



**UK NATIONAL REPORT ON THE  
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE  
RAMSAR CONVENTION  
ON WETLANDS**

**Submitted 23 October 2024 to the 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting  
of the Conference of the Contracting Parties**

## **Background information**

1. The COP15 National Report form (NRF) was approved by the Standing Committee at its 62nd meeting (SC62). It was used by Contracting Parties to submit their National Report to the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties of the Convention, which took place in Zimbabwe, in July 2025.
2. The deadline for submission of completed National Reports for COP15 was 23 October 2024.
3. The COP15 NRF closely follows the form used for COP14, to permit continuity of reporting and analysis of implementation progress by ensuring that indicator questions are as far as possible consistent with previous NRFs (and especially the COP14 NRF). It is also structured in terms of the goals and targets of the Convention's fourth Strategic Plan for 2016-2024 adopted at COP12 through Resolution XII.2. Several questions were added based on COP14 mandates. Changes were also made in the wording of some questions to add clarity and enhance ease of reporting and data analysis.
4. Section 4 was provided as an optional annex in order to facilitate the task of preparing a Party's national targets and actions for the implementation of targets for the remaining triennium of the fourth Strategic Plan in accordance with Resolution XII.2.
5. Note that, for the purpose of the NRF, the scope of the term "wetland" is that of the Convention text, i.e. all inland wetlands (including lakes and rivers), all nearshore coastal wetlands (including tidal marshes, mangroves and coral reefs) and human-made wetlands (e.g. rice paddy and reservoirs), even if a national definition of "wetland" may differ from that adopted by the Contracting Parties to the Convention.

## **The purposes and uses of national reporting to the Conference of the Contracting Parties**

7. National Reports from Contracting Parties are official documents of the Convention and are made publicly available on the Convention's website.
8. There are seven main purposes for the Convention's National Reports. These are:
  - i. to provide data and information on how, and to what extent, the Convention is being implemented;
  - ii. to provide tools for countries for their national planning;
  - iii. to capture lessons and experience to help Parties plan future action;
  - iv. to identify emerging issues and implementation challenges faced by Parties that may require further attention from the Conference of the Contracting Parties;
  - v. to provide a means for Parties to account for their commitments under the Convention;
  - vi. to provide each Party with a tool to help it assess and monitor its progress in implementing the Convention, and to plan its future priorities; and
  - vii. to provide an opportunity for Parties to draw attention to their achievements during the triennium.
9. The data and information provided by Parties in their National Reports are a vital source for:
  - i. the analysis and assessment of the "ecological outcome-oriented indicators of the effectiveness of the implementation of the Convention"; and
  - ii. other multilateral environmental agreements (MEA) and their commitments, notably the Sustainable Development Goals and the extent of wetlands and the Global Biodiversity Targets of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) among others.
10. To facilitate the analysis and subsequent use of the data and information provided by Contracting Parties in their National Reports, the Secretariat holds in a database all the information it has received and verified. In order to facilitate incorporation of COP15 reporting data in the database, all National Reports should be done through the online reporting system (ORS).
11. The Convention's National Reports are used in a number of ways. These include:
  - i. compilation and analysis of information that Contracting Parties can use to inform their national planning and programming;
  - ii. as the basis for reporting by the Secretariat to each meeting of the Conference of the Parties on the global, national and regional implementation, and the progress in implementation, of the Convention. This is provided to Parties at the COP in two documents, including:
    - \* the Report of the Secretary General on the implementation of the Convention at the global level;
    - and

\* the Report of the Secretary General pursuant to Article 8.2 (b), (c), and (d) concerning the List of Wetlands of International Importance;

iii. to provide information on specific implementation issues in support of the provision of advice and decisions by Parties at the COP;

iv. as the source data for time-series assessments of progress on specific aspects of the implementation of the Convention, which may be included in other Convention outputs; and

v. for reporting to the CBD on the national implementation of the Joint Work Plan of the two Conventions, and the Convention's lead implementation role on wetlands for the CBD. In 2022, in accordance with paragraph 11 of Resolution XIV.4, Annex 2 of the fourth Strategic Plan was updated to align the goals and targets with the new Global Biodiversity Framework targets (see <https://www.ramsar.org/document/the-4th-strategic-plan-2016-2024-2022-update>). Thus the COP15 NRF enabled Contracting Parties to indicate how the actions they are undertaking for the implementation of the Convention may be contributing to the new Global Biodiversity Framework.

## Section 1: Institutional information

### Designated Administrative Authority for the Convention on Wetlands

Name of Administrative Authority: **Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)**

Head of Administrative Authority - name and title: **Ananda Guha, Deputy Director, International Strategic Engagement and Multilaterals, International Biodiversity and Climate Directorate**

Mailing address: **Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 1st Floor, Seacole Building, 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF, UK**

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### Designated National Focal Point for the Convention on Wetlands

Name and title: **Thomas Arnold, Ramsar Wetlands Convention Team Leader, International Strategic Engagement and Multilaterals, International Biodiversity and Climate Directorate**

Mailing address: **Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), 1st Floor, Seacole Building, 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF, UK**

Telephone:

Email: [Thomas.Arnold1@defra.gov.uk](mailto:Thomas.Arnold1@defra.gov.uk)

### Designated Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) National Focal Point

Name and title: **Stephen Grady, Senior International Biodiversity Adviser**

Name of organization: **Joint Nature Conservation Committee**

Mailing address: **Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Monkstone House, City Road, Peterborough, PE1 1JY, UK**

Telephone:

Email: [Stephen.Grady@jncc.gov.uk](mailto:Stephen.Grady@jncc.gov.uk)

### Designated Government Communication, Capacity Building, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA) Programme National Focal Point

Name and title: **Thomas Arnold, Ramsar Wetlands Convention Team Leader, International Strategic Engagement and Multilaterals, International Biodiversity and Climate Directorate**

Name of organization: **Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)**

Mailing address: **Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), 1st Floor, Seacole Building, 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF, UK**

Telephone:

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### Designated Non-Governmental Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA) Programme National Focal Point

Name and title: **International Engagement Manager [post vacant, DEFRA and WWT are currently discussing a new appointment]**

Name of organization: **The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust**

Mailing address: **The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT), Slimbridge, Gloucestershire, GL2 7BT, UK**

Telephone:

Email:

### Designated National Focal Point on Strengthening the Convention on Wetland's Connections through Youth

Name and title: **No designated National Focal Point**

## Section 2: General summary of national implementation progress and challenges

In your country, in the past triennium (i.e., since COP14 reporting):

### A. What have been the five main achievements of the implementation of the Convention since COP14?

1) The UK has continued to initiate measures to further protect and restore peatlands, through a blend of government and private funding for restoration projects, country-level peatland plans, and the coordination and advocacy work of the IUCN UK Peatland Programme which aims to drive action through the UK Peatland Strategy (see sections 3.3 and 12.1-12.4 for further details).

2) We have undertaken continued investment in a wide range of UK policies and other measures that are broadly analogous with the 'wise use' principles of the Ramsar Convention, including:

i) implementation of domestic legislation across the UK that provides, amongst other things, statutory protection for sites of national and international importance for nature conservation (including wetland habitats and species), provisions to ensure that for such sites appropriate levels of development controls are in place and that planning proposals and other potentially damaging operations are subject to appropriate levels of scrutiny, and measures are progressed to protect and restore water bodies to reach good ecological status;

ii) making progress on domestic environmental improvements following the passing of the Environment Act 2021 in England, including the publication of an environmental principles policy statement (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-principles-policy-statement/environmental-principles-policy-statement>). This work has been framed around the Environment Act's legally binding national environmental improvement targets, which include:

- halting the decline in species abundance by 2030 and reversing the decline in species by 2042;
- reducing the risk of species extinction; and
- restoring or creating more than 500,000 hectares of wildlife-rich habitats (including wetlands);

iii) publication of the Defra (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP 2023), which sets out coordinated actions to implement improvements to biodiversity, water and air quality across England, including:

- an interim target to restore or create 140,000 hectares of a range of wildlife-rich habitats (including wetlands) outside protected sites by 2028 (see sections 1.1 and 12.1); and
- a commitment to bring 75% of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) into favourable condition by 2042, including Ramsar Sites and other nationally important wetland sites (see sections 1.1, 9.1 and 12.1 for further details);

iv) publication of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to 2045 and Edinburgh Declaration by the Scottish Government; following revisions which are currently being made to the first 5-year Delivery Plan in the light of a recent consultation exercise (see sections 1.1, 3.3 and 9.1).

v) publication of the Defra Plan for Water in England in 2023 that sets out the actions to transform management of the whole water system, deliver a clean water environment, and create a plentiful sustainable supply of water, supported by an £11 million Water Restoration Fund 2024 to help restore water and wetland habitats and species (see sections 2.4 and 3.4);

vi) updating of River Basin Management Plans, which set out how organisations, stakeholders and communities can work together to protect and improve the quality of the water environment across an entire river system, including river, lake, groundwater, estuarine and coastal water bodies (see section 2.4).

3) In the UK, significant resources have been invested in tackling Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS), as detailed under 4.1-4.3 – these include:

- the production of a refreshed GB Invasive Non-native Species Strategy for 2023-2030;
- the establishment of a GB INNS inspectorate to raise awareness, ensure existing legislation is better understood, and reduce the risk of INNS being introduced;
- GB risk assessments have continued to be produced for new INNS and joint information and awareness raising campaigns and events undertaken;
- Scottish Government has recently allocated approximately £2 million in funding over the next three years to continue the work of the Scottish Invasive Species Initiative;
- activities undertaken through the Wales Resilient Ecological Network (WaREN) project, which acts as a framework for tackling invasive species across Wales;
- on the Channel Islands, site specific policies on INNS have been developed and a marine INNS management framework launched on Alderney, an INNS Action Plan and Horizon Scanning report have been published and a Marine Biosecurity Plan commissioned on Guernsey, and a rapid risk assessment framework for marine INNS has been commissioned on Jersey;
- action to address the threat of INNS across the UK Overseas Territories.

4) The first phase of Third Review of the UK Special Protection Area (SPA) network (<https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/special-protection-areas-overview/#spa-reviews-third-review-2000s>) provided a *de facto* review of the avian aspects of the UK Ramsar Site network. The report on the Second Phase of this review, publication of which is planned for autumn 2024, sets out detailed advice and options for the designation of new sites, addition of qualifying bird species to existing sites, reviews of site boundaries and management, and survey/monitoring needs.

5) The UK has extended and added further protection to Ramsar Sites:

- in August 2023, the Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands Ramsar Site in Scotland was extended by over 2,300 hectares making it is the largest UK Ramsar Site – in July 2024, the site also attained World Heritage status as a natural feature (see section 5.1 for details);
- official recognition has been given to a protected area within the Alderney West Coast and Burhou Islands Ramsar Site by the UK Hydrographic Office, meaning it is now represented on marine charts – this ‘Puffin Friendly Zone’ is now off limits to boat traffic during the breeding season, reducing disturbance to an important but fragile breeding bird colony;
- on Jersey: (i) four Areas of Special Protection have been designated at Les Écréhous Ramsar Site and another two at Les Minquiers Ramsar Site in order to protect the breeding activities, nesting and young of protected wild birds; (ii) a key recommendation in the Jersey Marine Spatial Plan is to extend the No Mobile Gear Zone to the Ramsar Site boundary at Les Écréhous and Les Minquiers Ramsar Sites, Jersey, which would add further statutory protection; and (iii) the Jersey Coastal National Park 2021 Review report recommends that at Les Écréhous, Les Minquiers and the Les Pierres de Lecq Ramsar Sites, the boundary of the Jersey Coastal National Park is extended from the high-water mark the low water mark thereby covering the intertidal zone.

**B. What have been the five main challenges in implementing the Convention since COP14?**

1) Although the UK has the largest number of Ramsar Sites (176) designated as wetlands of international importance of any of the Contracting Parties, there is an overall lack of familiarity with the Ramsar Convention and its provisions amongst some environmental conservation and restoration actors in the UK. This is in part due to the range of other domestic policies, plans, regulations and measures that exist in parallel, including the co-designation of many Ramsar Sites as Special Areas of Conservation and/or Special Protection Areas. Similarly, the UK has parallel obligations and commitments under other MEAs, including those under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). The UK Government has made efforts to ensure that these parallel provisions are nonetheless complementary to the objectives of the Ramsar Convention around the conservation and wise use of wetlands.

2) Addressing complex, multifaceted and resource-demanding issues such as diffuse nutrient pollution, improving the ecological status of freshwater and other wetland habitats, and promoting integrated management of water across sectors has continued to prove difficult, despite the development of a significant number of policies, regulations, statutory mechanisms and other measures aimed at promoting the conservation and sustainable use of wetland ecosystems and water resources. New measures have been designed to help address this, such as the £30 million Nutrient Mitigation Scheme and Wetland Mitigation Framework in England which focuses on mitigating the additional nutrient inputs arising from new housing development.

3) Resourcing for baseline inventory and monitoring of Ramsar Sites and wetlands more widely has proved challenging, partly because of the remote and patchy nature of certain wetland habitats, but also because of fluctuations in the resources that are made available to public authorities for this purpose. The UK has continued to make best use of existing resources and to develop and use new technologies.

4) Some of the UK Ramsar Sites in the UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs) are located on relatively small, remote islands that have small human populations, limited resources and limited capacity for planning, monitoring and management. Accordingly, there is some reliance on external funding and securing expertise from external sources (e.g. via Darwin Plus <https://darwinplus.org.uk/>), which can be difficult to sustain, limits the amount of work that can be carried out, and projects are often scaled down to reflect the resources available. The Bailiwick of Guernsey faces similar issues, although the islands have higher population density and increasing development pressures, and funding is heavily reliant on local government or small grants from philanthropic private sources as most large funding streams available to the UKOTs are not currently available to the Crown Dependencies.

5) Control and preventing establishment of highly invasive non-native species is a major problem. Effective biosecurity measures to prevent INNS establishing are critical, but these are difficult to design and implement. Short-term funding cycles are often not compatible with the life cycle of invasive species control projects. Many of the species that have established in the freshwater and marine environment are exceptionally difficult to control and effective methods of eradication are not easy to design – they can also be difficult to apply, need to be sustained over a long timeframe, and can have environmentally damaging side-effects. Nevertheless, the UK has invested considerable resources and developed a wide range of measures to address the issue of INNS, as detailed under sections 4.1-4.4.

**C. Please outline five priorities for implementing the Convention in your country during the coming triennium (2026-2028):**

1) To protect, restore and expand nature-rich wetland and freshwater habitats across the UK, as well as cleaning up rivers, lakes and seas by tackling pollution from a wide range of sources. To help address this, UK Governments have announced a series of environmental priorities, including reform of the water sector in England and a rapid review of England's Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP 2023) to deliver our legally binding targets to save nature. This approach will build on the commitments under the EIP 2023 to support the conservation and wise use of wetlands, promote wetland and peatland restoration, and ensure Ramsar Site management plans are in place and new Ramsar Wetlands Protection Areas are identified.

2) To further progress and support the IUCN UK Peatland Programme (<https://www.iucn-uk-peatlandprogramme.org>) and related peatland activities, including:

- implementation of England's Peat Action Plan which commits to restore 35,000 hectares of peatland by 2025;
- enforcement of recent legislation to limit burning of vegetation on protected blanket bog in England;
- confirmation of continued public finance in England following the recently successful Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme;
- continuation and extension of the Welsh National Peatlands Action Programme launched in 2020, which includes a five-year programme to restore 600-800 hectares of peatland annually targeted on key restoration sites and plans to produce peatland habitat inventories based on a new peat map;
- continued investment in peatland restoration supported by funding from Scottish Government through the Scotland Peatland ACTION project, which has a restoration target of 250,000 hectares by 2030 with an interim target of 110,000 hectares by 2026;
- progressing the draft national peatland strategy in Northern Ireland, which is awaiting sign-off by ministers, as supported by the recently launched £3 million peatland challenge fund (<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/news/muir-opens-ps3million-peatland-challenge-fund-competition>).

3) Continue to support the development and uptake of the latest data and technology, supporting science-led delivery of wetland protection and restoration both in the UK and globally. This includes delivering on the commitment to develop a National Wetland Inventory (NWI) in support of the Ramsar Convention, thereby mapping UK wetlands and providing a means to improve monitoring and reporting on wetland ecosystems. The NWI will also support greater co-ordination across the Governments of the four nations of the UK and recognises the important role that NWIs can provide in supporting Contracting Parties' delivery of their wider environmental obligations and commitments, including under the GBF, its 30x30 target, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

4) Continued support from the UK Government for biodiversity conservation in the UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs), including:

- providing support to protect the unique environments of the UKOTs through:
  - (i) the Darwin Plus fund, which provides grants to help deliver outcomes for the unique biodiversity, the natural environment and improving resilience to climate change within the UKOTs (<https://darwinplus.org.uk/>);
  - (ii) the Blue Belt Programme, which supports the protection and sustainable management of marine environments in the UKOTs (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-blue-belt-programme>);



- developing a new UKOT Biodiversity Strategy to facilitate action on invasive species and improve biosecurity;
- reviewing the status of management plans, including the potential for creating and implementing new management plans, as well as the need for extending and establishing further Ramsar Wetland Protected Areas;
- raising awareness and improving opportunities for educational use of designated sites;
- increasing the resilience of the UKOTs to natural disasters, as caused by disease outbreaks (e.g. bird flu), hurricane-related flooding, severe drought, and wildfires, including opportunities to maximise the role of coastal vegetation, mangroves and coral reefs (see the Marine Climate Change Impacts Partnership for further information <https://www.mccip.org.uk/uk-overseas-territories>);
- improving wetland inventory and other baseline data.

5) To support biodiversity conservation in other countries, including using funding from UK International Climate Finance (ICF) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/international-climate-finance>). The UK Government has committed to spending £11.6 billion on ICF between 2021-22 and 2025-26, balanced between spending on mitigation and adaptation. It will provide climate change solutions and funding for projects that will protect and restore biodiversity-rich land and oceans, help create sustainable food systems and support the livelihoods of the world's poorest. This in turn will support Official Development Assistance (ODA) eligible countries and may also fulfil many objectives of the Ramsar Convention, such as preserving water catchments in areas facing increased drought risk.

**D. Does the Administrative Authority have any recommendations concerning implementation assistance from the Convention Secretariat?**

Whilst the development of the online Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) portal has been an excellent development, there is still no possibility of database-to-database transfer of information as requested by COP in 2002. For countries like the UK with a large number of Ramsar Sites, the manual input of data, on a site-by-site basis, remains a major constraint to our ability to provide data and information on our Ramsar Site network. Delivery of the data vision requested in 2002 would be of enormous value. We would also appreciate a review of the RIS/Ramsar Site Information Service system to ensure the Secretariat is able to promptly confirm receipt and publication of RIS updates and that it is clear which aspects of the RIS are mandatory and which are optional. The UK Government is pleased to be currently engaging with the Secretariat and other Contracting Parties in the RIS Working Group, to constructively address these topics.

**E. Does the Administrative Authority have any recommendations concerning implementation assistance from the Convention's International Organization Partners (IOPs) (including ongoing partnerships and partnerships to be developed)?**

No.

**F. In accordance with paragraph 21 of Resolution XIII.18 on *Gender and wetlands*, please provide a short description about the balance between genders participating in wetland-related decisions, programmes and research.**

The UK does not specifically monitor diversity in our work related to wetlands. Nevertheless, the UK strongly supports diverse workforces and makes information about diversity across the UK Civil Service publicly available (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-diversity-inclusion-dashboard/civil-service-diversity-and-inclusion-dashboard>). The UK Equality

Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society, and promotes equality in the areas of nine protected characteristics, including gender.

**G. On the basis of your indications above, list possible areas where change is necessary for the achievement of gender equality.**

The UK Government will continue to pursue policies which ensure diversity of participation in environmental management and conservation, without discrimination on any grounds.

**H. Please describe lessons learnt in the context of wetlands and gender equality work in your country.**

Building on existing gender equality policies and legislation, the UK Government will continue to explore opportunities to improve the analysis and reporting of gender equality work into the next reporting cycle.

**I. If possible, please list gender-related policies, strategies and action plans in place relevant to wetlands in your country.**

Although the UK does not currently have gender-related policies or strategies specifically relating to wetlands, the UK Government's overarching commitment to ensuring the diversity of participation in environmental management and conservation, without discrimination, fully applies. This includes continued efforts to tackle the gender stereotypes and prejudice that underpin discrimination, and encouraging partnerships across government, civil and private sectors. For more information see

[https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/gender\\_equality\\_and\\_empowerment\\_in\\_the\\_uk.pdf](https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/gender_equality_and_empowerment_in_the_uk.pdf).

