Core Management Plans managed through the SSSI / ASSI mechanism

**Table 2. Natura 2000 marine features recorded as being affected (or likely to be affected) by marine fisheries activities**

Natura 2000 feature (common name)		Number of sites designated for feature	Number of sites where feature is linked to activity	
			Marine fisheries activities	Access for marine fisheries
SAC habitats	Reefs	5	4	1
	Intertidal mudflats and sandflats	7	3	4
	Estuaries	6	2	4
	Shallow inlets and bays	4	2	2
	Glasswort and other annuals colonising mud and sand	4	1	3
	Atlantic salt meadows	7	-	3
	Annual vegetation of drift lines	1	-	1
SAC species	Grey seal	3	2	1
	Otter	3	-	1
SPA species	Eurasian oystercatcher	3	1	1
	Northern gannet	1	1	-
	Black-tailed godwit	1	-	1
	Common tern	2	-	1
	Eurasian curlew	3	-	1
	Dunlin	3	-	1
	Grey plover	2	-	1
	Red knot	2	-	1
	Northern pintail	2	-	1
	Common redshank	4	-	1
	Common shelduck	3	-	1
Eurasian teal	2	-	1	

*The data refers to sites where the marine fisheries activity is a current issue or a potential risk. This includes high, medium and low priority issues/risks. The information is derived from the LIFE Natura 2000 Programme data held in the NRW Actions Database. Sourced September 2015.*

Marine SAC habitat features were more frequently identified as being impacted or having the potential to be impacted by fisheries activities themselves, whilst concerns for SPA features were mainly related to access for those activities.

Of the sub-categories of marine fisheries activities outlined in Box 1, the following were most frequently identified as issues or risks:

- **Hand gathering** – predominantly related to potential impacts of unregulated activities (e.g. commercial and recreational bait collection) including effects on structure and function of intertidal SAC habitats species removal. This category was most frequently reported against intertidal mudflats and sandflats, and reef features.
- **Potting (crab, lobster, prawn whelk)** – predominantly related to potential direct physical impacts (e.g. fishing gear on sensitive habitats such as reef) and indirect impacts (e.g. the removal of typical species). This category was most frequently reported against reef feature.
- **Access for sea fisheries** – predominantly refers to potential physical impacts (e.g. trampling and vehicle access) on estuaries, and intertidal mudflats and sandflats features, and disturbance effects on bird features.

## 5. Policy and legislative context

There is a broad framework of policy and legislation at the international, UK and Welsh level which drives and supports the management of Natura 2000. The primary European legislation is the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive which promote the conservation and management of natural habitats and wild species. Key UK legislation includes the Habitats Regulations, Wildlife and Countryside Act, and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act. Wales is developing a new approach to integrated and sustainable natural resource management, through for example, the Environment (Wales) Bill and the Nature Recovery Plan. Further information is provided in the *LIFE Natura 2000 Programme Facts and Figures Report*.

Recent policies and legislation for fisheries management in Wales and internationally are underpinned by an ecosystem approach, which derives from the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity and the subsequent declaration of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development. Ecosystem-based fisheries management (EBFM) has been adopted as a central tenet of the FAO (UN) Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries 1995, and is a stated objective of national and regional fisheries policies and strategies (e.g. Europe's Reformed Common Fisheries Policy 2014). The ecosystem approach has also been adopted in a number of cross-sector European policies, including the Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP), the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) and the Blue Growth Policy.

At the UK level, the ecosystem approach has been incorporated into the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, and in Wales, underlies the Environment (Wales) Bill, and the Wales Marine and Fisheries Strategic Action Plan (WG 2013). The MCAA has simplified governance of marine fisheries in Wales to some extent through the creation of the Welsh Zone (Boundaries and Transfer of Functions) Order 2010 extending the area over which the Welsh Government had jurisdiction for marine fisheries management. It also brought the management of inshore fisheries, formally the domain of the local Sea Fishery Committees, into the Welsh Government.

The key policy and legislation relevant to marine fisheries in Wales are listed below.