**J. If applicable, identify examples of strategies and actions your country is implementing to support youth participation in the implementation of the Convention's Strategic Plan or in wetlands management (Resolution XIV.12 on *Strengthening Ramsar connections through youth*, paragraph 21).**

Multiple education and youth participation programmes cover wetland conservation and wise use issues. The national curriculum science programme in England, for example, includes studying living things and their habitats

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-science-programmes-of-study/national-curriculum-in-england-science-programmes-of-study>).

Wetland ecology and wise use issues form part of numerous degree courses in the UK, and postgraduate degree programmes in aquatic and wetland conservation are also available. The Department for Education has also commissioned a National Education Nature Park as part of their Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy. This is open to all educational establishments in England and specifically includes wetlands/blue spaces. It allows students to survey and map biodiversity in their school grounds and take actions to improve it

(<https://www.educationnaturepark.org.uk/>).

The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT) runs a learning programme for all ages from pre-school to higher education and adult groups, which welcomes around 50,000 learners per year. This welcomes around 50,000 learners per year (72% primary school, 4% secondary, 3% pre-school, 12% other, 5% FE/HE, 4% Special Educational Needs), including 15,000 learners per year through their Generation Wild nature connection programme for schools, children and families in economically disadvantaged communities. This programme uses a visit to a wetland as the springboard to further activity in support of wetlands and wider nature in the

community. Over 125,000 nature activities have been completed through the programme since it launched in September 2021.

WWT have also piloted a Wetland Learning Hub (<https://wetlandlearninghub.org/>), offering four modules to wetland conservationists online. 400 people applied, 63 were selected and 43 completed the course, which now has Darwin Capability & Capacity funding to develop it. They also pay for learning programmes with a wetland focus. As a result, it is estimated that annually 35,000 young people aged 3-24 have learnt about wetlands and their wildlife. WWT's Generation Wild (<https://generationwild.wwt.org.uk/>) is a nature connection programme about wetlands, which is available to primary schools in economically disadvantaged communities. 15,000 young people aged 5–11 engage in this programme and enjoy a free schools visit to a WWT wetlands centre which acts as a springboard to further activity in the local community. 45,000 children have taken part in the last three years and have completed 150,000 nature activities in their school grounds, garden and local nature spaces. 6,000 children have visited wetlands centres using free family visit vouchers given out as part of the programme. Blue Influencers is a youth social action project focussing on wetlands (<https://www.wwt.org.uk/our-work/projects/blue-influencers/>). WWT is one of 22 host organisations across the UK. Each host organisation will work with 180 young people aged 10-14 over the next three years, helping them identify issues facing their local blue spaces and developing youth social action projects to address these. WWT also have child and young person memberships and many activities are designed for young people under the age of 30.

Northern Ireland Water provides a 'Water Bus' education service. This is a double decker bus which has been transformed into a popular mobile education unit. It concentrates on many aspects of water and is aimed at Primary School pupils, who learn about a range of issues such as the water cycle and water conservation (<https://www.niwater.com/water-bus/>).

The youth of Alderney are directly engaged with the Alderney West Coast and the Burhou Islands Ramsar Site through a programme of education and outreach. A key example of this is the commitment for all local children to be given a chance to explore the Ramsar Site on a boat tour by their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The local Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) La Société Guernesiaise is working with the States of Guernsey education services to ensure that nature education (including wetlands and wetland birds) is integral to the curriculum and is a basic educational entitlement for every child. They also assist in the delivery of this through classroom and field-based education opportunities.

Programmes on wetland conservation are regularly delivered at the UK Akrotiri Ramsar site on the island of Cyprus by the Akrotiri Education Centre to school children across Cyprus (about 10,000 children visit every year). The Centre is part of the Cyprus Network of Environmental Education Centres and school visits are part of the national curriculum.

As part of a UK Government Darwin Plus project on Montserrat (DPLUS192), the Montserrat National Trust with its partners the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum (UKOTCF) are developing a youth programme. This will follow the UN Youth United Nations Global Alliance (YUNGA) Challenge Badges, which follows each one of the Sustainable Development Goals, and starts with a Biodiversity Badge with additional badges in the future including water and sustainable use (which will outline sustainable use and include recognition of Montserrat's potential Ramsar Sites (<https://www.ukotcf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/46Montserrat.pdf>)). In addition, the Montserrat National Trust

relaunched its children's groups Monty's Messengers in March 2022, aimed at engaging schoolchildren and developing their interest in target species (especially the Montserrat oriole) in a way that involves them exploring their local forests and wetlands, learning more about Montserrat's nature and culture, and embracing their responsibility for looking after it (<https://montserratnationaltrust.ms/2022/02/18/montserrat-national-trust-launches-montys-messengers-childrens-logo-competition/>).

On the Turks and Caicos Islands, 'Wonderful Water' is a curriculum-integrated course with strong components on local wetlands. It was developed at the request of the TCI Director of Education by UKOTCF working with local schools and is used in all state and some private schools, as well as in some higher courses. A new version is now openly available (<https://www.ukotcf.org.uk/environmental-education/wonderful-water/>).

**K. Please list the names of the organizations which have been consulted on or have contributed to the information provided in this report.**

The UK National Report was submitted to the Ramsar Secretariat on 23 October 2024, and all information was correct, to the best of Defra's knowledge, as of this date. The following contributed to the preparation of the report through a consultation exercise, which was run by JNCC on behalf of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, between May-September 2024.

UK and Devolved Administrations – Government

- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)
- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) (Northern Ireland)
- Scottish Government
- Welsh Government
- UK Ministry of Defence (MOD)

UK Statutory Bodies / Arm's Length Bodies

- Environment Agency
- Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)
- Natural England
- Natural Resources Wales / Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru (NRW)
- NatureScot
- Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA)
- Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)

Crown Dependencies – Government

- States of Alderney
- States of Guernsey
- Government of Jersey
- Isle of Man Government
- Government of Sark

UK Overseas Territories – Government

- Government of Anguilla
- Government of Bermuda
- Government of the British Indian Ocean Territory
- Government of the British Virgin Islands

- Cayman Islands Government
- Cyprus Sovereign Base Areas Administration
- Falkland Islands Government
- Government of Tristan da Cunha
- Government of the Turks and Caicos Islands

UK – non-Government

- IUCN UK (National Committee) Peatland Programme
- National Trust
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
- Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT)

UK Overseas Territories & Crown Dependencies – non-Government

- Alderney Wildlife Trust
- Anguilla National Trust
- Bermuda National Trust
- Manx Wildlife Trust
- UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum (UKOTCF)

International – non-Government

- Rare

Note that references within this report to the ‘UK’ refer to England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales; the UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies are referred to separately.

### Section 3: Indicator questions and further implementation information

In responding to each of these questions, Contracting Parties are encouraged to provide links, references/ upload documents where applicable and relevant.

#### Goal 1. Addressing the drivers of wetland loss and degradation

[Reference to Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 6, 8, 11, 13, 14 and 15]

**Target 1.** Wetland benefits are featured in national/local policy strategies and plans relating to key sectors such as water, energy, mining, agriculture, tourism, urban development, infrastructure, industry, forestry, aquaculture, fisheries at the national and local level.

[Reference to Global Biodiversity Framework Target 14]

#### 1.1 Have any actions been taken since COP14 to integrate wetland protection, wise use and restoration, or wetland benefits, into other national strategies and planning processes, including: {1.1}

A=Yes; B=No; C=Partially; D=Planned; X=Unknown; Y=Not relevant

- a) National policy or strategy for wetland management **A=Yes**
- b) Poverty eradication strategies **B=No**
- c) Water resource management and water efficiency plans **A=Yes**
- d) Coastal and marine resource management plans **A=Yes**
- e) Integrated coastal zone management plan **A=Yes**
- f) National forest management plan/strategies **A=Yes**
- g) National policies or measures on agriculture **A=Yes**
- h) National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans drawn up under the CBD **A=Yes**
- i) National policies on energy and mining **A=Yes**
- j) National policies on tourism **C=Partially**
- k) National policies on urban development **A=Yes**
- l) National policies on infrastructure **A=Yes**
- m) National policies on industry **A=Yes**
- n) National policies on aquaculture and fisheries {1.3.3} **A=Yes**
- o) National plans of actions (NPAs) for pollution control and management **A=Yes**
- p) National policies on wastewater management and water quality **A=Yes**
- q) National policies, strategies or plans on sanitation **A=Yes**
- r) National policies, strategies or plans on food security **A=Yes**

##### 1.1 Additional information:

The need to conserve and promote sustainable use of UK wetlands and water resources has been integrated into many policies, regulations, statutory mechanisms and other measures.

Following on from the agreement of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in December 2022 (<https://www.cbd.int/gbf>), the UK published the UK National Targets on 1 August 2024, which commit the UK to achieving each of the goals and targets of the GBF (<https://ort.cbd.int/national-targets?countries=gb>). The UK National Targets are the product of collaboration between the four countries of the UK and the Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies that the CBD is extended to, and are underpinned by a robust set of commitments and policies at the UK and national level. The UK National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan will be published in due course. In addition, the UK Biodiversity Framework 2024 sets out how England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales will work together on areas of shared ambition or common purpose for biodiversity at a UK level, including where joint

action will be required to implement the GBF (<https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/uk-biodiversity-framework/>).

In England, the Defra Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP 2023) sets out coordinated actions to implement improvements to biodiversity, water and air quality (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-improvement-plan>). This follows on from the Environment Act 2021 (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents/enacted>), which alongside the strengthened Agriculture and Fisheries Acts, set a new legal foundation for government action to improve the environment, invest in nature restoration and nature-based solutions to tackle biodiversity loss and climate change, including an ambitious programme of peatland restoration. In addition, the Government set four legally binding targets for biodiversity to: (i) halt the decline in species abundance by 2030 and to reverse species decline by 2042; (ii) reduce the risk of species extinction; and to restore or create more than 500,000 hectares of wildlife-rich habitats (including wetlands). These targets, alongside other targets on water and air quality, for example, will drive action to create and restore habitats, reduce pressures on nature, and recover species. A delivery plan for these targets is set out in the EIP, including an interim target to restore or create 140,000 hectares of a range of wildlife-rich habitats outside protected sites by 2028. The Environment Act 2021 also: (i) led to the establishment of the Office for Environmental Protection, a new public body for England that protects and improves the environment by holding government and other public authorities to account; (ii) strengthened biodiversity duty placed on public authorities; (iii) led to the creation of new Local Nature Recovery Strategies; and (iv) placed statutory requirements on new developments to achieve net biodiversity gain.

The Scottish Government published its Biodiversity Strategy post-2020 Statement of Intent and Edinburgh Declaration in 2020, which set out future ambitions for halting biodiversity loss in Scotland including for wetlands (<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-biodiversity-strategy-post-2020-statement-intent/>, <https://www.gov.scot/publications/edinburgh-declaration-on-post-2020-biodiversity-framework/>). Following on from a consultation exercise in late autumn 2023 on the proposed Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and first 5-year Delivery Plan, revisions are currently being made to the Delivery Plan with publication of the final version planned for autumn 2024. In addition, in October 2021, a new public body, Environmental Standards Scotland, was formed. Independent of the Scottish Government but accountable to the Scottish Parliament, it monitors both the effectiveness and the implementation of environmental law in Scotland and compliance by public authorities.

In Wales, the objective of securing sustainable management of natural resources has been progressed under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and through the Welsh Government Natural Resources Policy that recognises the importance of delivering nature-based solutions, developing resilient ecological networks, and maintaining, enhancing and restoring floodplains and hydrogeological systems (<https://gov.wales/natural-resources-policy>). This contributes to the sustainable development goals of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (Wales), which mirrors the recognised link between the Ramsar Convention and the UN Sustainable Development Goals at the national level. The policy is implemented through Area Statements in which biodiversity and ecosystem resilience are key themes (<https://naturalresources.wales/about-us/area-statements/>). Natural Resources Wales has published a policy on the use of constructed wetlands for treatment of wastewaters and, where appropriate, support their use to remove nutrients, including phosphorus (<https://naturalresourceswales.gov.uk/guidance-and-advice/environmental-topics/water-management-and-quality/constructed-wetlands/constructed-wetlands-overview/>).



In England, under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/contents>), public authorities have a duty to have regard to conserving biodiversity when exercising their functions. The Environment Act 2021 strengthened this provision, by placing a duty on the Secretary of State to further the conservation and enhancement of key habitats and species, many of which occur in wetlands (see section 3.1). Other measures, including national planning policies, ensure appropriate protection and environmental and ecological impact assessments are conducted for proposed developments that could potentially damage protected wetlands and key wetland habitats (see section 13.3).

The States of Alderney published a Strategy for Nature and Agriculture in 2024 (<https://alderney.gov.gg/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=177536&p=0>). This is based around three guiding principles: (i) connect our island community with the natural environment; (ii) care for nature and agricultural activity to ensure the diversity and resilience of our natural capital and assets; and (iii) improve knowledge about nature and the environment to inform decision making. In addition, the States of Alderney's Public Works Department and Harbour Office maintain a pollution response strategy and equipment.

In Guernsey, work has progressed to complete actions within the Strategy for Nature. Formal appraisals have resulted in the compilation of priority habitats and species lists, including those which are designating features of the Ramsar Sites. Monitoring and action plans are being produced for the listed species and habitats, which will also be considered through local policies and action plans.

In addition, the Water Pollution Ordinance came into force in 2022; this provides robust powers to prevent pollution to surface, ground and inland waters and to take action should pollution incidents occur. It also provides, for the first time, a licensing framework of discharges of trade effluent or sewage effluent into inland waters or the sea, and the establishment of water quality standards for surface water and groundwater.

See also sections 9.1-9.2.

**Target 2.** *Water use respects wetland ecosystem needs for them to fulfil their functions and provide services at the appropriate scale inter alia at the basin level or along a coastal zone.*

*[Reference to Global Biodiversity Framework Target 7, Sustainable Development Goal 6, Indicator 6.3.1]*

**2.1 Have the *Guidelines for allocation and management of water for maintaining the ecological functions of wetlands* and the additional guidance on tools and methodologies been brought to the attention of national ministries and/or agencies at different levels of territorial organizations (Resolutions VIII.1, VIII.2)? {2.1}**

A=Yes; B=No; C=Partially; D=Planned

*2.1 Additional information:*

Although the guidelines and additional guidance have not been formally brought to the attention of all national ministries/agencies, the principles have been embedded in domestic processes and regularity mechanisms, notably River Basin Management plans (see section 2.4).

**2.2 Have assessments of environmental flow been undertaken in relation to mitigation of impacts on the ecological character of wetlands? {2.2}**

A=Yes; B=No; C=Partially; D=Planned



## 2.2 Additional information:

The UK Technical Advisory Group (UKTAG) of the Water Framework Directive has published guidance on river flow standards to assess the risk to ecological status posed by alterations in flows across the flow regime, ecological indicators of the effects of abstraction and flow regulation and optimisation of flow releases from water storage reservoirs, river flow for good ecological potential, and abstraction and flow regulation pressures on river, lake, transitional and coastal water bodies (<http://wfduk.org/search/flow>). See also Common Standards Monitoring Guidance for Freshwater Habitats and Species (<https://hub.jncc.gov.uk/assets/1b15dd18-48e3-4479-a168-79789216bc3d>).

The UKTAG has also published guidance on threshold values and the identification and risk assessment of groundwater dependent terrestrial ecosystems (<http://wfduk.org/search/gwdte>), on boundary values for nitrogen and phosphorous levels in lakes and rivers (<http://wfduk.org/resources/category/environmental-standard-methods-203>), and the use of biological indicators (e.g. invertebrates, macrophytes, phytoplankton) to assess nutrient enrichment and other pressures (<http://wfduk.org/resources/category/biological-standard-methods-201>).

Detailed guidelines have been produced that set out the ecohydrological requirements, including critical environmental features for their maintenance or enhancement, for a range of UK wetland plant communities, including types of fen, mire, swamp, wet dune, wet heath and wet woodland (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/eco-hydrological-guidelines-for-lowland-wetland-plant-communities>, [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/291628/scho0309bpoe-e-e.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/291628/scho0309bpoe-e-e.pdf), <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/61018>, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/eco-hydrological-guidelines-for-wet-dune-habitats>, <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/107007>, <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/91054> – see also Common Standards Monitoring Guidance for Freshwater Habitats and Species <https://hub.jncc.gov.uk/assets/1b15dd18-48e3-4479-a168-79789216bc3d>).

Work to develop a set of eco-hydrological guidelines for blanket bog/mire is being led by the Environment Agency, in partnership with Scottish Environmental Protection Agency, Natural Resources Wales, Natural England, DAERA-Northern Ireland and NatureScot (<https://www.iucn-uk-peatlandprogramme.org/resources/restoration-practice/restoration-techniques>).

## 2.3 Have the designation or management of Wetlands of International Importance (“Ramsar Sites”) improved the sustainable use of water (e.g. reduced drainage, reduced use of pesticides, controlled pollution etc.) in your country?

A=Yes; B=No; C=Partially; D=Planned; O= No change; X= Unknown

### 2.3 Additional information:

Management of Ramsar Sites aims to conserve the features for which they were designated and to ensure that sites are maintained or (where necessary) restored to favourable condition/good ecological status. This includes ensuring that water-levels are maintained at appropriate levels; using herbicides only where necessary (e.g. to control invasive non-native species); and minimising diffuse pollution from air and water. The designation of Ramsar Sites has partly been responsible for the development of a variety of measures aimed at the conservation of designated sites and wetlands in general, as detailed in other sections.

**2.4 Have the *Guidelines for allocation and management of water for maintaining ecological functions of wetlands* (Resolutions VIII.1 and XII.12 ) been used/applied in decision-making processes? {2.3}**

**A=Yes; B=No; C=Partially; D=Planned**

*2.4 Additional information:*

River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) have been created for the whole of the UK. Those covering England, Scotland and Wales were updated in 2022 (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/river-basin-management-plans-updated-2022>, <https://naturalresourceswales.gov.uk/evidence-and-data/research-and-reports/water-reports/river-basin-management-plans/>, <https://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/water/river-basin-management-planning/>). In Northern Ireland, a draft RBMP for the 3rd cycle 2021-2027 has been consulted on (<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-draft-3rd-cycle-river-basin-management-plan-2021-2027>) (<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/water/river-basin-management>). These plans set out how organisations, stakeholders and communities can work together to protect and improve the quality of the water environment. Each plan covers an entire river system, including river, lake, groundwater, estuarine and coastal water bodies. They provide information on how future plans may affect an industry sector and its obligations, how to ensure a development proposal considers the requirements of the plan, how to apply for an environmental permit, and how to contribute to the delivery of the plan or maximise potential funding for a project.

Strategic approaches have been produced to support more integrated and sustainable approaches to the management of water resources, for example the Water Strategy for Wales (<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-06/water-strategy.pdf>.) In England, Defra launched its Plan for Water in 2023. This sets out the Government's intention to deliver clean and plentiful water, a healthy water environment, and a sustainable supply of water for people, businesses and nature, including wetland and water-dependent nature-rich sites (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/plan-for-water-our-integrated-plan-for-delivering-clean-and-plentiful-water/plan-for-water-our-integrated-plan-for-delivering-clean-and-plentiful-water>).

Abstraction, drainage and altered water levels continue to be recognised as major causes of damage to wetlands in England, contributing in part to groundwater bodies being below sustainable levels and river water bodies not attaining good ecological status (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/state-of-the-environment>). Progress on reforms to the arrangements for managing water abstraction was published in 2019 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/abstraction-reform-report-2019>), which describes efforts to address three main issues in managing abstraction, i.e. that some older licences allow abstraction that can damage the environment; that the current approach is not flexible enough to cope with the pressures of increasing demand for water and climate change in the long term, or to allow abstractors access to additional water when it is available; and that the abstraction service is outdated and paper-based.

A programme of water quality assessments is being launched in Alderney, with citizen scientists working with professional ecologists to collect water quality data from marine wetlands. Jersey is as an island with limited underground reserves of water and relies on rainfall for most of the mains water supplied. Jersey Water is currently reviewing operations and informing its sustainability strategy to be able to supply water and deliver services in the most environmentally responsible way possible. On Bermuda, public water is defined as underground water and freshwater ponds, and the Environment Authority grant water rights

to extract, use and store public water through well-digging and extraction from underground freshwater lenses. On the Cayman Islands, water governance is focused on provision of desalinated municipal water to population centres.

**2.5 Have projects that promote and demonstrate good practice in water allocation and management for maintaining the ecological functions of wetlands been developed {2.4}**  
A=Yes; B=No; C=Underway; D=Planned

*2.5 Additional information:*

Multiple projects and initiatives have been developed by the authorities and organisations responsible for the water sector and environmental quality across the UK.

Waterwise is an independent, not-for-profit UK NGO focused on reducing water consumption in the UK (<https://www.waterwise.org.uk/>). It is the leading authority on water efficiency in the UK that supports and challenges governments, industry, customers and others to be innovative and ambitious on water efficiency. They started Water Saving Week in 2015 to get the UK talking about saving water and empowering people to take action to save water, at home, at work and in their communities. The 2024 campaign reached over 3.5million people, with contributors generating over 1.2k social media posts. In 2022, Waterwise worked with government, regulators, water companies and other stakeholders to develop a UK Water Efficiency Strategy to 2030. A progress report was published in May 2024.

The Centre of Expertise for Water (CREW) is a Scottish Government funded partnership that has carried out projects and published research on major water policy drivers, including sustainable communities, water quality, flooding and coastal erosion, and catchment management (<https://www.crew.ac.uk/our-work>).

The Environment Agency and Defra announced £25 million funding in 2023 for improving flood resilience in England through a new Natural Flood Management (NFM) programme (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-flood-management-programme#the-nfm-programme>). This builds on the £15 million NFM pilot programme, which included 60 projects between 2017-2021. 40 new projects have been selected to receive funding, with works taking place during 2024-2027. These will carry out a mixture of NFM measures at a range of scales and seek to manage flood risk from a variety of sources, including: leaky barriers, wet woodlands, ponds and wetlands to help to slow and store high flows in upper catchments, reducing the chance and impact of flooding downstream; soil and land management to slow and store surface water runoff, reduce soil erosion and improve water quality; new woodland areas and hedgerows to support wetland complexes and create new habitats; and expansion and enhancement of saltmarsh and sand dune systems to break wave action and reduce the risk of tidal flooding.

The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT) has developed a NFM scheme along the Doniford and Monksilver streams in west Somerset, working with farmers, landowners, businesses and the wider community to reduce flooding affecting the town of Williton and surrounding communities. Together with partners, WWT has restored natural features across the catchment that have been lost or replaced over time by man-made structures. These include creating 10 new open water wetlands, installing 91 'leaky dams', and planting over 1,200 trees. Preliminary evidence indicates the new NFM features – particularly woody dams – have boosted local biodiversity, with a rapid increase in insect diversity and abundance (<https://www.wwt.org.uk/our-work/projects/natural-flood-management/two-valleys-flood-prevention/>).

Since its launch in 2021 the Scottish Government's Nature Restoration Fund has supported more than 140 projects, worth nearly £40 million (<https://www.nature.scot/funding-and-projects/scottish-government-nature-restoration-fund-nrf>). Projects include the River Peffery catchment restoration project, where river straightening is being reversed by re-meandering the river through its floodplain, along with riparian planting and large wood structure placement in the river channel to reduce flooding of local communities.

Natural Resources Wales currently runs a River Restoration Programme working to deliver Water Framework Directive, Special Area of Conservation and freshwater ecosystem priorities. There are a number of large-scale projects underway, including the DeeLIFE, 4 Rivers for LIFE and work to address physical modifications. This work includes key interventions to slow the flow and restore longitudinal and lateral connectivity in rivers.

The Wales Water Efficiency Group (WWEG) was formed in 2019 to prioritise water efficiency needs. The group works with the UK Water Efficiency Forum to deliver the UK Water Efficiency Strategy objectives within Wales. Further details on the approach to sustainable water management are included in the Natural Resources Wales Second State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR2020) (<https://cdn.cyfoethnaturiol.cymru/media/693313/sonarr2020-theme-resource-efficiency-water.pdf>).

Manx Utilities has a formal leakage strategy, along with a number of water conservation groups, with water conservation being a deliverable for some roles; they have also joined the UK lead group Waterwise and taken steps to implement the 2023 Water Resources Management Plan, which focuses on reducing customer demand and the need for hosepipe bans, as well as balancing water stocks protection against environmental requirements (<https://www.manxutilities.im/our-environment/saving-water/water-resources-management-plan/>). Plans are also progressing for sewage treatment plants to replace the three remaining raw sewage outfalls on the Isle of Man with two new treatment plants.

- 2.6 Does the country use constructed wetlands/ponds as wastewater treatment technology? {2.8}  
**A= Yes; B= No; C= Partially; D=Planned; X= Unknown; Y= Not relevant**

*2.6 Additional information:*

Constructed wetlands/ponds have been created to treat wastewater in a variety of situations. WWT uses wetland treatment systems across its UK wetland centres, which serve as practical means to treat water and act as demonstration sites. Several UK Water Companies have installed systems, such as at Yorkshire Water's Clifton Wastewater Treatment Works (<https://waterprojectsonline.com/case-studies/clifton-icw-2022/>). The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in England recognises the role that Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) have in managing surface water and they have increasingly been used to manage urban stormwater by mimicking natural drainage systems and encouraging infiltration, attenuation and passive treatment – multiple case-studies are available at (<https://www.susdrain.org/case-studies>). Ofwat (the water sector regulator in England and Wales) also promotes the use of nature-based solutions, including wetlands for wastewater treatment. Natural Resources Wales has published a policy on the use of constructed wetlands for treatment of wastewaters (<https://naturalresourceswales.gov.uk/guidance-and-advice/environmental-topics/water-management-and-quality/constructed-wetlands/constructed-wetlands-overview/>).

To address pollution at source, the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 created a new duty for water companies in designated catchments in England, to ensure wastewater

treatment works serving a population equivalent over 2,000 meet specified nutrient removal standards. As a result, Competent Authorities (including local planning authorities) considering planning proposals for development draining via a sewer to a wastewater treatment works must ensure that the nutrient pollution standard is met for the purposes of Habitats Regulations Assessments. Natural England on behalf of Defra is implementing a £30 million Nutrient Mitigation Scheme designed to mitigate the additional nutrient inputs arising from new housing development, which may affect a number of protected sites, some of which are Ramsar Sites.

**Target 3.** *Public and private sectors have increased their efforts to apply guidelines and good practices for the wise use of water and wetlands.*

*[Reference to Global Biodiversity Framework Targets 7, 10, 15, 16 and 18]*

**3.1 Has your country put in place policies, including incentives, guidelines or other instruments to encourage the private sector to apply the wise use principle and guidance (Ramsar handbooks for the wise use of wetlands) in activities and investments related to wetlands? {3.1}**

**A=Yes; B=No; C=Partially; D=Planned**

*3.1 Additional information: Please specify if it was applied for policy formulation or in implementation of good practice.*

Examples of the way the private sector in the UK is encouraged to conserve and make wise use of wetlands are given below.

Planning policies have been developed to ensure that development plans take account of and minimise impacts on the natural and local environment, as well as providing opportunities for biodiversity improvement and net gain (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>). This includes placing an emphasis on key habitats identified as priorities for conservation, which include a wide range of wetland types (<https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/uk-bap-priority-habitats/>), adopting appropriate measures during works to prevent pollution of waterbodies and wetland sites, e.g. Guidance for Pollution Prevention 5: Works and maintenance in or near water (<https://www.netregs.org.uk/media/1418/gpp-5-works-and-maintenance-in-or-near-water.pdf>), and promoting the incorporation of SuDS to manage urban stormwater (see section 9.9).

Guidance and regulations have been produced so that farmers are able to take precautions and other steps to minimise aquatic pollution, whilst also sustaining their agricultural business. In England, the Control of Pollution (Silage, Slurry and Agricultural Fuel Oil) Regulations 1991 sets minimum standards for the safe storage of silage, livestock slurry and certain fuel oils, and minimum construction standards and storage capacity requirements (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/storing-silage-slurry-and-agricultural-fuel-oil>); and the Farming Rules for Water (The Reduction and Prevention of Agricultural Diffuse Pollution (England) Regulations 2018 focus on encouraging good agricultural practice on all farms whilst avoiding nutrient and soil runoff, erosion and leaching (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rules-for-farmers-and-land-managers-to-prevent-water-pollution>). Under the Nitrate Pollution Prevention Regulations 2015, more stringent rules to reduce nitrate pollution from nitrogen fertiliser and storage of manure are required in designated Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs), which cover approximately 55% of England that are either polluted or at risk of pollution from nitrates (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/nitrate-vulnerable-zones>). Agri-environment schemes and related guidance also provide targeted incentives for farmers to

adopt appropriate management regimes to conserve, restore and create wetland habitats and to buffer waterbodies from pollutants whilst maintaining a profitable agricultural business (see section 3.3).

Environmental permits are a statutory requirement to discharge liquid effluent or waste water (poisonous, noxious or polluting matter, waste matter, or trade or sewage effluent) into surface waters, e.g. rivers, lakes, estuaries, coastal waters, or into or onto the ground, e.g. land spreading waste sheep dip or discharging treated sewage effluent to ground via an infiltration system (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/discharges-to-surface-water-and-groundwater-environmental-permits>). Guidance is available on how businesses and organisations can avoid causing pollution from oil and chemical storage, car washing, construction and other activities (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pollution-prevention-for-businesses>).

Following the enactment of a new Water Pollution Ordinance in 2022, the States of Guernsey have produced guidance to private industry, including farming, to manage the risk of activities to surface water, ground water and inland waters. The guidance covers pollution which may arise from the use of fertilisers, pesticides and other activities and it recommends measures to prevent pollution events, including diffuse pollution.

The Government of Anguilla is currently developing an Environmental Stewardship certification programme for the private sector, focusing first on the tourism sector, which includes standards/targets for water use and conservation.

### **3.2 Has the private sector undertaken any activities or actions for the conservation, wise use, and management of (a) Ramsar Sites or (b) wetlands in general? {3.2}**

**A=Yes for both; B=No; C=Partially; D=Planned; X= Unknown; Y= Not relevant**

a) Ramsar Sites

b) Wetlands in general

#### *3.2 Additional information:*

Examples of UK private sector initiatives with a particular focus on wetlands are outlined below.

WWT has recently been awarded £21 million by the multinational insurance company AVIVA to restore coastal saltmarsh, making it one of the largest projects of its kind in the UK. This pioneering partnership will enable WWT to restore and manage coastal saltmarsh at a landscape-scale and fund research into measuring and maximising its benefits (<https://www.aviva.com/newsroom/news-releases/2023/06/aviva-to-support-restoration-of-shrinking-saltmarsh-habitat-to-combat-climate-change/>).

The States of Alderney approved a Strategy for Nature and Agriculture in 2024, which aims to connect the island community with the natural environment and increase awareness and integration with business. Examples of how this will be achieved include providing information to business and supporting conservation partnerships between business, NGOs and government. In addition, a ‘harbour users’ forum has contributed to the establishment of the voluntary no-go zone to protect areas sensitive to disturbance with support from the private sector. This has recently been officially recognised by the UK Hydrographic Office. The private sector has also supported biosecurity monitoring on key seabird breeding sites on Alderney. The Alderney West Coast and the Burhou Islands Ramsar Site is a major asset for the Alderney tourism sector, with nature and wildlife recognised as a key driver of Alderney’s tourism.



The commercial sector is represented on the Jersey Ramsar Advisory group and plays an active role in advising management policy to ensure sustainable use of the sites. RIB boat operators have proposed a voluntary charge for passengers to support the management and conservation of the Jersey Ramsar Sites. RIB boat operators also engage in citizen science by collecting information on the location and number of cetaceans and pinnipeds.

Both Ramsar Sites in Guernsey are managed and monitored in collaboration with multiple NGOs and private businesses. A local charity, The Clean Earth Trust, published their first marine litter report in 2022 which analysed marine litter collected from the shoreline around the island and recommended measures to reduce marine litter. The Pollinator Project has set up a 'Pesticide free Guernsey' project, working alongside government to review where pesticides are being used, explore the associated risks of pesticides, and reduce their use. Recreational activity providers have adopted a recently published wildlife watching Code of Conduct to reduce disturbance to marine mammals and seabirds, a marine chart has been published to discourage anchoring within the eelgrass beds within both Ramsar Sites.

The private sector has been involved in wetland restoration initiatives in Anguilla, and hotels and other tourism operators work with the Anguilla National Trust and other ecotourism providers to market nature-based tours to guests and clients.

The Montserrat National Trust and UKOTCF have run a project "Adopt a Home for Wildlife" (supported by Montserrat Government and part-funded by Darwin Plus), to facilitate individuals, schools, community groups and small businesses to lead in managing their land, including wetland areas, to maintain and restore native species and ecosystems (<https://www.ukotcf.org.uk/key-projects/adoptahomeforwildlife/>).

### **3.3 Have actions been taken to implement incentive measures which encourage the conservation and wise use of wetlands? {3.3}**

**A=Yes; B=No; C= Partially; D=Planned**

*3.3 Additional information: Please specify the types of incentive measures (loans, tax breaks, or others).*

Examples of incentive measures to deliver wetland wise use objectives across the UK are provided below.

In England, three Environmental Land Management (ELM) schemes (Countryside Stewardship, Landscape Recovery and the Sustainable Farming Incentive) are available to farmers and other land managers. Countryside Stewardship provides payments to manage and create a wide range of wetland habitat types (e.g. coastal saltmarsh, lowland peat, wet grassland, fens, reedbeds rivers, streams, ditches, ponds and lakes), as well as supporting catchment sensitive farming (<https://www.gov.uk/countryside-stewardship-grants>). The Landscape Recovery Scheme similarly supports a wide range of wetland creation and is aimed at landowners and managers who want to implement more ambitious, large-scale, bespoke and long-term (20+ year) agreements. One of the focal themes of the first funding round was towards projects delivering river restoration in England; and many of the projects in the first two rounds aim to create wetlands, for example the Leven Carrs Wetland and Wigan Greenheart projects (<https://defrafarming.blog.gov.uk/2023/10/23/leven-carrs-wetland-broadening-our-ambitions-with-landscape-recovery/>, <https://www.lancswt.org.uk/wigan-greenheart-landscape-recovery>). Recent improvements to ELM payment rates better reflect the costs and income forgone to create and maintain wetlands. For example, rates for the management of

fen have increased from £35 to £920/hectare, and rates for raising water levels on cropped or arable land or grassland on peat soils have risen from approximately £400 to £1400/hectare.

To support the 2023 Defra Plan for Water in England (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/plan-for-water-our-integrated-plan-for-delivering-clean-and-plentiful-water>), an £11 million Water Restoration Fund (WRF) was launched in 2024 to help restore water and wetland habitats and the species they support. The fund can be used to undertake development and delivery projects (£75,000 to c.£2 million) with the facility to provide some funding in advance of delivery. The fund will complement other funding and encourage projects that link to catchment plan priorities and support outcomes in Local Nature Recovery Strategies, Protected Site Strategies and Nature Recovery Projects. Lead applicants can include environmental and not-for-profit organisations, farmers and other land managers, Catchment Partnerships, Landscape and National Park Authorities, and Local Authorities (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/water-restoration-fund-guidance-for-applicants/about-the-water-restoration-fund>).

In Scotland, the Agri-Environment Climate Scheme (AECS) was launched in 2015 (due to end 2026) under the Scottish Rural Development Programme. This helps to promote land management practices which protect and enhance the natural environment, improve water quality, manage flood risk, and mitigate and adapt to climate change. AECS has a section on supporting wetland, lowland bog and fen management; an option to manage grazing and restore peatlands in moorland areas; and a large range of capital items to help maintain water levels, restore peat or manage sites (including ditch blocking, wetland creation, and the control of woody vegetation and invasive non-native species etc. – see <https://www.ruralpayments.org/topics/all-schemes/agri-environment-climate-scheme/>). More than £253 million has been committed from AECS, including £9.3 million on over 1500 contracts on wetland/lowland bog management, management of buffer areas for fens and lowland bogs, and associated capital items. Additional funding has been committed for blanket bog management as part of wider moorland options. A further £8 million has been committed on the management of water quality and flood risk. The range of options to support biodiversity and climate friendly farming activities and land management practices has been expanded for the 2024/25 funding round.

In addition, in 2020 the Scottish Government announced a substantial, multi-annual investment in peatland restoration of more than £250 million over the next 10 years, as part of the policy commitments within the Climate Change Plan. By August 2023, the Scotland Peatland ACTION project had restored over 43,000 hectares of peatlands in Scotland since 2012, with a target of 250,000 hectares by 2030 and an interim target of 110,000 hectares by 2026 (<https://www.nature.scot/climate-change/nature-based-solutions/peatland-action>). On Nature Day at COP26 in 2021, Scottish Government announced a £65 million [Nature Restoration Fund](https://www.nature.scot/funding-and-projects/scottish-government-nature-restoration-fund-nrf) (NRF) (<https://www.nature.scot/funding-and-projects/scottish-government-nature-restoration-fund-nrf>). This is a competitive fund managed by NatureScot, which offers grants to encourage projects that restore wildlife and habitats, address biodiversity loss and climate change, and improve the health and wellbeing of local communities. The NRF has two streams: Helping Nature for grants of £25,000 to £250,000; and Transforming Nature grants of £250,000 upwards for single or multi-year projects, including development projects to support preparatory tasks particularly those being delivered through a partnership /collaboration. The draft Scottish Biodiversity Strategy defines clear priorities for the NRF, which will be further refined on publication of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy in autumn 2024. The priority themes are habitat and species restoration; management for enhancement and connectivity; freshwater restoration, including restoration of natural flows in rural catchments; coastal and



marine initiatives which promote restoration, recovery, enhancement or resilience; control of invasive non-native species impacting on nature; and, urban, enhancing and connecting nature across, and between, towns and cities. In 2022, 31 NRF Transforming Nature stream projects received a total of £7.6 million. An example is the Wilder, Wetter Caerlaverock project, where The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT) was granted just over £325,000 over three years to restore wetland habitats for wildfowl and Natterjack toads at its Caerlaverock site in Dumfries and Galloway. The project will replace intensive agricultural practices with ecosystem-sensitive, low impact grazing to enhance habitats and increase species diversity, as well as creating six Natterjack toad breeding ponds. The addition of the urban theme in 2023 encouraged nature positive applications in urban areas, and there is an increased ambition to encourage partnership projects that work at scale (large-scale, multi-year) and facilitate nature networks to improve habitat connectivity. Since its launch the NRF has supported more than 140 projects, worth nearly £40 million.

In Wales, a range of measures have been employed to achieve wise use, including Glastir agri-environment agreements, Section 16 agreements and EU LIFE. The Welsh Government Sustainable Farming Scheme is due to be launched in 2026; the Universal element of which is designed to deliver general environmental improvements throughout Wales. The Optional and Collaborative elements are in development but are likely to include specific interventions in targeted areas to address key issues, including for wetlands. Measures and investments to improving water quality also featured under Glastir Small Grants (<https://gov.wales/glastir-small-grants-water-guidance>) and Farm Business Grants (<https://gov.wales/farm-business-grant>). A National Peatlands Action Programme has been launched with a five-year programme to restore target peatland bodies at a rate of 600-800 hectares annually year; restoration action took place on over 1650 hectares in the first two years (2020-2022) (<https://naturalresourceswales.gov.uk/evidence-and-data/maps/the-national-peatland-action-programme/>).

In Northern Ireland, DAERA runs an Environmental Farming Scheme to support farmers to carry out environmentally beneficial practices (<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/environmental-farming-scheme-efs>). The Higher Level scheme targets designated sites and areas containing priority habitats or species. Management options depend on the habitat involved. Non-productive investments include creation of wetlands and scrapes, structures/work to raise water levels, and ditch blocking. The wider scheme includes measures to protect surface waters from diffuse pollution and run off through fencing and buffer strips.

The States of Alderney, through a new national Strategy for Nature and Agriculture, aims to integrate environmental considerations into internal States of Alderney decision making, support the expansion of Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives on Alderney, and encourage sustainable agricultural work practices.

On the Isle of Man, a whole-nation Agri-Environment Scheme was launched in 2021 (<https://www.gov.im/categories/business-and-industries/agriculture/agri-environment-initiatives-grant-scheme/>), which offers initiatives to encourage the conservation and wise use of wetlands, including measures to reduce chemical fertiliser use, create water buffer zones and improvement to wetlands, along with the support of any farmer initiative that may result in increased wetland area conservation and wise use.