### European

- **Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) (first introduced in 1970s, most recently reformed in 2014)** – set of rules for managing European fishing fleets and for conserving fish stocks<sup>13</sup>. Focused on managing a common resources, seeks to ensure that fishing and aquaculture are environmentally, economically and socially sustainable and that they provide a source of healthy food for EU citizens.
- **Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) 2009** – framework to achieve Good Environmental Status (GES) of the EU's marine waters by 2020 and to protect the resource base upon which marine-related economic and social activities depend<sup>14</sup>. The MSFD has 11 descriptors, one of which is Commercial fisheries (D3), other descriptors also have relevance for marine fisheries including Biodiversity (D1), Food webs (D4) and Seafloor integrity (D6).

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<sup>13</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/index_en.htm)

<sup>14</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/marine/eu-coast-and-marine-policy/marine-strategy-framework-directive/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/marine/eu-coast-and-marine-policy/marine-strategy-framework-directive/index_en.htm)

## UK

- **Marine and Coastal Access Act (MCAA) 2009** – system to improve management and protection of the UK marine and coastal environment. It has eight key elements, including fisheries management and marine enforcement. The legislation allowed WG to rationalise management of marine fisheries in Wales by transferring functions of the two Sea Fisheries Committees and the Marine Fisheries Agency (MFA) to the Welsh Government (WG). It also expanded the remit of marine fisheries management organisations to conserve marine ecosystems whilst enabling a profitable and sustainable fisheries sector. Other key elements include powers to designate Marine Conservation Zones with the aim of halting deterioration of the UKs marine biodiversity and enable recovery where possible, in support of commitments under MSFD, OSPAR and the Convention on Biological Diversity<sup>15</sup>.
- **Welsh Zone (Boundaries and Transfer of Functions) Order 2010** – transfer of powers related to fishing, fisheries and fish health to Welsh Ministers and specifies boundaries of the Welsh Zone<sup>16</sup>.

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## Wales

- **Wales Marine and Fisheries Strategic Action Plan 2013** – sets out a vision for the development of marine and fisheries policy in Wales. Underpinned by an ecosystem-based approach and identifies the importance of a more collaborative approach to managing the marine environment. From the fisheries perspective, the focus is on developing profitable, sustainable fisheries. Given recent significant changes in the management of marine fisheries in Wales in recent years, this Plan also outlines the process of fisheries legislative review that is currently being progressed.
- **Environment (Wales) Bill** – overarching aims of the Bill are to put in place legislation that will enable Wales' resources to be managed in a more proactive, sustainable and joined-up way. In terms of fisheries, the Bill clarifies the law in relation to shellfisheries management and marine licensing<sup>17</sup>.

There are many other drivers that have relevance for the management of marine fisheries. For example, the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 in terms of social and economic development; the UK Marine Policy Statement 2012 and the developing Wales National Marine Plan in terms of cross sector management of marine activities; the Shellfish Waters Directive 2006 and Water Framework Directive 2000 in terms of water quality and food health.

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<sup>15</sup> <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-5230>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.assembly.wales/en/bus-home/Pages/PlenaryItem.aspx?category=Ministerial%20Statement&itemid=661>

## 6. Current mechanisms and planned actions on sites to 2020

The Welsh Government is responsible for the management of all marine fisheries activities in the Welsh Zone, which extends from the coast out to the median line, apart from:

- management of the Dee and Burry Cockle Regulating Orders (managed by NRW);
- management of migratory fish under the Salmon Act 1986 (managed by NRW); and
- non-UK vessels with historical fishing rights to operate within the Welsh zone (managed under the CFP).

There are a number of mechanisms and tools available to the Welsh Government for fisheries management in Wales mainly delivered through statutory instruments including Regulating and Several Orders. These allow for:

- Gear and vessel restrictions
- Minimum landing sizes
- Spatial and temporal restrictions
- Permits

The Welsh Government are currently undertaking a review of over 200 national and EU level fishery regulations that apply in Wales to ensure that they are fit-for-purpose.

The site level actions identified within the Prioritised Improvement Plans (PIPs) and Site Improvement Plans (SIPs) and NRW Actions Database for addressing impacts or potential impacts of marine fisheries activities on Natura 2000 features identified the following mechanism categories:

- **Investigation** is the most frequently identified mechanism against marine fisheries issues / risks (30 of 33 actions). This mechanism is identified for use where a better understanding and evidence base of the direct and indirect effects on habitats and species is required to enable the development of management actions where appropriate.