On Jersey, the agricultural subsidy system has switched to a Rural Support Scheme to support environmental improvements, such as implementing water management plans and reducing

nitrate use. Wetlands and Ramsar are specifically noted in the strategy, which is audited by Linking Environment and Farming (LEAF) (<https://www.gov.uk/sitecollectiondocuments/government%20and%20administration/R%20Rural%20Economy%20Strategy%202017-2021%2020170213KLB.pdf>).

At Cyprus Sovereign Base Area, a primary source of income for local farmers is the subsidies they receive under the CAP Strategic Plan to sustainably graze the reedbeds with cattle.

### **3.4 Have actions been taken to remove perverse incentive measures which lead to degradation or loss of wetlands? {3.4}**

**A=Yes; B=No; D=Planned; Z=Not Applicable**

*3.4 Additional information: Please specify the actions that have been taken to remove perverse incentive measures (e.g. removal of subsidies for agricultural expansion) and provide the source links or upload the source documents here.*

The UK has taken a broad approach to identifying and removing perverse incentives. For example, forestry policies have been reformed to address inappropriate afforestation of peatlands. For example, The Woodlands for Wales (WfW) Strategy (<https://gov.wales/woodlands-wales-strategy>) is supported by a suite of policy position statements, including on Biodiversity and Water and Soils. These are also adopted in the UK Forestry Standard which sets out the approach of the UK Government to sustainable forest management, including a specific presumption against the conversion of some priority habitats and avoiding establishing new forests on deep peat soils with and on sites that would compromise the hydrology of adjacent bog or wetland habitats (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-uk-forestry-standard>). The depth used to determine deep peat in England, Scotland and Wales varies between 30-50cm (depending on context). Natural Resources Wales provides Welsh Government with Ramsar Site boundaries and citations to assist them with screening and permitting cases under the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Agriculture Regulation to protect sites from potentially negative impacts of agriculture intensification projects.

In Scotland, a new standard for the protection of peatlands and wetlands under Good Agricultural Environmental Condition (GAEC) will be introduced from January 2025 as part of the farming support system to help protect carbon stores and peatlands/wetlands from activities which may damage or dry them (<https://www.gov.scot/news/agricultural-support-is-changing/>). Cross-compliance requirements also provide protection for buffer strips along water courses and sites designated as Ramsar Sites or other areas protected for nature conservation (<https://www.ruralpayments.org/publicsite/futures/topics/inspections/all-inspections/cross-compliance/detailed-guidance/>).

Measures have also been integrated into the national planning system that aim to ensure that potential impacts from development on wetland habitats, the aquatic environment and water resources are mitigated, e.g. through EIA (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/environmental-impact-assessment>), impact risk zones (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/protected-sites-and-areas-how-to-review-planning-applications>), and measures to conserve and enhance the natural environment (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/15-conserving-and-enhancing-the-natural-environment>).

In England, developers are required (through Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) to ensure that developments (such as new housing and industrial units) result in 10% Biodiversity Net Gain post-development, with biodiversity value being measured through standardised

units using a statutory Biodiversity Metric (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/understanding-biodiversity-net-gain>, <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-metric-calculate-the-biodiversity-net-gain-of-a-project-or-development>).

**Target 4.** *Invasive alien species and pathways of introduction and expansion are identified and prioritized, priority invasive alien species are controlled or eradicated, and management responses are prepared and implemented to prevent their introduction and establishment.*  
[Reference to Global Biodiversity Framework Target 6]

**4.1 Does your country have a national inventory of invasive alien species that currently or potentially impact the ecological character of wetlands? {4.1}**

A=Yes; B=No; C=Partially; D=Planned

*4.1 Additional information:*

The Non-native Species Information Portal (<https://www.nonnativespecies.org/non-native-species/information-portal/>) provides access to distribution data for over 3,000 non-native species in the UK, as well as additional information such as place or origin, date of introduction and methods of introduction. For 300 species, more detailed information is provided, including information on identification, impacts and control methods. A risk analysis identified the top 30 non-native species that are likely to become invasive in Great Britain (<https://www.nonnativespecies.org/non-native-species/risk-analysis/horizonscanning/>). In addition, the Alien Species Alarm List (<https://www.wfduk.org/resources/alien-species-alarm-list>) identifies species whose presence has not yet been recorded in Great Britain that are thought to pose a risk to surface waters and their ecological status under the Water Framework Directive. This is accompanied by guidance on the assessment of alien species pressures and a classification of the level of impact (<https://www.wfduk.org/resources/>).

In Wales, Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) of the greatest concern are identified in two national lists: the Wales Biodiversity Partnership INNS Priority Species for Action in Wales (<https://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/Invasive-Non-Native-Species-Group>); and the Welsh Government Marine INNS Priority Monitoring and Surveillance Species List (<https://gov.wales/invasive-aquatic-species-priority-marine-species>). The Welsh Government has also worked with the Wales Biodiversity Network Atlas to develop an INNS Portal to increase access to information about INNS and their distribution in Wales (<https://wales-species-inns.nbnatlas.org/>). The Special Sites Database held within Natural Resources Wales identifies management units within Welsh Ramsar Sites where INNS are identified as an issue and any action taken to manage them. The INNS Chapter of the State of Natural Resources Report (<https://naturalresources.wales/evidence-and-data/research-and-reports/state-of-natural-resources-report-sonarr-for-wales-2020/sonarr2020-our-assessment/cross-cutting-themes/invasive-non-native-species/>) includes information about the impact that INNS have on ecosystems in Wales. Supporting data can be accessed through the INNS section of the Wales Environmental Information Portal (<https://smnr-nrw.hub.arcgis.com/apps/3ad6560d23d243c29f4fabd99a42eaa9/explore>).

The Alderney Wildlife Trust hosted a University of Exeter research project in 2023, which recorded the spread of marine INNS around the island and how they impact marine wetland habitats and species. Several marine INNS are now established within the intertidal marine environment, such as Red wireweed *Sargassum muticum*, the Red-ripple bryozoan *Watersipora subatra*, and Harpoon weed *Asparagopsis armata*. The freshwater invasive New Zealand pigmyweed *Crassula helmsii* is present in one wild pond. Terrestrial INNS are recorded and monitored and key species will be listed as part of the Alderney State of Nature Project

(<https://www.alderneywildlife.org/current-projects/alderney-state-of-nature>). On Guernsey, an INNS survey was undertaken in 2022 of the Herm, Jethou and the Humps Ramsar Site to identify and map INNS already present. A similar audit of established INNS is planned for the Lihou Island Ramsar Site. The Red ripple bryozoan is abundant in the intertidal zone; New Zealand pigmyweed and Parrots feather *Myriophyllum aquaticum* are present in other wetlands within Guernsey; and Angular sea-fig *Carpobrotus glaucescens* is abundant and spreading on cliff land in Herm Island. On Jersey, the invasive Asian bryozoan *Watersipora alata* has become an increasing issue across areas of shade on rocky shores; Wire weed *Sargassum muticum* has also become an established problem in large rockpools and shallow channels; and the American slipper limpet *Crepidula ornicate* now forms dense mats likely replacing disturbed maerl beds. The Isle of Man has uploaded its biodiversity database onto the National Biodiversity Network Atlas Isle of Man, including records on INNS (<https://isleofman.nbnatlas.org/>). On Sark, the bryozoan *Watersipora subatra* has increased after first being observed in 2014.

The Government of Anguilla Environment Unit-Department of Natural Resources maintains an INNS species database/list; the Bermuda Natural History Museum has a comprehensive biodiversity database that contains all known species on the island, including INNS; and the Cayman Islands have an initial invasive species inventory. Invasive plant species have been inventoried in the British Virgin Islands through a partnership between the National Parks Trust of the Virgin Islands and the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew. On the Cyprus Sovereign Base Area, INNS (mainly *Acacia*) have been mapped in the Ramsar Site and adjacent Special Area of Conservation and Special Protection Area. Additionally, the following non-native species have been recorded within and around wetland areas, most of which are Invasive Alien Species of European Union Concern: Common myna *Acridotheres tristis* (detected in 2022); Eastern mosquitofish *Gambusia holbrooki*; Red swamp crayfish *Procambarus clarkia*; Golden wreath wattle *Acacia saligna*; She-oak *Casuarina cunninghamiana*; and Bermuda buttercup *Oxalis pes-caprae*. More information on these species is recorded in the Cyprus Database of Alien Species (<https://ris-ky.info/cydas>).

Further information on INNS in the UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies is available via (<https://www.nonnativespecies.org/overseas-territories/>).

#### **4.2 Has your country adopted any national policies, strategies, or guidelines on invasive species control and management that are relevant for wetlands? {4.2}**

**A=Yes; B=No; C=Partially; D=Planned**

##### *4.2 Additional information:*

A refreshed Great Britain Invasive Non-native Species Strategy has been prepared for 2023-2030, which sets out a high-level vision and key actions for invasive species management in England, Scotland, and Wales (<https://www.nonnativespecies.org/about/gb-strategy/>). Preventing the introduction and establishment of new INNS is identified as a high priority. The Strategy follows the Convention on Biological Diversity's hierarchical approach, which emphasises prevention, followed by early detection and rapid response, and finally long-term management and control. A key target is to reduce the establishment of INNS by at least 50% by 2030 compared with 2000 levels. To achieve this, horizon scanning was used to predict which species are likely to be introduced, establish and spread. Six pathways (methods of introduction) are identified as high risk for the introduction of INNS, and Pathway Action Plans have been developed to address these. A UK Programme Board provides coordination between the four UK administrations, e.g. in the development of tools and measures, and also where the administrations are pursuing individual priorities within a devolved implementation

framework. For example, the INNS Working Group of the Wales Biodiversity Partnership (<https://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/>) is a source of expertise that also promotes awareness, best practice, data sharing and action to tackle INNS in Wales; and in Northern Ireland, DAERA has published an Invasive Alien Species Strategy to minimise risks and reduce negative impacts caused by invasive alien species, and undertaken a first review and update of the Implementation Plan (<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/invasive-alien-species-strategy-northern-ireland>).

In addition, the GB Non-Native Species Secretariat (NNS) has continued to produce risk assessments for new species (<https://www.nonnativespecies.org/non-native-species/risk-analysis/risk-assessment/>), a rapid response approach has been developed, and joint information and awareness raising campaigns undertaken including 'Check Clean Dry' and 'Be Plant Wise' campaigns (<https://www.nonnativespecies.org/what-can-i-do/check-clean-dry/>, <https://www.nonnativespecies.org/what-can-i-do/be-plant-wise/>). The GB NNS has also promoted these campaigns through the Invasive Species Week, which involves over 200 organisations across the UK, Ireland, Isle of Man, Jersey, and Guernsey working together to raise awareness of INNS, their impacts, and the simple things that can be done to help prevent their spread (<https://www.nonnativespecies.org/what-can-i-do/invasive-species-week/>). A GB NNS inspectorate has been established, whose main roles are to ensure that existing legislation is better understood by stakeholders and better enforced where necessary, collect data to target resources more effectively, and work closely in an educational capacity with a range of organisations to reducing the risk of spreading INNS (<https://nonnativespecies.org/about/inspectorate/>).

A study of INNS in Scotland undertaken in 2023, asked a group of experts which INNS were most likely to arrive, become established and impact on biodiversity and ecosystems in the next 10 years. 30 high-risk species were identified, of which 10 were listed as priorities. Awareness raising was seen as critical and likely to be effective in preventing the arrival and spread of these species. The results from this horizon scanning study, coupled with a pathway analysis, provided detailed information to prioritise actions to prevent the establishment of new INNS in Scotland, including action plans for priority pathways of introduction and spread. In terms of investment in INNS control, Scottish Government has recently allocated approximately £2 million in funding over the next three years to continue the work of the Scottish Invasive Species Initiative. This project is working with communities and landowners to take a catchment-wide approach to the control/eradication of invasive non-native species such as Japanese knotweed and American mink.

On Alderney, sites specific policies on INNS have been developed, including guidance in the Alderney Ramsar Site five-year management strategy. A marine INNS management framework has been launched, which includes assistance for harbour users to promote 'check, clean and dry' procedures. The States of Alderney produced public guidance regarding invasive flatworms, and invasive plants have been managed within the Alderney Ramsar Site. Biosecurity monitoring is conducted for rodents on key seabird islets, particularly Burhou.

On Guernsey, an INNS Action Plan and Horizon Scanning report were published in 2022 following consultation with local stakeholders. The plan prioritises biosecurity actions for the prevention of new introductions, followed by early detection and rapid response protocols to detect and deal with new arrivals before their establishment. The importation of high-risk invasive animals has been prohibited and annual surveillance monitoring is undertaken for certain high-risk species such as Asian tiger mosquito *Aedes albopictus*, Oak processionary



moth *Thaumetopoea processionea* and Carpet sea squirt *Didemnum vexillum*. A Marine Biosecurity Plan has been commissioned for completion by December 2024.

On the Isle of Man, a Marine Biosecurity Plan was launched in 2018 (<https://www.gov.im/about-the-government/departments/environment-food-and-agriculture/environment-directorate/ecosystem-policy-team/invasive-non-native-species/marine-invasive-non-native-species-inns/>). A Japanese knotweed factsheet has been updated (<https://www.gov.im/japanese-knotweed>) and discussions held regarding options for coordinated control (ongoing), which is thought necessary for successful control. A review of the listing of INNS on Schedule 8 of the Isle of Man Wildlife Act 1990 is planned. Preparatory work has been undertaken towards a terrestrial non-native species strategy. On Sark, the bryozoan *Watersipora subatra* has increased after first being observed in 2014.

The Government of Jersey Biosecurity section commissioned a report in 2023 in partnership with the Jersey Community Fund to devise a rapid risk assessment framework for marine INNS in the Channel Islands. The primary aim was to design a repeatable, rapid risk assessment methodology to identify the spread and threat of marine INNS and use the risk assessment as a mechanism to assess the threat of marine INNS present and likelihood of introduction of those that are not yet established. The report, which is currently in draft format, builds on the horizon scanning review of marine INNS carried out in 2017 ([https://www.gov.je/SiteCollectionDocuments/Government and administration/R Non-native Marine Species in the Channel Islands 20171222 DM.pdf](https://www.gov.je/SiteCollectionDocuments/Government%20and%20administration/R%20Non-native%20Marine%20Species%20in%20the%20Channel%20Islands%2020171222%20DM.pdf)).

Many of the UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs) are islands, which makes them particularly vulnerable to the introduction of harmful INNS and risk of this leading to the extinction of native and endemic species (<https://www.nonnativespecies.org/overseas-territories/>). Action to reduce the threat of INNS is being taken across the UKOTs. Partners and other technical specialists were brought together at a UKOTCF conference in 2021, where INNS was highlighted as a topic of significant interest. A follow-up webinar in 2023 provided a platform to demonstrate work being undertaken on INNS across the UKOTs, share knowledge and best practice on research and management, and further expand the network of researchers and practitioners (<https://www.ukotcf.org.uk/other-territory-support/seminars-training/webinar-invasive-species/>). An identification service for invasive invertebrate pests for the UKOTs has been provided since 2009 by Fera Science with funding from Defra.

All six UK Overseas Territories in the Caribbean took part in a horizon scanning workshop exercise in 2018 (led by the Non-Native Species Secretariat for Great Britain) to identify potential new invasive species. A Darwin Plus project (<https://darwinplus.org.uk/project/DPLUS125>) led by the Government of Anguilla is focusing on building capacity in Anguilla to reduce the risk of introduction and spread of invasive plant species. A plan is being developed on Bermuda to tackle an ornamental coralberry *Ardisia* that has invaded large areas of Paget Marsh Ramsar Site. Through another Darwin Plus project, the Chagos Conservation Trust (CCT) surveyed amphibians, reptiles, invertebrates and plants and created distribution and risk maps for on Diego Garcia, British Indian Overseas Territory (BIOT). This also provided biosecurity training with outputs which were shared across the UKOTs (<https://darwinplus.org.uk/project/DPLUS151/>). Collaborating with the BIOT Administration, CCT is developing management plans to prevent future invasions and mitigate impacts of INNS, with data collected being shared via Open Access platforms (<https://chagos-trust.org/our-work/healthyislands>). In addition, in Cyprus Sovereign Base Area, the control of INNS follows the Republic of Cyprus guidelines/policies or UK guidelines/policies. In April 2023 Darwin Plus Strategic announced £3 million in support for projects that strengthen species and

habitat recovery in the UK Overseas Territories (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/boost-for-nature-recovery-as-new-multi-million-pound-grant-scheme-opens>); and in April 2024 the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and Caribbean UKOT government partners secured funding of £2.5 million for the first Darwin Strategic project, which will address the issue of biosecurity against INNS.

#### **4.3 Has your country successfully controlled through management actions invasive species of high risk to wetland ecosystems? {4.3}**

E= # species; F=Fewer than #; G=More than #; X= **Unknown**; Y=Not relevant

##### *4.3 Additional information:*

A wide range of organisations in the UK are carrying out work to control and mini mitigate the impacts of INNS. For example, in Wales there have been several large scale projects that have involved controlling INNS on protected wetland sites, including Ramsar Sites – see LIFE Quaking Bogs (<https://naturalresources.wales/about-us/what-we-do/our-projects/nature-projects/life-quake/>), LIFE Raised Bogs (<https://naturalresources.wales/about-us/what-we-do/our-projects/nature-projects/new-life-for-welsh-raised-bogs/>), and Sands of LIFE (<https://naturalresources.wales/sandsoflife>). Local action groups are also making an important contribution to this work (<https://www.nonnativespecies.org/local-action-groups-lags/>). The Wales Resilient Ecological Network (WaREN) project (<https://www.northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk/waren>) has established a framework for tackling invasive species across Wales. It has developed linkages and supported stakeholders who are taking action on invasive species in Wales. WaREN has also increased public engagement to raise awareness of invasive species through effective science communication and sharing best practice. Action is also being taken to improve biosecurity to prevent the introduction of INNS within certain Ramsar Sites in Wales (<https://naturalresourceswales.gov.uk/about-us/news-and-blogs/blogs/biosecurity-planning-to-prevent-invasive-species-in-six-of-wales-marine-protected-areas/>). Publicly-accessible guidance is available on listed invasive non-native animals and plants in England and Wales (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/invasive-non-native-alien-animal-species-rules-in-england-and-wales>, <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/invasive-non-native-alien-plant-species-rules-in-england-and-wales>), and on best practice control of INNS.

One of the priority themes of the Scottish Government’s Nature Restoration Fund (<https://www.nature.scot/doc/nature-restoration-fund-priorities-action>) is control of INNS impacting on nature. INNS applications must bring entire populations of INNS under control, demonstrate a coordinated and collaborative approach across large geographic/multiple ownership units, and be sustainable beyond the funding period. Control projects without long-term maintenance plans are not supported. Biosecurity projects which put in place measures to manage pathways to prevent the introduction and establishment of priority invasive species are encouraged. Priorities include targeting mammals threatening ground nesting seabirds on offshore islands and water dominated environments, which are most at risk of INNS spread. INNS are known to spread easily along habitat corridors such as rivers. The Scottish Invasive Species Initiative (<https://www.invasivespecies.scot/about-us>) is an 8-year partnership project that works with local organisations and volunteers to control INNS along riversides in Northern Scotland. Funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and NatureScot (2017-2023) and the Scottish Government's Nature Restoration Fund, the initiative is managed by NatureScot (2023-2026) and by in-kind support from project partners and volunteers.

Within the Alderney Ramsar Site, Hottentot fig *Carpobrotus edulis* continues to be successfully controlled, and The States of Alderney actively manages Asian hornets *Vespa velutina* across

the island. Within the Herm, Jethou and the Humps Ramsar Site (Guernsey), Sour fig *Carpobrotus edulis* has been removed from a beach on the west coast and New Zealand flax *Phormium tenax* has been removed from an area on the east coast. Baseline data has been collected to evidence a rat eradication. Three-cornered leek *Allium triquetrum* has been removed from Lihou island and will continue to be monitored. Elsewhere, Water fern *Azolla filiculoides* has been successfully controlled in a wetland, and Himalayan balsam *Impatiens glandulifera* has almost been eradicated from the whole island. The States of Guernsey are continuing control of Asian hornets *Vespa velutina* to prevent their establishment.