Example investigation actions include:

- Studies to address impacts or potential impacts of hand gathering (including bait collection and the removal of diver caught crayfish) at a number of SAC sites. These actions are flagged for consideration in a cross Wales *Review of unregulated activities targeting marine living resources* to be led by NRW.
- Studies of the direct effects (gear impacts) and indirect effects (removal of typical species) of potting and netting on Natura 2000 features at a number of SAC sites. These actions are flagged for consideration as part of a cross Wales project assessing fishing activities led by the Welsh Government.

- **Direct management** is cited as a mechanism to address marine fisheries issues/risks in 2 out of 33 actions. It indicates where action is required by the competent authority, the Welsh Government or NRW. This mechanism has been used to highlight the need for further development of cockle fisheries management



for Carmarthen Bay and Estuaries SAC. The overarching objective of this action is to integrate environmental assessment and subsequent management for the cockle fishery, taking account of the direct and indirect effects of the removal of cockles on SPA features.

- **Targeted education, awareness raising and liaison** as a mechanism can be used to develop projects to educate or inform people about the impacts that activities can have on features and to encourage more sustainable behaviours. A single action was recorded under this mechanism for Anglesey Saltmarsh SAC to address impacts from access for sea fisheries (e.g. cockling, winkle picking, mussels collection) on the mudflats and their typical species (e.g. *Zostera*), and vehicle access across the saltmarsh.

It is not possible to provide estimated costs or NRW staff time for identified actions at this stage as in many cases the full scope of the actions has not been finalised. For the **direct management** and **targeted education, awareness raising and liaison** actions, staff time will be required from the Welsh Government and NRW, and further input from wider marine fisheries stakeholders to enable delivery. The **investigation** actions are likely to require funding and staff time (WG and NRW), and will involve input from NRW operational and KSP colleagues, and external parties with an interest in marine fisheries. It is envisaged that Wales-level delivery of some of the investigative actions is likely to be more cost effective as this will allow generic assessment of the inherent sensitivity of Natura 2000 features to marine fisheries activities, and site level consideration of these sensitivities and the vulnerability of features to those activities (i.e. the likelihood of overlap of activities and features).

## 7. Rationale for strategic actions

Challenges with managing marine fisheries activities across the marine Natura 2000 sites, and in Wales' waters more widely, predominantly arise due to:

- Limited data on the spatial distribution and intensity of marine fisheries activities;
- Incomplete (or low confidence data) on the extent of protected features (particularly sub-tidal features) which marine fisheries can impact;
- Incomplete data on:
  - sensitivities of Wales' marine Natura 2000 features to different fishing activities, gears and intensities, and access associated with them; and
  - vulnerability of features at the site level (where activities overlap with features).

These challenges are reflected in the high number of **investigations** actions that have been identified (Section 5), and exist for both regulated marine fisheries and currently unregulated activities (commercial and recreational) that target marine living resources. The emphasis in developing the strategic actions was to build a better evidence base to underpin marine fisheries management to enable the development of management actions that are focussed and able to deliver improvements in the condition of marine Natura 2000 features and the Welsh marine environment.

The Welsh Government have stated a commitment to the delivery of marine fisheries management in partnership with stakeholders in the Wales Marine and Fisheries Strategic Action Plan 2013. Key demonstration of this commitment came from the Minister for Natural Resources and Food in June 2013, who “...*signalled his intention to develop a co-management approach with the fishing industry...*” In the context of an ecosystem approach, there is consensus that people are part of the ecosystem and should also be part of the management process<sup>18</sup>. Meaningful stakeholder participation has been demonstrated to increase the credibility of management objectives, foster stakeholder support for the resultant management, and thus improve the likelihood of management success. Stakeholder involvement can also bring new (non-traditional) data and understanding to the table to aid decision-making.

Inshore Fisheries Groups (IFGs) have already been established in Wales (to enable continued stakeholder involvement following the abolition of the Sea Fisheries Committees) with the intention of improving management of local fisheries through partnerships. IFG membership includes representatives from the fishing sector, the Welsh Government, the scientific community, environmental bodies and NRW. IFGs are forums to raise and discuss issues or concerns and shape proposals for the management of marine fisheries in a collaborative way. Local scale projects are also being progressed, for example Welsh marine stakeholders in North Wales are currently engaged in a co-management project on the Llŷn Peninsula where they are looking at local marine issues and evidence gaps. The project will seek to adopt locally supported management mechanisms as necessary, and both the Welsh Government and NRW are involved in this process.