On the Isle of Man, the Manx Shearwater Recovery Project continues to remove occasional remaining/incursive rats in its effort to achieve eradication to protect the seabird colonies. Now that the 250-hectare islet is largely rat-free, breeding pairs of Manx shearwater have risen from near zero to 1,500 pairs in 2024, and breeding Common eider and Northern wheatear have also increased significantly. There is a discussion currently regarding the effects of Red-necked wallabies, with 568 individuals (140 per km<sup>2</sup>) having been recorded in 2023 in Ballaugh Curragh Ramsar Site, which have spread to numerous wetlands (and other habitats) around the Isle of Man (<https://www.mwt.im/wallabies-and-isle-man>).

Rats were successfully eradicated from two of Anguilla offshore cays (Dog Island in 2012 and the Prickly Pear cays in 2018). As part of a Darwin Plus project (<https://darwinplus.org.uk/project/DPLUS086/>), Fauna and Flora International worked in partnership with the RSPB, Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust and Anguilla National Trust (supported by the Government of Anguilla) to successfully eradicate invasive House mice *Mus musculus* from the Sombrero Island Ramsar Site. By 2022, the population of Sombrero ground lizards had more than doubled since the project began in 2019. On the Cayman Islands, initial control of certain invasive species is showing partial success (eradication is unlikely), specifically for lionfish and green iguanas. A Darwin Plus project (<https://darwinplus.org.uk/project/DPLUS128/>), led by the RSPB in collaboration with the University of Aberdeen and Cayman Islands Government, has been working to strengthen biosecurity and implement invasive alien species management with local communities. While territory-wide, this work will particularly benefit the Ramsar Site where feral cats have been causing native species decline. On the Cyprus Sovereign Base Area, *Acacia saligna* has been removed on a regular basis from designated sites with efforts having focused on the Eastern Sovereign Base Area of Dhekeleia; the intention is to also remove it from the Western SBA and implement a post-removal management and habitat restoration scheme.

On the Turks and Caicos Islands, some management/control of the Caicos pine tortoise scale insect was achieved through the Caicos Pine Recovery Project, but significant species and habitat losses were still realised. A Darwin Plus project successfully controlled rodent and cat populations that threatened the critically endangered Turks and Caicos Islands Rock iguana (<https://darwinplus.org.uk/project/DPLUS055/>). A follow-on Darwin Plus project has been working across multiple sectors to strengthen biosecurity capacity across the Turks and Caicos Islands, focusing on protecting the Rock iguana; this is the first attempt at holistic management for invasive vertebrates in the region (<https://darwinplus.org.uk/project/DPLUS121/>). Good progress is also being made with the recovery of the endemic Caicos Pine following devastation by invasive species introduced accidentally by humans, in part due to the discovery of the importance of native soil fungi in helping the tree growth.

Local volunteers on Montserrat are managing invasive plants on their land on the coasts under the Adopt a Home for Wildlife project, organized by UKOTCF and Montserrat National Trust



and part-funded by Darwin Plus (<https://www.ukotcf.org.uk/key-projects/adoptahomeforwildlife/>).

#### 4.4 Has the effectiveness of wetland invasive alien species control programmes been assessed?<sup>{4.5}</sup>

A=Yes; B=No; C=Partially; D=Planned; X=Unknown; Y=Not relevant

##### 4.4 Additional information:

Control of a significant number of highly invasive non-native wetland species in the UK continues to be problematic – this includes New Zealand pigmyweed, Signal crayfish, Zebra mussel, various invasive shrimp species and others (see <https://www.nonnativespecies.org/non-native-species/management-guidance/>). The number of species listed as priorities for control and management in Wales demonstrate that there are many INNS of high risk to wetland ecosystems that have not been successfully controlled – see the Wales Biodiversity Network Atlas INNS Portal (<https://wales-species-inns.nbnatlas.org/>). Many freshwater and marine species are exceptionally difficult to control once established, as effective methods of eradication are not easy to design. The impact of the only effective control measure in an aquatic environment can also be very environmentally damaging, i.e. ‘entombing’ ponds or wetlands where New Zealand pigmyweed is present. Even where effective control methods exist, physical constraints or the sensitivity of wetland sites means tackling invasive species can be challenging, e.g. removing Himalayan balsam from Crymlyn Bog Ramsar Site due to health and safety issues. Other sites have commercial or other constraints, e.g. using pesticide to remove Topmouth gudgeon from a reservoir that provides potable water. In peatland areas, the creation of both surfaced and ad hoc routes into remote peatland areas is encouraging the spread of *Campylopus introflexus*, the impact of which is poorly understood. Native species from other habitats can also be transported readily into sites on vehicles and rapidly establish and spread outwards from tracks, as highlighted by research in both the UK and North America. The permitting of developments such as access routes without the application of precautionary principles has the potential to create significant pathways for future invasions. Some INNS infestations can take years to successfully eradicate, while some widespread species are unlikely to be totally eradicated and need to be controlled for the foreseeable future. Short-term funding cycles are often not compatible with the life cycle of invasive species control projects. Innovative approaches to tackle INNS continue to be researched, trialled and applied; for example the recent work in applying a new approach to the management of American mink in South East England (<https://www.waterliferecoverytrust.org.uk/>), and work that the Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience International (CABI) is undertaking to develop and trail biocontrols for certain plant INNS that affect wetland sites (e.g. New Zealand pigmyweed and Floating pennywort) (<https://www.cabi.org/projects/finding-a-biocontrol-agent-for-crassula/>). Concerns have been raised about the recent announcement by the UK Campaign for Responsible Rodenticide Use to end the legal use of Second Generation Anti-coagulant Rodenticides (SGARs) outside away from buildings, as this may have unintended impacts on both island eradications of invasive non-native rodents and emergency responses to confirmed and probable rodent biosecurity breaches (which rely on the use of SGARs in the open in rapid response to an incursion).

On the Channel Islands, there are no realistic options to control coastal marine species like the Red ripple bryozoan *Watersipora subatra*, which continues to spread and is abundant in the intertidal zone of the Ramsar Sites on Guernsey. The Angular sea-fig *Carpobrotus glaucescens* is abundant and spreading on cliff land in Herm Island where management is difficult due to steep slopes and lack of safe access. On the Isle of Man there are currently no comprehensive control programmes in place.

On the Cayman Islands, invasive logwood plants (*Haematoxylum campechianum*) have established in seasonal wetlands across Grand Cayman; limited control occurs in protected areas, but it is too widespread to control more widely.

Coral reef ecosystems on the Turks and Caicos Islands are being significantly impacted by the invasive *Pterois* Lionfish and an un-named pathogen causing Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease. Practical measures to control these have proved difficult to enact. Wetland habitats are also threatened by invasive floral species, including *Casuarina equisetifolia* and *Scaevola taccada*, which invade coastal areas and undermine shoreline stability, and *Leucaena leucocephala*, which invades inland areas and outcompetes and replaces native floral assemblages. Management strategies to control such species are urgently required.

Management of Acacia in the Cyprus Sovereign Base Areas has been effective, but there needs to be an ongoing assessment of the situation and additional management when funding is available.

## Goal 2. Effectively conserving and managing the Ramsar Site network

[Reference to Sustainable Development Goals 6, 11, 13, 14, 15]

**Target 5.** *The ecological character of Ramsar Sites is maintained or restored through effective planning and integrated management*

[Reference to Global Biodiversity Framework Targets 1, 3 and 5]

### 5.1 Have a national strategy and priorities been established for the further designation of Ramsar Sites, using the *Strategic Framework for the Ramsar List*? {5.1}

A=Yes; **B=No**; C=Partially; D=Planned

#### 5.1 Additional information:

The UK has designated 176 Ramsar Sites, 150 of which are located in in England/Northern Ireland/Scotland/Wales, 9 in the UK Crown Dependencies (Channel Islands, Isle of Man), and 17 in the UK Overseas Territories. Consultations were undertaken in 2019 on two new Ramsar Sites in Northern Ireland (Derryleckagh and Teal Lough). In August 2023 (following a statutory public consultation exercise) the Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands Ramsar Site in Scotland was extended (along with the associated Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Area and SSSIs) by over 2,300 hectares, making it the largest Ramsar Site in the UK. In July 2024, the site also attained World Heritage status as a natural feature; it is anticipated that this additional level of designation will afford it further protection.

Whilst there is no overall strategy for Ramsar Site designation, the UK Government and relevant national, regional and local NGOs continue to work with the Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies to help facilitate further site designations as requested. The Isle of Man has set out its strategy and priorities in the Managing our Natural Wealth, The Isle of Man's First Biodiversity Strategy 2015-2025 (<https://www.gov.im/media/1346374/biodiversity-strategy-2015-final-version.pdf>); potential sites have been identified within the 2005 UKOTCF Review of Existing and Potential Ramsar Sites in the UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies (<http://www.ukotcf.org/pubs/ramsarReview.htm>), but these have not yet been assessed in further detail and brought forward.

### 5.2 How many Ramsar Sites have a management plan? {5.3}

**E= 131**; X=Unknown

5.3 How many of the Ramsar Sites are actively implementing their management plan? {5.4}  
**E= 127**; X= Unknown

5.4 How many Ramsar Sites are implementing management actions outside of formal management plans? {5.5}  
**E= 30**; X= Unknown

*5.2 - 5.4 Additional information:*

Of the 176 UK Ramsar Sites, which include those in UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies, 131 sites have a management plan, including 5 sites where the plan is only partial (e.g. Ballaugh Curragh Ramsar Site on the Isle of Man, where some private/NGO-owned areas have management agreements/plans and the core area of the site owned by Manx National Heritage is covered by a draft management plan, which is currently being reviewed). In terms of site management, 157 Ramsar Sites have at least partially implemented management actions, including 30 sites where a management plan is not in place.

The UK Department of Culture, Media and Sport announced in 2023 that the 'East Atlantic Flyway: England East Coast Wetlands', which encompasses 21 Ramsar Sites, had been added to the UK World Heritage Tentative List on the UNESCO website. Nomination is expected around 2029 with a view to inscription in 2030. It is expected that this will enhance the joined up, multistakeholder management of these Ramsar Sites and associated coastal wetlands which functions as a single ecosystem from the point of view of migratory waterbirds. The nomination will also be on the basis that the site is a global exemplar of coastal adaptation and nature conservation management on a top flyway site in the face of a changing climate.

On Alderney, a new stakeholder forum has been set up to enable all site users to input into the management of the site. Furthermore, the Alderney Ramsar Advisory Group, which provides expert scientific advice for the Alderney Ramsar Management Strategy, was formalised with a Terms of Reference. The group provides expert guidance and advice to the States of Alderney and reviews annual management strategies. The existing Ramsar framework in Alderney has proved invaluable in coordinating the islands response to highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). Alderney's two Gannet colonies were significantly hit by HPAI in 2022, but there was an excellent response coordinated through the Alderney Ramsar programme which brought together key stakeholders to monitor colonies and remove and test dead birds, introduce biosecurity measures, and inform the public. This effective response was almost certainly a contributing factor to there being only one case of HPAI detected in domestic birds in Alderney.

The Anguilla National Trust has continued to work with local partners and international organisations to secure funding from the UK Government and other donors to support the development of management plans for the East End Pond Conservation Area, Road Salt Pond, the Prickly Pear cays, Fountain National Park, and Sombrero Island Nature Reserve Marine Park and Ramsar Site, with the latter completed as part of a Darwin Plus project (<https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DPLUS137/>).

As part of another Darwin Plus project (<https://darwinplus.org.uk/project/DPLUS086/>), Fauna and Flora International worked in partnership with the RSPB, Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust and Anguilla National Trust to develop climate change-informed conservation action plans for Anguilla's terrestrial endangered species, and increased local conservation capacity and prescribed policy interventions to implement climate change resilience.

The South Atlantic Environmental Research Institute (SAERI) worked with University College London, the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (UKCEH) and the Falkland Islands Government as part of a Darwin Plus project (<https://darwinplus.org.uk/project/DPLUS116/>), carrying out intensive field assessments to develop a Falkland Islands terrestrial Wetlands Action Plan and establish infrastructure for basic hydrological long-term monitoring. Falklands Conservation has also been working with the Ministry of Defence, British Forces South Atlantic Islands, Falkland Islands Government and UKCEH as part of another Darwin Plus project to gather knowledge on the Falkland's threatened peat-wetland habitats and develop management plans (<https://darwinplus.org.uk/project/DPLUS110/>).

In the Turks and Caicos Islands, Environment Systems Limited is working with Wavehill, the University of Exeter, the Marine Conservation Society, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee and the Turks and Caicos Government under a Darwin Plus project (<https://darwinplus.org.uk/project/DPLUS129/>) to gather an evidence-base for the management of the Ramsar Site and potentially extending this into East Caicos.

**5.5 Have all Ramsar Sites been assessed regarding the effectiveness of their management (through formal management plans where they exist or otherwise through existing actions for appropriate wetland management)? {5.6}**

A=Yes; B=No; **C=Partially**; D=Planned; X= Unknown; Y= Not relevant

a) If "yes", please indicate the number of Ramsar Sites

b) If "partially", please indicate the number of Ramsar Sites **N=137**

c) If "planned", please indicate the number of Ramsar Sites

*5.5 Additional information: Please provide the source links or upload the source documents here indicating the assessment tool used (e.g. Ramsar Site Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT), Resolution XII.15), and the source of the information.*

The effectiveness of the management of Ramsar Sites across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales has largely been assessed using Common Standards Monitoring, which provides an agreed approach to the assessment of habitat/species condition on statutory sites designated through UK legislation and international agreements (<https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/common-standards-monitoring/>).

For the 73 Ramsar Sites in England, an estimated 53% of the total area is currently in favourable condition (i.e. the condition objectives for the interest features were being met), with an additional 32% in an unfavourable but recovering condition; the remainder is in unfavourable condition and either shows no change (4%) or is declining (11%) (based on data accessed in July 2024 from

<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/ReportUnitConditionSummary.aspx?SiteType=RAMSAR>). This includes those Sites of Special Scientific Interest which are, or form part or, listed Ramsar Sites (note that from 2024 onwards Natural England will be assessing and reporting on the condition of the features of a designated site, rather than the condition of the geographical area within those sites). In Scotland, 74.5% of the Ramsar Site features are currently in favourable or recovering condition, with the remaining 25.5% of features in an unfavourable condition (<https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/national-outcomes/explore-national-outcomes/environment/about-environment-national-indicators/condition-protected-nature-sites>).

In recent years, an emphasis has been placed on taking a risk-based approach to prioritising and planning monitoring programmes, and whilst the resources available for and the frequency of protected area monitoring has reduced and remains challenging (especially for

Ramsar Sites where there are also often other co-designations), there have been technological advances in environmental monitoring and changed thinking about conserving nature at different spatial scales and the dynamic nature of ecosystems.

In the Ballaugh Curragh Ramsar Site (Isle of Man), the effectiveness of the management agreements covering areas in private ownership and in the ownership of the Manx Wildlife Trust are reviewed every five to six years.

**5.6 How many Ramsar Sites have a cross-sectoral management committee? {5.7}**  
**E= 21 Sites; X=Unknown**

*5.6 Additional information:*

The 21 Ramsar Sites that have some form of cross-sectoral management committee are:

- Akrotiri (Ramsar Site 1375)
- Alderney West Coast and the Burhou Islands (Ramsar Site 1587)
- Bertha's Beach (Ramsar Site 1103)
- Booby Pond and Rookery (Ramsar Site 702)
- Burry Inlet (Ramsar Site 562)
- Crymlyn Bog (Ramsar Site 608)
- Cuilcagh Mountain (Ramsar Site 968)
- Gough Island (Ramsar Site 1868)
- Herm, Jethou and The Humps (Ramsar Site 2277)
- Hungry Bay Mangrove Swamp (Ramsar Site 987)
- Inaccessible Island (Ramsar Site 1869)
- Les Écrehous & Les Dirouilles, Jersey (Ramsar Site 1455)
- Les Minquiers, Jersey (Ramsar Site 1456)
- Les Pierres de Lecq (Ramsar Site 1457)
- Paget Marsh (Ramsar Site 990)
- Sea Lion Island (Ramsar Site 1104)
- Severn Estuary (Ramsar Site 67)
- Sombrero Island Nature Reserve Marine Park (Ramsar Site 2354)
- Somerset Long Bay Pond (Ramsar Site 985)
- South East Coast of Jersey, Channel Islands (Ramsar Site 1043)
- Spittal Pond (Ramsar Site 984)

**5.7 For how many Ramsar Sites has an ecological character description been prepared (see Resolution X.15)?**  
**E=0 Sites; X= Unknown**

*5.7 Additional information: for example give the name and official number of the Site or Sites.*

Updated ecological character descriptions have been prepared for 13 Ramsar Sites in the UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies, for which updated Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) were submitted to the Ramsar Secretariat during 2023 and 2024. A further 12 descriptions have been drafted by NatureScot as part of their work to update the RIS for Ramsar Sites in Scotland, and some UK Ramsar Site management plans include ecological character descriptions. However, none of these meet with the requirements for ecological character descriptions as detailed under Resolution X.15.

**5.8 Resolution VI.13 urges Parties to give priority to providing the Secretariat with maps and completed Ramsar Information Sheets (RIS) for all Sites designated for the Ramsar List, and**

**to revise this data at least every six years. If your country has not updated its RIS as required, describe the challenges in updating RIS, particularly descriptions of ecological character.**

The UK submitted 13 RIS updates to the Ramsar Secretariat during 2023 and 2024, most of which were for Ramsar Sites in the UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies. A further 12 descriptions have been drafted by NatureScot as part of their work to update the RIS for Ramsar Sites in Scotland. Defra held a consultation with relevant Government Departments/Statutory Agencies in 2024 to consider options and resources to progress a wider programme of RIS updating for other Ramsar Sites in England Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

A significant issue that the UK has with updating RIS is resourcing the work required to compile the necessary information, noting that:

- (i) the information required to update the RIS has increased;
- (ii) the UK is responsible for 176 Ramsar Sites, the most of any Contracting Party;
- (iii) multiple partners need to be involved because site designation/management is dealt with separately in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and each UK Overseas Territory (Anguilla, Bermuda, British Indian Ocean Territory, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Falkland Islands, Tristan da Cunha, Turks and Caicos, Western Sovereign Base Area of Cyprus) and Crown Dependency (Alderney, Guernsey, Isle of Man, Jersey and Sark);
- (iv) a significant number of sites are co-designated as Special Protection Areas for birds and updating of qualifying features/populations count on such sites need to align;
- (v) the only way in which updated RIS information can be transferred to the Secretariat is through the Ramsar Site Information System web-portal by inputting the information manually on a site-by-site basis because there is no mechanism to allow for a database-to-database transfer.

The UK is currently participating in the Convention's RIS Working Group, collaborating with other Contracting Parties and the Secretariat to shape proposals to ensure the RIS continue to be a valuable source of data that support a scientific approach to wetlands wise use, while ensuring the process is not too resource intensive.

**Target 7.** Sites that are at risk of change of ecological character have threats addressed {2.6.}.  
[Reference to Global Biodiversity Framework Targets 3, 4 and 10]

**7.1 Are mechanisms in place for the Administrative Authority to be informed of negative human-induced changes or likely changes in the ecological character of Ramsar Sites, pursuant to Article 3.2? {7.1}**

**A=Yes; B=No; C=Planned**

*7.1 Additional information: If "Yes", please provide the source links or upload the source documents here describing the mechanisms established*

Any party can raise concerns directly with the Government department that is responsible for the protection of Ramsar Sites so that they can initiate an investigation process.

In England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, the Statutory Conservation Agencies will be alerted to potential impacts through monitoring of the condition of protected sites (<https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/common-standards-monitoring/>), and via the legal requirement to seek permission to carry out potentially damaging operations on Sites of Special Scientific Interest (which applies to all Ramsar Sites) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/protected-areas->



[sites-of-special-scientific-interest](#)). In addition, potential issues can be raised as most UK Ramsar Sites are also protected as Special Areas of Conservation and/or Special Protection Areas, and are therefore subject to the Habitats Regulations Assessment process (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/habitats-regulations-assessments-protecting-a-european-site>). This provides a mechanism analogous to Ramsar Article 3.2 provisions, in that a formal procedure must be followed in cases where a plan or project (not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a site) is likely to have a significant effect on the designated features, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects. An Appropriate Assessment of such a plan or project must be undertaken to evaluate the potential impacts and, in light of the conclusions reached, the relevant Competent Authority shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site conservation objectives. Only in exceptional circumstances (where there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest and no alternative) can a plan or project be approved despite it having an adverse effect, provided that the procedural safeguards laid down in the UK Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations are followed, as articulated in associated case law. In such cases, suitable compensatory measures would need to be taken to fully offset the damage caused and maintain the integrity of the site network, for example by creating replacement habitat.