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<sup>18</sup> See Bloomfield HJ, Stamp T and Goudge H (2014). A Process for Implementing an Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management in Wales: a literature review. Natural Resources Wales, Contract Number No R006, 92pp.

## 8. Development of strategic actions

The strategic actions to assess and manage impacts and potential impacts of marine fisheries activities on features have been developed through a process of engagement, in combination with analysis of the LIFE Natura 2000 Programme data. At an initial NRW workshop (November 2014), participants were asked to consider existing management approaches for marine fisheries, and to identify new strategic actions which could address impacts regionally or at a Welsh or UK level. These proposals were then reviewed by a small working group.

The draft strategic actions were made available for comment to a wider audience through a series of three workshops during the summer of 2015. The first workshop was open to sector leads from the Welsh Government, while the second and third workshops (held on the 19 and 25 August 2015, in Garwnant and Bangor respectively) were attended by representatives of interested organisations in Wales, from, for example, the third sector, local authorities, representatives from the marine fishing industry and other user groups. There were 84 attendees. Drafts were made available to others not able to attend the events on request. A specific meeting was also held with a representative from the marine fishing industry to discuss both the draft strategic actions and actions identified within the PIPs. Feedback on the strategic actions was received from a wide range of stakeholders (including from marine industry, environmental non-governmental organisations and European Marine Site Officers), and was used by the working group to finalise the strategic actions.

The focus for the development of the strategic actions has been on identifying gaps in current management, for example gaps in the evidence base to underpin management of the Natura 2000 network or in policy / legislation needed to deliver desired outcomes. Strategic actions have been developed to address these gaps to improve management and decision making, and ultimately the condition of Natura 2000 features across Wales.

The strategic actions are intended to be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Assignable, Realistic and Time-related) and therefore information has been provided on estimated costs and time-scales where possible. One or more proposed delivery organisations are also listed against each action. The intention is that the organisation proposed as lead would drive the action forward, collaborating with other partners and stakeholders as necessary.

The following table in Section 9 describes the strategic actions which would be required to manage and address impacts from marine fisheries on Natura 2000 features. The table also identifies where strategic actions could meet objectives of other policies and work programmes.

## 9. Strategic actions for Natura 2000 in Wales: Marine fisheries

The following represent a list of proposed actions which are needed to make progress towards favourable condition of Natura 2000 features. They do not represent a fully funded or committed operational plan.

	Action	Detail	Priority	Link to existing work programmes	Identified or possible mechanisms	Proposed lead organisation	Proposed partner organisation(s)	Estimated cost	Proposed timetable
1.	Improve marine fisheries evidence base in line with the recommendations identified in the Welsh Marine and Fisheries Strategic Action Plan in support of obligations under European legislation. This should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- collection of high resolution spatial data on fishing effort;</li> <li>- collection of catch data per fishery;</li> <li>- improved data accessibility.</li> </ul>	European legislative obligations include Habitats and Birds Directives, Common Fisheries Policy, Marine Strategy Framework Directive etc.	High	Legislative review Assessing fishing activities Marine Ecosystems Research Programme FishMap Môn methodologies Marine Strategy Framework Directive	Investigation Changes to policy and / or legislation	Welsh Government	Natural Resources Wales Welsh Fisheries Association Universities Seafish Cefas Non-Government Organisation	Staff time TBC (Technology and analysis)	2015 - ongoing
2.	Continue a programme of work to complete and maintain a high resolution data map of sub-tidal feature location and extent in European Marine Sites in Wales.	One of the challenges for managing EMSs is incomplete (or low confidence) data on the extent of the protected features.  This would need to include analysis of existing side-scan data and collection of data where gaps exist in the series.  This work is essential to underpin a number work areas.	High	Assessing fishing activities N2K monitoring and reporting United Kingdom Hydrographic Office Clean Marine Ecosystem Project Bangor SOS <sup>i</sup> , Sustainable Fisheries in Wales Project Marine Ecosystems Research Programme	Investigations Marine management	Welsh Government	Natural Resources Wales United Kingdom Hydrographic Office	£5m	2017 - ongoing
3.	Develop a programme of work on the assessment of marine fishing activities to increase understanding of direct and indirect impacts of different fishing activities on European Marine Site features.	This will include a generic assessment of the sensitivity of features to different fishing activities and gears, and a vulnerability assessment at	High	Assessing fishing activities England's revised approach to assessing fishing activities	Investigation	Welsh Government	Natural Resources Wales	£3m <sup>ii</sup>	2015 - ongoing