The Alderney Ramsar Strategy (<https://alderney.gov.gg/article/198131/Ramsar-Site>) facilitates baseline monitoring of habitats and species within the site, which is carried out by the Alderney Animal Welfare Society, Alderney Bird Observatory, Alderney Wildlife Trust, and Channel Islands Bird Ringing Scheme, with data reported annually. The Alderney State of Nature project will create a list of key habitats and species and identify limits of acceptable change for these (<https://www.alderneywildlife.org/current-projects/alderney-state-of-nature>).

On Anguilla, the National Trust and Government Department of Natural Resources conducts monitoring within the Sombrero Island Ramsar Site, so that they can report on potential changes.

**7.2 Have all cases of negative human-induced change or likely change in the ecological character of Ramsar Sites been reported to the Ramsar Secretariat, pursuant to Article 3.2? {7.2}**  
**A=Yes; B=No; C=Some cases; O=No Negative change**

*7.2 Additional information (If “Yes” or “Some cases”, please indicate for which Ramsar Sites the Administrative Authority has not made Article 3.2 reports to the Secretariat):*

Negative human-induced change occurs at a variety of scales and has varying implications for the maintenance of the ecological character of a site. The consequences can range from short-term and small-scale to sufficiently significant, long-term and site-wide to warrant listing a site on the Montreux Record following formal procedures. Where appropriate, cases of human-induced negative change have been reported to the Secretariat.

The UK is making good progress to address the issues affecting the two Ramsar Sites it has listed on the Montreux Record (Dee Estuary and Ouse Washes). Key stakeholders met in November 2022 to discuss the Ouse Washes. This involved Defra, Environment Agency, Natural England, RSPB, WWT and Norfolk Wildlife Trust. Work to expand wet grassland habitat led by the Environment Agency is ongoing, despite funding constraints and issues with land acquisition from private landowners. Defra will continue to undertake periodic reviews of the project with its steering group partners to explore options for maximising conservation benefits.

Natural Resources Wales and Natural England have reviewed the issues behind the listing of The Dee Estuary on the Montreux Record. The main threats continue to come from development pressures, pollution, and disturbance through recreation (including wildfowling). The Defra Ramsar Team is planning to meet with all stakeholders to outline the case and discuss the next steps for removing The Dee Estuary from the Montreux Record.

Defra continues to discharge its responsibility under Article 3.2 of the Convention to report any change or likely change to the ecological character of UK Ramsar Sites to the Secretariat and respond to site queries received by the Secretariat or directly from third parties.

### Goal 3. Wisely using all wetlands

[Reference to Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15]

**Target 8.** National wetland inventories have been either initiated, completed or updated and disseminated and used for promoting the conservation and effective management of all wetlands  
[Reference to Global Biodiversity Framework Targets 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 21]

#### 8.1 Does your country have a National Wetland Inventory (NWI)? {8.1}

A=Yes; B=No; C=In Progress; D=Planned

*8.1 Additional information: for example, if “in progress” or “planned”, by when will it be completed?*

The UK has amassed an impressive array of inventory data, ranging from comprehensive general land cover maps to more detailed site-based surveys of wetland habitat types, vegetation communities and wetland species (which vary in the type of information recorded, spatial coverage and their comprehensiveness). Amongst the major inventories are:

- CEH UK Land Cover Maps (<https://www.ceh.ac.uk/ukceh-land-cover-maps/>);
- CEH UK Lakes Portal (<https://eip.ceh.ac.uk/apps/lakes/index.html>);
- CEH Digital River Network of Great Britain (<https://www.ceh.ac.uk/services/150000-watercourse-network/>);
- Priority Habitat inventories for England (<https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx> - select the ‘Habitats’ layer);
- Northern Ireland (<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/services/natural-environment-map-viewer/>);
- Natural Resources Wales Terrestrial Phase 1 Habitat Survey of Wales (<http://lle.gov.wales/catalogue/item/TerrestrialPhase1HabitatSurvey/>);
- Scotland Habitat and Land Cover maps (<https://www.spatialdata.gov.scot/>);
- inventories of Coastal Vegetated Shingle, Saltmarsh, Sand Dune Vegetation, other NVC Habitats, Freshwater habitats, Wetlands and Native Woodland in Scotland (<https://www.nature.scot/landscapes-and-habitats/habitat-map-scotland>, <https://www.environment.gov.scot/our-environment/habitats-and-species/habitat-map-of-scotland/>);
- wetland species records available via the National Biodiversity Atlas (<https://nbnatlas.org/>) and the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) (<https://bto.org/our-science/projects/wetland-bird-survey>).

The inventory of UK Ramsar Sites and other protected areas, including wetlands, is available via the:

- JNCC website (<https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/uk-protected-areas/>);
- MAGIC website (<https://magic.defra.gov.uk/home.htm>);



- Scotland Environment Map (<https://www.environment.gov.scot/maps/scotlands-environment-map/>);
- NIEA Natural Environment Map Viewer (<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/services/natural-environment-map-viewer>);
- Natural Resources Wales geographic information map viewer (<https://naturalresources.wales/evidence-and-data/maps/browse-map-of-data-about-the-natural-environment/>) and protected areas map (<https://naturalresources.wales/guidance-and-advice/environmental-topics/wildlife-and-biodiversity/protected-areas-of-land-and-seas/find-protected-areas-of-land-and-sea/>), and the new DataMapWales ([https://datamap.gov.wales/maps/new?layer=inspire-nrw:NRW\\_RAMSAR#/](https://datamap.gov.wales/maps/new?layer=inspire-nrw:NRW_RAMSAR#/)).

In Alderney, multiple terrestrial habitat maps have been conducted, including the first comprehensive habitat mapping of the island in 2023. Marine intertidal and subtidal wetland habitats are mapped using a combination of walkover Phase 1 and Phase 2 survey and drop-down video camera survey. Data from Seasearch surveys in Alderney also contributes information on subtidal habitats. Information on Ramsar Sites in the Channel Islands is available through [www.ci-ramsar.com](http://www.ci-ramsar.com). Alderney has a dedicated Records Centre (Alderney Biodiversity Centre), and in 2024 Alderney worked with the States of Guernsey to produce a Bailiwick of Guernsey Records Centre, which will merge the Alderney and Guernsey records centres.

In Guernsey, all terrestrial habitats have been mapped (<https://maps.digimap.gg/EnvironmentalMap/>) and the intertidal habitats have been mapped in both designated Ramsar Sites. The Bailiwick Eelgrass Exploration Project (BEEP) is using citizen science to map and assess the condition of eelgrass habitats around the Islands. Annual seabird census and winter wading bird counts (WeBS) also continue to inform understanding of the importance of local wetlands both within and beyond designated Ramsar Sites.

The Isle of Man 2007 Wetland Inventory is held by Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture (DEFA). DEFA and Manx Wildlife Trust are working on a critical peat mapping process under the terms of the Manx Peatland Partnership, which will allow the designation of Registered Peatland under the Climate Change Act 2021 (<https://www.iucn-uk-peatlandprogramme.org/projects/isle-man>).

Wetland inventories and maps of wetland habitats have been produced in the UK Overseas Territories, for example:

- Anguilla has a habitat inventory maintained by the Anguilla National Trust;
- a wetland inventory has been completed in Cyprus by Terra Cypria, which includes wetlands within the Cyprus Sovereign Base Area – the Akrotiri wetland complex is also included in the 2014 BirdLife Inventory of Important Bird Areas for Cyprus;
- in Bermuda, robust maps exist for shoreline and nearshore marine habitats, inland ponds and peat marshes (saltmarshes are not well mapped); the island-wide aerial photo mosaic was updated in November 2019 and new hydrographic mapping conducted; wetland species data is held in the biodiversity database and natural history library at the Bermuda Natural History Museum; in 2022 all of Bermuda’s mangroves were extensively mapped (abundance, distribution, threats, species composition);
- wetlands in the Cayman Islands were comprehensively mapped in 1988 – the remaining wetland land cover is updated by the Cayman Islands Department of Environment approximately every five years using periodically updated aerial imagery;
- the National Parks Trust of the Virgin Islands has published an Environmental Atlas of natural resources.

In addition to these resources, the Defra Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP 2023) includes a commitment to establish a UK wetland inventory, in support of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, mapping our wetlands for the first time and underpinning future actions to protect these vital habitats.

## 8.2 If your country has an NWI, has it been updated in the last decade [2014-2024]? {8.2}

A=Yes; B=No; C=In progress; C1= Partially; D=Planned; X= Unknown

### 8.2 Additional information:

The range of existing UK wetland inventory data (see above), includes the following examples of recently published or updated information:

- the UKCEH Land Cover Maps which are based on UK Biodiversity Action Plan Broad Habitats (<https://www.ceh.ac.uk/data/ukceh-land-cover-maps>);
- GIS layers of Priority River Habitat (England) (<https://naturalengland-defra.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/priority-river-habitat-rivers-england>) and Priority River Headwater Areas (England) (<https://naturalengland-defra.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/priority-river-habitat-headwater-areas-england>);
- Scotland Habitat and Land Cover maps (<https://www.spatialdata.gov.scot>);
- an updated inventory of Alkaline Fen and Transition Mire and Quaking Bog habitats in England (<https://naturalengland-defra.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/annex-1-alkaline-fens-transition-mire-quaking-bog-polygons>);
- the Natural Resources Wales Lowland Peatland Survey online dataset ([https://datamap.gov.wales/layers/geonode:nrw\\_phase\\_2\\_peatland](https://datamap.gov.wales/layers/geonode:nrw_phase_2_peatland)) now provides details of the plant communities recorded at over 250 priority lowland peatland sites – this has been extensively validated and verified by vegetation survey specialists;
- the Wales National Peatland Action Programme provides maps of restoration sites based on the new national peat map of Wales developed under contract to Welsh Government (<http://lle.gov.wales/catalogue/item/UnifiedPeat>);
- a new map of terrestrial habitats on the Isle of Man will be created, based on satellite data, as part of a land management framework project (climate change-related work), and Manx Wildlife Trust and DEFA have been mapping peat depth and extent under the Manx Peatland Project, which will allow the designation of Registered Peatland under the Climate Change Act 2021 (<https://www.iucn-uk-peatlandprogramme.org/projects/manx-peatland-project>).

Repeat monitoring of the condition of UK protected areas has also taken place, including Ramsar Sites and other areas of wetland habitat, as part of the periodic monitoring and reporting of Sites of Special Scientific Interest

(<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6232097035386880>,  
<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SearchEngland.aspx>,  
<https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/protected-areas-and-species/protected-areas/site-condition-monitoring>).

The British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) of wintering waterbirds is conducted annually across a large number of wetlands, including Ramsar Sites, in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales, the Channel Islands and Isle of Man. It is used to determine waterbird population sizes and identify important sites. Typically 2,800 wetland sites are covered each winter. The results are reported on the online WeBS Alerts portal (<http://www.bto.org/webs-reporting-alerts>).

Island-wide habitat mapping in Alderney was updated in 2023 and there is a rolling programme of marine habitat mapping on the island.

In consultation with the Jersey Ramsar Advisory Group, the Government of Jersey Marine Resources team have undertaken a risk-based assessment of the four Jersey Ramsar Sites to highlight critical locations and interactions where monitoring should be taken forward as a priority. As part of the annual report due in 2025, baseline data will be outlined for seabirds at Les Minquiers and Les Écréhous within the Areas of Special Protection, together with other data such as reef visitor numbers, cetacean activity through our network of hydrophones, sea temperature data and water quality information.

In the UK Overseas Territories, the habitat inventory in Anguilla was last updated in 2017 by the Anguilla National Trust, and the island-wide aerial photo mosaic in Bermuda was updated in November 2019 and new hydrographic mapping conducted.

In Cyprus, the NGO Terra Cypria is taking steps to update the wetland inventory in the next 2-3 years, which will include all wetlands within the Cyprus Sovereign Base Areas.

The UK Government and many of the UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies are continuing to assess opportunities to map habitats using Earth Observation (EO) techniques. Challenges remain relating to the wetland habitat types that can be assessed and monitored using this approach to those in the Ramsar Convention wetland typology. The Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) produced a report in 2023 that reviewed the status of EO for habitat mapping and assessment in Scotland (<https://hub.jncc.gov.uk/assets/cde8edea-3cd2-4229-8d75-e36689b9935f>). This identified the predominance of machine learning EO classification approaches and growing use of radar (SAR) and LiDAR datasets in habitat classification. These can provide additional information on vegetation structure. There is also growing interest around very high resolution (VHR) satellite imagery which offers the potential for more detailed habitat mapping. There are ongoing developments around quantifying habitat change, particularly concerning national-scale habitat mapping initiatives and quantifying year-on-year change. Assessing habitat condition is currently more challenging, with most approaches being specific to particular habitats or sites.

### **8.3 How often is the NWI updated?**

A: Regular intervals  $\leq$  6 years; **B: Irregularly  $\geq$  7 years [both A&B apply, but only able to select one option]**; C: Not updated; X= Unknown

#### *8.3 Additional information:*

Updating of existing information and addition of new information on wetlands that contribute to the UK Wetland Inventory occurs periodically; in some cases annual updates take place (as with the CEH UK Land Cover Maps <https://www.ceh.ac.uk/ukceh-land-cover-maps>), but generally updates and additions tend to be made more intermittently.

### **8.4 Is wetland inventory data and information publicly available? {8.4}**

A=Yes; B=No; **C=Partially**; D=Planned

#### *8.4 Additional information: for example if “partially” or “planned” by when will the data/information be made public?*

A variety of government bodies, statutory agencies, research institutes and NGOs in the UK, UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies maintain wetland inventory and protected area information, some of which is made available via dedicated websites (see section 8.1).

The UK is a signatory to the Open Data Charter, which sets out international principles for the availability of public data. The UK Government has made wide ranging policy commitments to

promote open accessibility and reuse of public sector information. As a matter of policy, formal outputs from publicly funded scientific research are made freely available in open access publications. All public authorities in the UK have a legal obligation to proactively disseminate environmental information that they hold to the public by electronic means, including data from monitoring of activities that could affect the environment. A wealth of environmental data published by central government, local authorities and public bodies is available (see section 8.1 for details and also <https://data.gov.uk/>, <https://naturalengland-defra.opendata.arcgis.com/>, <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/>, <https://www.gov.scot/>, <https://www.nature.scot/information-hub>, <https://www.environment.gov.scot/our-environment/land/wetlands/>, <https://naturalresources.wales/evidence-and-data/>, <http://lle.gov.wales/home>).

All non-sensitive data collected in the Alderney Ramsar Programme is made publicly available and annual reports published online (<https://alderney.gov.gg/article/198131/Ramsar-Site>). Data requests can be made to the Alderney Biodiversity Centre and its successor, the Bailiwick of Guernsey Records Centre.

### 8.5 Please explain how the NWI data/information is maintained if at all? {8.3}

Wetland inventory information is maintained/expanded on through a variety of mechanisms, based on field surveys, remote-sensed data/earth observations, regular and irregular recording programmes, citizen science/volunteer networks, web-portals, etc. – see sections 8.1-8.2 for further information.

### 8.6 Based on the information in NWI, if available, please provide the total area in square kilometres (km<sup>2</sup>) for the extent of wetlands (according to the Convention on Wetland's definition) for the year of available data and provide the relevant disaggregated information in the box below. This information will also be used to report on SDG 6, Target 6.6, Indicator 6.6.1, for which the Convention is a co-custodian. {8.6}

E= # Km<sup>2</sup> ; X= Unknown

#### 8.6 Additional information:

Estimates of the area of marine/coastal and inland Ramsar wetland types that are known to occur in the UK are presented below. This does not include the UK Overseas Territories or Crown Dependencies. The figures for inland habitat types are based on published sources. The figures for marine habitats are based on a combination of published sources and novel analyses of selected GIS datasets. Types C, I, P, Q, R, Ss, Vt, Zg and Zk(a) do not appear to occur in the UK. Extent figures have not been assembled for human-made Ramsar wetland types.

#### 1. Extent of Ramsar marine/coastal types

- Type A Permanent shallow marine waters less than six metres deep at low tide, B Marine subtidal aquatic beds, D Rocky marine shores, F Estuarine waters, and G Intertidal mud, sand or salt flats combined = 11,343.75 km<sup>2</sup>
- Type E Sand, shingle or pebble shores = 444.72 km<sup>2</sup>
- Type H Intertidal marshes = 361.32 km<sup>2</sup>
- Type J Coastal brackish/saline lagoons = 52.43 km<sup>2</sup>
- Total for all marine/coastal types combined = 12,202.22 km<sup>2</sup>

#### 2. Extent of Ramsar inland types

- Types M Permanent rivers/streams, N Seasonal/intermittent/irregular rivers/streams, and L Permanent inland deltas combined = 640 km<sup>2</sup>
- Types O Permanent freshwater lakes (over 8 ha), Tp(a) Permanent freshwater pools/ponds (below 8 ha) on inorganic soils (not including marshes/swamps), Ts(a) Seasonal/intermittent freshwater pools on inorganic soils (not including marshes/swamps), dystrophic pools/ponds <8 hectares [for which there is no corresponding Ramsar type], and K Coastal freshwater lagoons [which have been included as an inland freshwater type rather than coastal type to mirror how this type is classified in the UK] combined = 2,650 km<sup>2</sup>
- Type Sp Inland permanent saline/brackish/alkaline marshes/pools = 0.005 km<sup>2</sup>
- Types Tp(b) Permanent freshwater marshes/swamps on inorganic soils (not including pools/ponds), Ts(b) Seasonal/intermittent freshwater marshes/swamps on inorganic soil (not including pools/ponds), U Non-forested peatlands, Va Alpine wetlands, and Y Freshwater springs combined = 34,775.89 km<sup>2</sup>
- Types W Shrub-dominated wetlands, Xf Tree-dominated wetlands, and Xp Forested peatlands combined = 795.42 km<sup>2</sup>
- Total of all inland types = 38,861.315 km<sup>2</sup>

A range of issues were encountered in the translation of the Ramsar wetland classification to the habitat/wetland classification systems used in the UK. This included uncertainties about the intended scope of the Ramsar wetland types and how to best align recognised UK wetland habitat types that had been defined in different ways. To make the reporting on the extent of Ramsar wetlands in the UK reasonably straightforward, a pragmatic approach was taken to the interpretation, scope and alignment of Ramsar and UK wetland types, especially so that extent figures that had already been produced could be utilised; in many cases this meant it was necessary that several Ramsar wetland types were grouped together to report on their extent. An explanation of the approach taken, data sources and issues encountered in the compilation of the UK extent figures is available a supplementary file. This also includes extent figures for the main wetland habitats on the Isle of Man, but these do not directly align to Ramsar wetland types.

See also [Supplementary text and tables submitted in a sperate document.](#)

**Supplementary text and tables on the extent of Ramsar wetland types in the UK** [submitted in a sperate document]

Extent figures are presented below in Tables A1/A2 and B1/B2 for inland and marine/coastal Ramsar wetland types that occur in the UK. This does not include the UK Overseas Territories or Crown Dependencies, apart from the Isle of Man for which figures are presented separately (see Table C1). The UK figures are based on a combination of published sources (Tables A1/A2) and novel analyses of selected GIS datasets (Tables B1/B2).

The approach assumed that, irrespective of their origin or past/current management/land-use: (i) the marine/coastal and inland wetland types A-Zk(b) are represented by wetland habitats that are of moderate-high biodiversity importance; and (ii) human-made Ramsar wetland types 1-9 and Zk(c) are represented by wetland habitats of low biodiversity importance. Although this potentially differs from (or is at least not made clear in) the explanatory information accompanying the Ramsar wetland classification, this interpretation aligns with the strategic focus of the Ramsar Convention, which is the wise use and conservation of wetlands. It also makes reporting on the extent of Ramsar wetland types more straightforward and meaningful.

Translation between the Ramsar wetland classification and UK classification systems proved to be problematic. The Ramsar wetland classification is a simple global classification system with only brief descriptions of the 42 types. It is intended to be comprehensive, but it is not always straightforward to use at a national level because of the lack of precision and apparent duplication between certain categories, and also certain omissions. It is recognised that the system was not intended as a general mechanism for national inventory purposes, and that its usefulness as a habitat classification for any specific wetland inventory should be carefully assessed, given that it does not readily accommodate descriptions of all wetland habitats that are now commonly included in national wetland inventories. Supporting contextual information provided by the Ramsar Convention on the Ramsar wetland types is limited and some of the sub-divisions are not commonly used in UK habitat classification systems. The intended scope of some of the sub-divisions is difficult to understand and alignment with potentially relevant UK wetland habitat types, which have been defined in different ways, is not always obvious or straight-forward.

To make the reporting on the extent of UK wetlands reasonably straightforward, a pragmatic approach was taken to the interpretation, scope and alignment of Ramsar wetland types with UK habitat types, particularly those for which readily available UK extent figures had already been produced for other purposes. As a result, some of the Ramsar wetland types were combined to report on their extent and some of the correspondences between the potential scope of Ramsar wetland types and UK habitat types were simplified.

Extent figures were not assembled for any human-made Ramsar wetland types. Types that did not appear to occur in the UK included: I. Intertidal forested wetlands; P. Seasonal/ intermittent freshwater lakes (over 8 ha); Q. Inland permanent saline/ brackish/alkaline lakes; R. Inland seasonal/ intermittent saline/brackish/ alkaline lakes and flats; Ss. Inland seasonal/ intermittent saline/brackish/ alkaline marshes/pools; Vt. Tundra wetlands; and Zg. Geothermal wetlands. It was assumed that type C. Coral Reefs did not include deep-sea cold-water coral reef or additional areas of biogenic reef (created by, for example, reef forming worms, mussels, oysters and maerl) which occur in UK waters. In addition, it was unclear whether the Ramsar type Zk(a). Karst and other Subterranean hydrological systems occurred in the UK waters. Whilst it was clear which features this type covered in terrestrial settings (primarily limestone karst underground cave and tunnel systems), it was uncertain which habitat types/features it should encompass in the marine/coastal environment; although the Annex I type H8330 Submerged or partially submerged sea caves might be included, these are mainly formed through erosion of differential geology rather than any hydrological influence and are open to the sea. There are no known subterranean cave systems in the UK coastal environment. It was assumed that this type did not extend to deeper waters and is not intended to accommodate gaseous submarine systems/structures, produced where methane leaks form deep-water carbonate structures (covered by the Annex I type H1180 Submarine structures made by leaking gases).

Extent figures for the main wetland habitats in the Isle of Man are given in Table C1, based on a survey conducted between 1991-94 (<https://www.gov.im/media/60296/daffphaseiecologicalsurveyrepor.pdf>), as presented in the technical report accompanying the Isle of Man Wetland Inventory Executive Summary (Tomlinson, P., July 2007).



**Table A1. UK extent figures (ha) for Ramsar wetland types based on published sources**

Ramsar wetland type	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland	UK
E Sand, shingle or pebble shores	11,714	27,731	3,793	1,234	44,472
H Intertidal marshes	22,482	5,623	7,787	240	36,132
J Coastal brackish/saline lagoons	1,445	3,537	84	177	5,243
M Permanent rivers/streams, N Seasonal/ intermittent/irregular rivers/streams, L Permanent inland deltas	29,000	21,000	8,000	6,000	64,000
O Permanent freshwater lakes (over 8 ha), Tp(a) Permanent freshwater pools/ ponds (below 8 ha) on inorganic soils (not including marshes/swamps), Ts(a) Seasonal/ intermittent freshwater pools on inorganic soils (not including marshes/swamps), K Coastal freshwater lagoons, together with dystrophic pools/ponds <8 ha	97,000	88,000	18,000	64,000	265,000 (a)
Sp Inland permanent saline/brackish/alkaline marshes/pools	0.5	0	0	0	0.5
Tp(b) Permanent freshwater marshes/swamps on inorganic soils (not including pools/ponds), Ts(b) Seasonal/ intermittent freshwater marshes/swamps on inorganic soil (not including pools/ ponds), U Non-forested peatlands, Va Alpine wetlands, Y Freshwater springs	594,518 (b)	2,423,312 (b)	204,390	246,191 (b)	3,477,589 (b)
W Shrub-dominated wetlands, Xf Tree-dominated wetlands, Xp Forested peatlands	20,000	44,742	12,200	2,600	79,542

(a) UK total is slightly less than the sum of the country figures due to rounding of figures and other methodological approaches used in Countryside Survey 2007

(b) the figures are incomplete as values for Reedbeds in Scotland and Upland fens, flushes and swamps in England and Northern Ireland were not available

**Table A2. Corresponding habitat types and data sources used to derive extent figures shown in Table A1**

Ramsar wetland type	Corresponding habitat types and (in brackets) data source
E	EU Habitats Directive Annex I habitat types H1210, H1220, H2110, H2120, H2130, H2140, H2150, H2160, H2170, H2190, H21A0, H2250 (JNCC Article 17 reporting 2019)
H	EU Habitats Directive Annex I habitat types H1310, H1320, H1330, H1420 (JNCC Article 17 reporting 2019)
J	EU Habitats Directive Annex I habitat type H1150 Coastal Lagoons (JNCC Article 17 reporting 2019)
M, N L	UK BAP Broad Habitat Rivers and Streams (Countryside Survey 2007)
O, Tp(a), Ts(a), K	UK BAP Broad Habitat Standing Water and Canals (Countryside Survey 2007)
Sp	EU Habitats Directive Annex I habitat type H1340 Inland salt meadows (JNCC Article 17 reporting 2019)
Tp(b), Ts(b), U, Va, Y	UK BAP Priority Habitat Reedbed (2008 UK BAP reporting round); Reedbed (NE State of Environment Report 2008); UK BAP Priority Habitat Lowland fen (2008 UK BAP reporting round); UK BAP Priority Habitat Upland flushes, fens and swamps (2008 UK BAP reporting round); Upland fen, marsh and swamp (Scotland's State of the Environment Report 2014); Upland fen, marsh and swamp (Natural Resources Wales (2016) State of Natural Resources Report), UK BAP Priority Habitat Purple moor grass and rush pastures (2008 UK BAP reporting round); Lowland marshy grassland (Purple Moor-grass and Rush Pastures) (Natural Resources Wales (2016) State of Natural Resources Report); H4010 Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> (JNCC Article 17 reporting 2019); H4020 Temperate Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica ciliaris</i> and <i>Erica tetralix</i> (JNCC Article 17 reporting 2019); H4080 Sub-Arctic <i>Salix</i> spp. scrub (JNCC Article 17 reporting 2019); H6430 Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels (JNCC Article 17 reporting 2019); UK BAP Priority Habitat Lowland raised bog (2008 UK BAP reporting round); H7130 Blanket bogs (JNCC Article 17 reporting 2019); UK BAP Priority Habitat Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh (2008 UK BAP reporting round); Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh (NE State of Environment Report 2008); UK BAP Priority Habitat Lowland meadows (2008 UK BAP reporting round)
W, Xf, Xp	UK BAP Priority Habitat Wet woodland (UK BAP reporting round 2008); Wet woodland (Native Woodland Survey of Scotland 2014)

**Table B1. UK extent figure for Ramsar wetland types based on novel analyses of selected GIS datasets**

Ramsar wetland type	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )
A Permanent shallow marine waters less than six metres deep at low tide	7,769.45
B Marine subtidal aquatic beds	1,117.14
D Rocky marine shores	238.11
F Estuarine waters	3,149.09
G Intertidal mud, sand or salt flats	3,095.98
A Permanent shallow marine waters less than six metres deep at low tide, B Marine subtidal aquatic beds, D Rocky marine shores, F Estuarine waters, and G Intertidal mud, sand or salt flats	11,343.75 (a)

(a) this total combined extent of wetland types A, B, D, F and G (calculated via GIS) is less than the sum of the extent of each of the individual constituent wetland types, due to locations where two or more of the wetland types overlap.

**Table B2. Description of datasets used to derive extent figure shown in Table B1**

Ramsar wetland type	Description of dataset
A	The lowest limit of shallow marine waters was defined using an internally produced JNCC dataset (2019), produced from the Defra Digital Elevation Model, supplemented by the 2018 version of the EMODnet Bathymetry Digital Terrain Model where the Defra Digital Elevation Model was not available; the upper boundary was defined using chart datum based on a Defra Marine Reference Dataset held at JNCC, which contained polygons of the UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO) depth areas
B	Based on Essential Ocean Variable layers for: (i) macroalgal canopy and (ii) seagrass; obtained from the EMODnet Seabed Habitats web portal – note that maerl beds were not included as it was unclear if the intended scope of this type was meant to extend to algal coralline beds
D	Based on an extraction from the JNCC EUNIS Level 3 Combined Map for the UK of EUNIS habitat types: A1 Littoral rock and other hard substrata; and B3.1 Supralittoral rock (lichen or splash zone), supplemented with Phase 1 habitat data for Wales from Natural Resources Wales for H1.2 Intertidal mud/sand, H1.3 Intertidal boulders/rocks, and H.4 Boulders/rock above the high tide mark
F	Based on the Annex I habitat H1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide shapefile produced by JNCC for the Habitats Directive 2019 UK Article 17 reporting
G	Based on the Annex I habitat H1130 Estuaries shapefile produced by JNCC for the Habitats Directive 2019 UK Article 17 reporting

**Table C1. Extent of main wetland habitats in the Isle of Man**

Broad habitat type	Area (ha)
Natural non-linear water bodies	7.3
Swamp	19.7
Man-made non-linear water bodies	132.4
Selected wet woodland and scrub	311.9
Wet heathland	342.4
Selected coastland	570.6
Mire	637.9
Marshy grassland	1,067.1
Intertidal	1,654.6
Shallow marine waters	13,915.4
Total	18,659.2

### 8.7 How has the ecological character<sup>1</sup> of wetlands in your country, overall, changed since COP14? {8.5}

**N=Status deteriorated for both; O=No change; P=Status improved**

a) Ramsar Sites

b) All wetlands in your country

#### 8.7 Additional information:

Available information suggests that there has been a modest decline in the overall condition of Ramsar Site features and wetland habitats across the UK in recent times. This is based on:

- (i) the reported condition of Ramsar Sites in England and Scotland – for the 73 Ramsar Sites in England, the amount in favourable condition has slightly declined between 2021 and 2024 (from 56% to 53% of the total area), as has that in an unfavourable but recovering condition (from 35% to 32%); of that in unfavourable condition the amount in recovering condition versus stable or declining condition has fallen (from 79% to 69%) – for Scotland, the amount in favourable or recovering condition has also slightly declined between 2021 and 2024 (from 76% to 74.5% of site features), whilst features in unfavourable condition have risen slightly (24% v 25.5%);
- (ii) the trends in the condition of 43 UK wetland habitat types recognised under Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive as reported on in 2019 (<https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/article-17-habitats-directive-report-2019-habitats/>) – this included a range of wetland habitat types, such as alluvial forests and bog woodland, bog, fen and flush vegetation, coastal dunes, shingle, saltmarsh and lagoons, freshwater rivers and lakes, inland saltmeadows, poorly-drained grassland, and wet and montane heath – the trend for 24 of these habitat was stable; decreasing for 13 types; and increasing in only one case (the trend for the other five habitats was uncertain); the habitats with a decreasing trend included alkaline fen and flush vegetation, coastal dune slacks and saltmarsh, damp grassland, and wet heath – the trend direction for the part of each Annex I habitat within designated Special Areas of Conservations was also reported; this was stable for 23 habitat types; decreasing for eleven habitats; and increasing for eight habitats (the trend for the other habitat was uncertain).

Recent trends in ecological character of wetlands in the UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies are mixed:

<sup>1</sup> Ecological character is the combination of the ecosystem components, processes and benefits/services that characterize the wetland at a given point in time.

- (i) the condition of the Anguilla Sombrero Island Nature Reserve Marine Park and Ramsar Site has improved with the successful removal of invasive mice and a resulting doubling of the endemic ground lizard population (from c.884 individuals to c.1684 individuals between 2021 and 2024), together with a successful rewilding initiative that included the reintroduction of three plant species to the island – on-going wetland restoration work following Hurricane Irma in September 2017 has helped to ensure that the condition of wetlands in Anguilla has not deteriorated;
- (ii) the condition of the Booby Pond and Rookery Ramsar Site and wetlands in the Cayman Islands has similarly shown no change in general, although unquantified loss of wetlands to residential and commercial development has reduced the overall extent of wetlands;
- (iii) in the Cyprus Sovereign Base Area, substantial management actions have taken place over the last three years to protect and/or restore important habitats (access management, rubbish removal, enhanced enforcement through installation of CCTV cameras, etc), though some habitat (turtle nesting and bird breeding) may have been adversely impacted by human activities, development and increased use – the affected area will be subject to an Appropriate Assessment under the Protection and Management of Nature and Wildlife Ordinance 2007 and the Game and Wild Birds Ordinance 2008, which will take account of cumulative and in combination impacts with a view to prescribing mitigation measures, including limiting permanent and temporary developments where appropriate;
- (iv) lastly, there has been no overall change in the condition of the Alderney West Coast and Burhou Islands Ramsar Site, though the adjacent wetland (Platte Saline Pond) has expanded substantially due to the cessation of water collection from the source stream.

**8.8 On a scale of 1-5 rate the change in the ecological character of wetlands in your country, overall, since last COP ?**

1=major deterioration; 2=deterioration; 3=no change; 4=improvement; 5=major improvement

- a) Marine/coastal **2=deterioration**
- b) Inland **2=deterioration**
- c) Human-made **unknown**

*8.8 Additional information:*

This is a difficult question to answer with confidence across the wide range of habitat types covered by each of the above categories and for the UK, UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies as a whole. Inland and coastal habitats have probably declined in condition, at least in the UK; the status of marine wetlands is less certain, as is the status of human-made wetlands (noting that it is unclear which habitat types fall under this category in the UK). Changes in the ecological character of wetlands in the UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies are also uncertain.

**8.9 What are your main needs in developing or updating an NWI to support SDG Indicator 6.6.1 reporting for tracking global wetland status and trends? Please select below. {8.7}**

- a) Access to data and data acquisition standards **Yes**
- b) Wetland delineation methods and approaches **Yes**
- c) Habitat classifications **Yes**
- d) Standardization in data interpretation methods **Yes**
- e) Regulatory framework and governance structure **Yes**
- f) Resources **Yes**
- g) Relevant skills **Yes**
- h) Data collection and mapping **Yes**
- i) Collaboration **Yes**

j) Others

*8.9 Additional information: e.g explain others as referred to in (j)*

A Stakeholder consultation exercise undertaken in 2023 for Defra on the development of a UK wetland inventory in support of the Ramsar Convention identified multiple challenges. These included:

- (i) strategic coordination and prioritisation (noting that the creation of a comprehensive inventory would need to involve multiple stakeholders from across the UK, as well as the UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies);
- (ii) content, design and maintenance of the inventory (with a dedicated web-portal and supporting information management tools);
- (iii) data availability, comparability, consistency and quality (including dealing with multiple habitat and other classification systems).

The main needs/challenges identified by the UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies are:

- (i) resources and the technology to record habitats in high energy tidal environments around Alderney;
- (ii) financial assistance to support the cost of boat transportation, monitoring equipment and data storage to assess offshore cays in Anguilla;
- (iii) resources/tools and financial assistance for mapping and surveys at the Cyprus Sovereign Base Area;
- (iv) resource limitations and technical assistance for the States of Guernsey.

**8.10 Please select from the list below the main needs of your country in using NWI results to implement COP mandates, e.g. conservation and wise use of all wetlands (Resolutions X.2, XIII.12, XIII.13, XIII.14, XIII.16, XIV.17 and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)) to achieve sustainable development.**

- a) Resources **Yes**
- b) Relevant skills
- c) Data systems and management
- d) Application of NWI information for decision making (climate, biodiversity and sectoral planning/reporting) **Yes**
- e) Regulatory framework and governance structure
- f) Data interpretation and communication **Yes**
- g) Collaboration **Yes**
- h) Others

*8.10 Additional information:*

The UK, UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies have somewhat differing needs in relation to using NWI results. Those identified above are of general importance. Items that are of particular importance for Anguilla are water quality monitoring equipment, climate change modelling for sea level rise, and regulatory frameworks and governance structures to support regulations for the Anguilla Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan Wetlands Policy. The Cyprus Sovereign Base Area highlighted resources and data systems.



**Target 9.** *The wise use of wetlands is strengthened through integrated resource management at the appropriate scale, inter alia, within a river basin or along a coastal zone {1.3.}*  
[Reference to Global Biodiversity Framework Targets 1, 9, 10 and 15].

**9.1 Is a national wetland policy (or equivalent instrument) that promotes the wise use of wetlands in place? {9.1}**

A=Yes; B=No; C=In preparation; D=Planned

*9.1 Additional information:*

Instead of a specific national policy for wetlands, the UK has integrated the sustainable use of wetland resources into a wide range of policies, regulations, statutory mechanisms and other measures. This includes the long-term legally binding Environment Act habitat target (as described in the Environmental Target (Biodiversity) (England) Regulations 2023) to restore or create more than 500,000 hectares of wildlife rich habitats outside of protected sites by 2042 (<https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6427187599900672>). An interim target was set in the Defra Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP 2023) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-improvement-plan>) to restore or create 140,000 hectares of a range of wildlife-rich habitats (including wetlands) outside protected sites by 2028, as well as a commitment to restore 75% of Sites of Special Scientific Interest in England to favourable condition by 2042, which will also benefit large swathes of wetland habitat.

In England, the Catchment Based Approach (CaBA) is an inclusive, civil society-led initiative that works in partnership with Government, Local Authorities, Water Companies and businesses to maximise the natural value of the environment (<https://catchmentbasedapproach.org/>). The partnerships are actively working in all 100+ river catchments across England and cross-border with Wales, directly supporting achievement of many of the Government's environmental targets. The approach embeds collaborative working at a river catchment scale, delivering a range of environmental, social and economic benefits and protecting our precious water environments for the benefit of all.

Scottish Government published its Biodiversity Strategy post-2020 Statement of Intent and Edinburgh Declaration in 2020, which aims to promote the use of nature-based solutions, such as peatland restoration, to mitigate and adapt to climate change, tackle flooding, improve water quality and benefit biodiversity. In addition, following on from a consultation exercise in late autumn 2023 on the proposed Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and first 5-year Delivery Plan, revisions are being made to the Delivery Plan with publication of the final version planned for autumn 2024.

In Wales, the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and Welsh Government Natural Resources Policy similarly endorses the importance of delivering nature-based solutions, developing resilient ecological networks, and maintaining, enhancing and restoring floodplains and hydrogeological systems. The Act also includes a requirement for Natural Resources Wales to embed the principles of sustainable management of natural resources throughout the way it works. Natural Resources Wales has also reinforced the need for the wise use of wetlands via their policy on the use of constructed wetlands for treatment, flow control and biodiversity to clarify the regulatory requirements and design considerations (<https://naturalresourceswales.gov.uk/guidance-and-advice/environmental-topics/water-management-and-quality/constructed-wetlands/constructed-wetlands-overview/>).

A specific UK Peatland Strategy was launched in 2018 to drive and co-ordinate action on peatland conservation and management across the UK, supported by country-level plans and a range of activities (see section 12.4). National Action Plans/Programmes/Strategies have been produced in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. A report on progress since the publication of the UK Strategy is due later in 2024.

Biodiversity conservation is also an essential component of the UK Forestry Standard, which recognises the role of forests in water regulation and purification, the need for forestry to avoid adverse impacts on watercourses and water quality, and to avoid afforestation where this could damage wetland habitats (see section 3.4).

National planning policies have been developed that aim to ensure appropriate protection and environmental and ecological impact assessments are conducted for proposed plans and projects that could potentially damage protected wetland sites and key wetland habitats (see section 13.3). Other policies have led to the production of integrated plans to protect and sustainably manage river basins, flood risk and shorelines (see section 9.3), the reform of water abstraction arrangements in England with a stronger catchment focus and to maximise sustainable access to water (see section 2.4), and measures to protect wetland ecosystems and water bodies from pollution from agriculture, wastewater and industrial sources (see section 3.1).