		the site level against specific features.		Scotland's new Marine Protected Area programme Marine Strategy Framework Directive					
4.	Carry out a cross-Wales review of unregulated activities targeting living marine resources.	This should consider the extent of activities, impacts of extractions and associated activities (e.g. access) on EMS features, and the recoverability of EMS features.  The bait collection aspect of this action should build on Perry <i>et al.</i> <sup>iii</sup> ; and Bean and Appleby <sup>iv</sup> . Should also be informed by relevant information from Boyes <i>et al.</i> 2006 <sup>v</sup>	High	DEFRA Impacts Evidence Group FishMap Môn methodologies LIFE Natura 2000 Access and Recreation Thematic Action Plan Strategic Action 2	Investigation Developing policy and / or legislation	Natural Resources Wales	Welsh Government Universities Cefas Consultancies	TBC	2016 - ongoing
5.	Integrate Welsh Government and NRW evidence strategies to avoid duplication, better understand roles and responsibilities, and identify priorities work areas and deliver programmes.		Medium	Marine Transition Programme NRW's Marine Programme Evidence work	Integration	Welsh Government & Natural Resources Wales	Universities Cefas Consultancies	Staff time	2015 / 2016

i School of Ocean Sciences

ii Indicative cost: this was the amount of money IFCAs in England were given to take forward similar work.

iii Intertidal species collection in Wales: Impacts review. Perry, F., Morris E and Burton S.

iv Guidelines for Sustainable Intertidal Bait and Seaweed Collection in Wales. Bean E.J and Appleby T.P.S.

v Unlicensed activities: a review to consider the threats to marine biodiversity. Report to DEFRA by Boyes, S., Burdon, D. and Elliot, M. 2006.

## Appendix A: Natura 2000 sites and features identified as being affected (or with the potential to be affected) by marine fisheries activities.

Data was derived from the NRW Actions Database following work by the LIFE Natura 2000 Programme. High, medium and low priority issues and risks are included, recorded for whole sites.

A cross (X) indicates where a feature has been identified as being affected (or with the potential to be affected) by marine fisheries activities; grey shading means that the feature is not designated at that site; white cells show features which are designated but have not been identified as being affected (or with the potential to be affected) by marine fisheries activities. Data from September 2015.

Feature	Designation	Burry Inlet SPA	Cardigan Bay / Bae Ceredigion SAC	Carmarthen Bay and Estuaries / Bae Caerfyrddin ac Aberoedd SAC	Dee Estuary / Aber Dyfrydwy SAC	Dee Estuary / Aber Dyfrydwy SPA	Glannau Mon : Cors heli / Anglesey Coast:	Grassholm SPA	Pembrokeshire Marine / Sir Benfro Forol SAC	Pen Llyn ar Sarnau SAC	Y Fenai a Bae Conwy / Menai Strait and Conwy
Annual vegetation of drift lines	SAC				X						
Atlantic salt meadows	SAC						X		X	X	
Estuaries	SAC			X	X		X		X	X	
Glasswort and other annuals colonising mud and sand	SAC				X		X			X	
Grey seal	SAC		X						X	X	
Intertidal mudflats and sandflats	SAC			X	X		X		X	X	X
Otter	SAC									X	
Reefs	SAC		X						X	X	X
Shallow inlets and bays	SAC			X					X	X	
Black-tailed godwit	SPA					X					
Common redshank	SPA					X					
Common shelduck	SPA					X					
Common tern	SPA					X					
Dunlin	SPA					X					
Eurasian curlew	SPA					X					
Eurasian oystercatcher	SPA	X				X					
Eurasian teal	SPA					X					
Grey plover	SPA					X					
Northern gannet	SPA							X			
Northern pintail	SPA					X					
Red knot	SPA					X					