On the Isle of Man, the Island Strategic Plan protects watercourses and wetlands from demonstrable harm (<https://www.gov.im/categories/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/development-plan/strategic-plan/>). The island also has a Biodiversity Strategy for 2015-2025 (<https://www.gov.im/about-the-government/departments/environment-food-and-agriculture/biodiversity-strategy-and-delivery-plan/>), as well as an agricultural strategy that incorporates a range of environmental strategies and an agri-environment scheme that supports the reintroduction, where appropriate, of wetland habitats (<https://www.gov.im/categories/business-and-industries/agriculture/agri-environment-initiatives-grant-scheme/>). The Future Fisheries strategy includes an ecosystem approach to safeguarding the marine environment and aims to achieve sustainable fish stocks and marine development and exploitation in harmony with the environment (<https://www.gov.im/about-the-government/departments/environment-food-and-agriculture/fisheries-directorate/future-fisheries-strategy/>). Action on plastic pollution has been taken through two Single Use Plastics Reduction Plans.

On Alderney, the Land Use Plan (<https://alderney.gov.gg/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=123992&p=0>) gives protections to wetland habitats from development, ensuring impacts upon the environment should be considered in the development process. The Alderney Strategy for Nature and Agriculture aims to reduce pressures on nature, creating resilience and maximising diversity of species and ecosystems. The Alderney Ramsar Strategies are a key tool for promoting wise use.

There is a draft Biodiversity Policy for the Cyprus Sovereign Base Areas. The Administration also works closely with the Republic of Cyprus to mirror relevant policies and there is a statutory obligation to maintain designated Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) (and thereby the Ramsar Site) at favourable conservation status. This is achieved by implementing the provisions of the Nature and Game and Wild Birds Ordinances. Appropriate Assessments are undertaken to ensure that activities, projects and plans that may have an adverse impact on a designated wetlands are not approved or are only approved with proper mitigation.

**9.2 Since COP14 have any amendments to existing legislation or policies been made to reflect commitments under the Convention on Wetlands? {9.2}**

**A=Yes; B=No; C=In progress; D=Planned**

*9.2 Additional information:*

The National Planning Policy Framework for England states that Ramsar Sites should be given the same protection as SACs and SPAs (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>). They are given similar protection in Northern Ireland, with Planning Policy Statement 2 stating that the procedures under the Habitats Regulations also apply to Ramsar Sites (<https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/retained-planning-policy>). Ramsar Sites in Wales are similarly protected through designation as SPAs/SACs/SSSIs and measures in the Welsh Planning Policy (<https://naturalresources.wales/guidance-and-advice/environmental-topics/wildlife-and-biodiversity/protected-areas-of-land-and-seas/sites-protected-by-european-and-international-law/>, <https://www.gov.wales/planning-policy-wales>). Similarly, the policy on Ramsar Site protection in Scotland notes that this is currently achieved through co-designation as SPAs/SACs/SSSIs (<https://www.gov.scot/publications/implementation-of-scottish-government-policy-on-protecting-ramsar-sites/>). Scottish Government is proposing to change this policy to give the same level of protection that is afforded in England, Northern Ireland and Wales. See section 13.3 for further information.

The Alderney West Coast and the Burhou Islands Ramsar Site is integrated into the Island Land Use Plan, and the Jersey 2022 Bridging Island Plan covers wetlands and specifically references the Ramsar principles in considering any action that may impact upon wetland areas ([https://www.gov.je/SiteCollectionDocuments/Planning and building/P Bridging Island Plan.pdf](https://www.gov.je/SiteCollectionDocuments/Planning%20and%20building/P%20Bridging%20Island%20Plan.pdf)). In addition, the recently published States of Alderney Strategy for Nature and Agriculture provides policies on nature conservation and includes consideration of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

Guernsey enacted new water pollution legislation in 2022, which provides for the licensing of discharges of trade effluent or sewage effluent into inland waters or the sea and the establishment of water quality standards for surface water and groundwater.

The Isle of Man Strategic Plan 2016 (under the Town and Country Planning Act 1999) notes the Ramsar Convention and the wise use of wetlands and provides protective policies. This is supported by policies on habitat protection and remediation within *Managing our Natural Wealth – The Island’s First Biodiversity Strategy, 2015-2025* – for which a mid-term audit has been published (<https://www.gov.im/about-the-government/departments/environment-food-and-agriculture/environment-directorate/ecosystem-policy-and-energy/wildlife-biodiversity-and-protected-sites/biodiversity-strategy-and-delivery-plan/>). The Isle of Man Forestry Act 1984 has been amended by the Climate Change Act 2021 to set up a register of peatlands to protect this important habitat and resource. This is separate from the protection of Registered Heath, designated under the Heath Burning Act 2003.

The National Conservation Law on the Cayman Islands: (i) requires local planning authorities to consult with the National Conservation Council on planning applications affecting primary habitats, which include mangrove wetlands; and (ii) provides a formal legal framework for Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs).

Under the Bermuda Plan 2018, all areas of mangroves, the main freshwater marshes and a number of uninhabited offshore islets have been zoned with a strict Nature Reserve Zoning – regardless of whether they are actual protected areas or not.

On the British Virgin Islands, the approved Green Paper on the Environmental Management and Climate Adaptation bill (2020) advocates for the declaration of wetlands as Environmentally Sensitive Areas.

An amendment to the Turks and Caicos Islands National Parks Ordinance allows the designation of any wetland habitat as a Critical Habitat Reserve.

Commitments under the Ramsar Convention in the Cyprus Sovereign Base Area are met through the Protection and Management of Nature and Wildlife Ordinance 2007 and the Game and Wild Birds Ordinance 2008.

**9.3 Do your country's water governance and management systems recognize wetlands as natural water infrastructure integral to water resource management at the scale of river basins? {9.3}**

**A=Yes; B=No; D=Planned**

*9.3 Additional information:*

River Basin Management Plans, which contain details of individual river basins and features of the catchment, including individual rivers, lakes and groundwater, estuarine and coastal water bodies, have been created for the whole of the UK (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/river-basin-management-plans-updated-2022>, <https://naturalresourceswales.gov.uk/evidence-and-data/research-and-reports/water-reports/river-basin-management-plans/>, <https://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/water/river-basin-management-planning/>, <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/water/river-basin-management>). These are complimented by Flood Risk Management Plans, which have been prepared for areas within a river basin district where flood risk is considered to be significant (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/flood-risk-management-plans-frmps>, <https://www2.sepa.org.uk/frmplans/>). These cover all major rivers, the sea and reservoirs, and local sources of flooding including surface water, ordinary watercourses and groundwater. Flood Risk Management Plans are reviewed, updated and published every 6 years as a requirement of the Flood Risk Regulations 2009.

In addition, Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs) have been developed which identify the most sustainable approach to managing the flood and coastal erosion risks to the coastline (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/shoreline-management-plans-smps>).

**9.4 Have communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness (CEPA) expertise and tools been incorporated into catchment/river basin planning and management (see Resolution X.19)? {9.4}**

**A=Yes; B=No; D=Planned**

*9.4 Additional information:*

Stakeholder engagement is a key element in the approach to delivering and developing the River Basin Management Plans. The Catchment Based Approach (CaBA) is an inclusive, civil society-led initiative that works in partnership with Government, Local Authorities, Water Companies and businesses to maximise the natural value of the environment across England (<https://catchmentbasedapproach.org/>). The partnerships are actively working in all 100+

river catchments across England and cross-border with Wales, directly supporting achievement of many of the Government's environmental targets. The approach embeds collaborative working at a river catchment scale, delivering a range of environmental, social and economic benefits and protecting our precious water environments for the benefit of all. The Wales Water Management Forum has cross-sectoral representation (land managers, water companies, agriculture, conservation, recreation and business) and plays an important role in developing the River Basin Management Plans.

The Scottish Water Environment Hub allows users to explore the information that underpins the River Basin Management Plan for Scotland 2021-2027, including the latest assessment of the condition of the water environment, actions being taken, information on protected areas, further maps and technical information, and data tables for downloading (<https://informatics.sepa.org.uk/RBMP3/>). Delivery of the plan is supported by The Water Environment Fund (<https://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/water/water-environment-fund/>), which is administered by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) (on behalf of Scottish Government) who work in partnership with local authorities, land and structure owners, fishery trusts and conservation bodies to deliver an annual programme of projects. The fund enables rivers to be restored by: (i) repairing damaged urban rivers to create attractive and accessible green river corridors within towns and cities that can be used for active travel and recreation, improving health and wellbeing; and (ii) removing and easing barriers to migrating fish and improving vital fish stocks, helping improve endangered populations and creating new opportunities for angling, tourism and recreation, bringing economic benefits and recreational opportunities to river communities.

In Northern Ireland, DAERA in partnership with the Department for Infrastructure (DFI) produces a river basin management plan for Northern Ireland. Integrated Catchment Planning also involves anyone who is interested in, or may be affected by, the water environment and the way in which it is managed. Catchment Officers continually work with stakeholders across the River Basin Districts (<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/delivery-and-public-participation>).

**9.5 Has your country established policies or guidelines for enhancing the role of wetlands in mitigating or adapting to climate change? {9.5}**

**A=Yes; B=No; C=Partially; D=Planned**

*9.5 Additional information:*

As part of the UK Adaptation Policy and associated UK Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA), five-yearly assessments of major risks and opportunities from climate change are produced. The 2022 (third) assessment (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-climate-change-risk-assessment-2022>) outlined risks to the viability and diversity of terrestrial and freshwater habitats and species, soil health from increased flooding and drought, natural carbon stores and sequestration, and other factors. The National Adaptation Programme sets out a strategy to address the main risks and opportunities identified (<https://www.theccc.org.uk/publicationtype/report/adaptation-reports/>). The Adaptation Manual for England provides advice on habitat management, including wetlands such as bogs, rivers and wet grasslands, to help conservation managers and advisors make informed decisions about adaptation (<https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5679197848862720>).

The true worth of peatlands as stores of carbon in tackling climate change is becoming increasingly recognized. Peatlands are one of Scotland's largest degraded ecosystems, which

have become sources of carbon emissions that actively contribute to climate change rather than acting as carbon sinks that mitigate against it. Recognising this, the Scottish Government has funded peatland restoration across Scotland through the Scotland Peatland ACTION project for over a decade. This is delivered through a partnership between NatureScot, Cairngorms National Park Authority, Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park Authority, Scottish Water, and Forestry and Land Scotland. In 2020, they also announced a substantial, multi-annual investment in peatland restoration of more than £250 million over the next 10 years as part of the policy commitments within their Climate Change Plan (<https://www.nature.scot/climate-change/nature-based-solutions/peatland-action-project>). This has supported the restoration of over 43,000 hectares of peatlands, with a target of 250,000 hectares by 2030 and an interim target of 110,000 hectares by 2026 (<https://www.nature.scot/climate-change/nature-based-solutions/peatland-action>).

The National Peatlands Action Programme (<https://naturalresourceswales.gov.uk/evidence-and-data/maps/the-national-peatland-action-programme/>) has been developed to address the biodiversity crisis and climate change emergency in Wales. This includes an initial five-year programme of restoration and has six priority action themes, including erosion, drainage, sustainable management of peatlands and afforested/hyper-modified peatlands, which are the main areas of concern to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and secure carbon storage.

The Northern Ireland Climate Change Adaptation Programme states that the restoration of habitats is a vital management tool to enable the natural environment to cope with the additional stress caused by climate change. This supported the restoration of priority habitats, peatlands and wetlands (<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-climate-change-adaptation-programme-2014-2019>).

The importance of blue carbon habitats for climate change mitigation, nature and people is increasingly being recognised across the UK, UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies. These habitats typically include saltmarsh, seagrass meadows and (in the UK Overseas Territories) mangroves, although other habitats are being investigated for their potential. The UK Blue Carbon Evidence Partnership (<https://www.cefas.co.uk/impact/programmes/uk-blue-carbon-evidence-partnership/>) was established in 2022 to bring together science and policy experts from across the UK Government Administrations. It has recently released an Evidence Needs Statement that aims to help accelerate action to manage, protect, enhance and restore blue carbon habitats in the UK by identifying gaps in current research ([https://www.cefas.co.uk/media/gdnmduft/ukbcep-evidence-needs-statement\\_june-23\\_final.pdf](https://www.cefas.co.uk/media/gdnmduft/ukbcep-evidence-needs-statement_june-23_final.pdf)).

The States of Guernsey has passed a Climate Change Policy and Action Plan in 2020 which acknowledges the role of nature-based solutions and commits to developing an On-Island Sequestration Plan, including marine and terrestrial sinks.

The Isle of Man Climate Change Plan (2022-2027) sets out a number of deliverables for protecting and enhancing important habitats for carbon sequestration, including peatland restoration (<https://www.tynwald.org.im/spfile?file=/business/opqp/sittings/20212026/2022-SD-0065.pdf>). The Peatland Restoration Project has worked to restore targeted areas of peatland, while also establishing the Manx Peatland Partnership and developing a Peatland Code of Practice, which provides guidelines for land use and management of peat. The Climate Change Act 2021 also makes provision for Biodiversity Net Gain.



A range of materials related to climate change adaptation, mitigation and ecosystem services in the UK Overseas Territories has been published by JNCC (<https://hub.jncc.gov.uk/assets/d201d6dc-a411-4ee5-b2a8-b6fa754ebf71>). With funds from Darwin Plus (<https://darwinplus.org.uk/project/DPLUS091/>), the Departments of Disaster Management and Natural Resources and Anguilla National Trust have worked with Environment Systems Ltd to create coastal ecosystem vulnerability and opportunity maps to increase coastal resilience to climate change. The Bermuda National Trust produced a national report on climate change in 2008, outlining the role of wetlands in mitigating climate change, particularly on the coast (<https://www.bnt.bm/images/newslettersandreports/Climate%20Change%20Report%202008.pdf>). On the British Virgin Islands, the Climate Change Adaptation Policy highlights the importance of mangroves to its adaptation measures (<http://bvi.gov.vg/climatechange>).

**9.6 Has your country included wetland actions in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and other related national policies on climate change mitigation and adaptation?**

A=Yes; B=No; C=Partially; D=Planned

*9.6 Additional information:*

Other reporting frameworks, such as the UNFCCC Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) template, provide opportunities for countries to draw links between national implementation plans across MEAs. For example, the UK's revised 2022 NDC (<https://unfccc.int/NDCREG>) reiterates the commitment to biodiversity by upholding its responsibilities under the Ramsar Convention (highlighting that biodiversity protection through Ramsar, CBD and other conventions also provides significant climate mitigation and adaptation benefits) and also utilises the 2013 IPCC Wetlands Supplement (further demonstrating the climate mitigation potential of biodiversity and a strong connection to the blue carbon potential from the UK coastal waters in Ramsar Sites and more widely, aligning with Ramsar Resolution XIII.14 on blue carbon, which encourages parties to update their national greenhouse gas inventories to better reflect data for wetlands, among other climate benefits).

**9.7 Has your country formulated policies, plans or projects to sustain and enhance the role of wetlands in supporting and maintaining viable farming systems? {9.6}**

A=Yes; B=No; C=Partially; D=Planned

*9.7 Additional information:*

Evidence on measures to intercept agricultural field run-off using Rural Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) has been collated by the Environment Agency (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rural-sustainable-drainage-systems>) (see also <http://www.ccri.ac.uk/rsuds/>). These measures aim to reduce loss of soil, chemicals, nutrients, faecal organisms and localised flooding, and can provide valuable aquatic habitats in the form of micro-wetlands, such as constructed wetlands, grip/gully blocks, sediment ponds, wet riparian buffer strips, and wetlands within ditches. Environmental Land Management schemes, such as the Countryside Stewardship scheme provides targeted grant-aid towards Rural SuDS and other forms of management of key wetland habitats to encourage their use in viable farming systems (<https://www.gov.uk/countryside-stewardship-grants>). The Landscape Recovery Scheme similarly supports a wide range of wetland creation and is aimed at landowners and managers who want to implement more ambitious, large-scale, bespoke and long-term (20+ year) agreements. The England Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) initiative also helps deliver practical solutions and targeted support to enable land managers to take voluntary action to reduce diffuse water pollution from agriculture (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/catchment-sensitive-farming-reduce-agricultural-water->

[pollution](#)). It gives free training and advice in high priority areas, on subjects such as manure, nutrient and pesticide management, flood management, and silage, slurry and agricultural fuel oil regulations.

The UK Government commissioned an independent Lowland Agricultural Peat Task Force (2021-2022) to consider how lowland peat soils can be managed more sustainably to deliver wider benefits for the environment and the climate. It set out recommendations to enable more sustainable ways of farming on peat soil ([https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/lowland-agricultural-peat-task-force-chairs-report-government-response](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/lowland-agricultural-peat-task-force-chairs-report-government-response/lowland-agricultural-peat-task-force-chairs-report-government-response)), and a paludiculture roadmap ([https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/649bed85f90109000c81892c/Paludiculture\\_Roadmap.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/649bed85f90109000c81892c/Paludiculture_Roadmap.pdf)). Following on from this, a £5 million Paludiculture Exploration Fund was announced to support projects focused on tackling the barriers to developing commercially viable paludiculture on lowland peat soils in England (<https://naturalengland.blog.gov.uk/2022/12/13/the-paludiculture-exploration-fund-invites-you-to-explore-the-future-of-wet-farming-on-peat-soils/>). A summary of existing knowledge around wetland farming/paludiculture in a UK context was commissioned by the IUCN UK Peatland Programme's Commission of Inquiry on Peatlands ([https://www.iucn-uk-peatlandprogramme.org/sites/default/files/2019-11/COIFens\\_ProductiveLowlandPeatland.pdf](https://www.iucn-uk-peatlandprogramme.org/sites/default/files/2019-11/COIFens_ProductiveLowlandPeatland.pdf)). In the Cyprus Sovereign Base Area, a three-year (2021-2024) Darwin Plus project (<https://darwinplus.org.uk/project/DPLUS141/>) on the protection and wise use of Akrotiri Wetlands is aiming to maintain viable farming systems through the use of grazing as a conservation tool at Akrotiri Marsh (<https://visitakrotiri.cy/darwin-plus-project/>).

## 9.8 Has research to inform wetland policies and plans been undertaken in your country on: {9.7}

A=Yes for all; B=No; D=Planned

- a) Agriculture-wetland interactions
  - b) Climate change
  - c) Valuation of ecosystem services
- {1.6.1} KRA 1.6.i

### 9.8 Additional information:

The UK has undertaken a wide range of wetland-related research which have supported various policies, plans and other measures:

- the IUCN UK Peatland Programme has produced: (i) a set of briefing notes aimed at policy makers, practitioners and academics to help explain the ecological processes that underpin peatland function, and advocate for sustainable peatland management (<https://www.iucn-uk-peatlandprogramme.org/resources/briefings>); (ii) a scientific review of Peatlands and Climate Change (<https://www.iucn-uk-peatlandprogramme.org/about-peatlands/peatland-benefits/climate-regulation>); (iii) a briefing note on Natural Capital Financing for Peatland, which highlights opportunities for financing peatland restoration and conservation and proposes a framework for structuring such finance (<https://www.iucn-uk-peatlandprogramme.org/funding-finance/natural-capital>);
- WWT has a long history of conservation research; they currently employ 18 scientific staff and have eight doctoral students who provide the scientific underpinning of WWT's conservation work (<https://www.wwt.org.uk/our-work/wetland-conservation-unit/what-we-do/science/>);
- a major review of the potential impacts of climate change on bird populations associated with the UK Special Protection Area network

(<https://randd.defra.gov.uk/ProjectDetails?ProjectId=16731>); see also (<https://www.nature.com/articles/nclimate2035>);

- the UK Natural Capital Committee has provided independent advice to government on natural capital, such as ecosystems, soils, freshwaters, and oceans, and recently published 'Green Book' guidance on embedding natural capital into public policy appraisal (<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/natural-capital-committee>);
- JNCC produced a report in 2022 on Blue Carbon in Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) (<https://hub.jncc.gov.uk/assets/e75010a5-4c1e-4953-a785-48e4d56ef98b>), which provides a global review of progress in the development of the evidence base relating to the occurrence and recognition of blue carbon habitats and species in MPAs – it covers blue carbon sequestration and long-term storage processes of both organic and inorganic carbon for climate change mitigation, including saltmarshes, seagrass meadows and mangroves, as well as other important marine and coastal carbon standing crops, pools and sinks, such as kelp forests, maerl beds, coral reefs, biogenic reefs and seabed sediments;
- on the Isle of Man, a Climate Change Adaptation (Risks and Opportunities) assessment is being undertaken and a Blue Carbon Project is under way in a collaboration between government and academic partners to assess and map marine carbon sequestration habitats and produce a blue carbon strategy;
- also on the Isle of Man, research undertaken through the Peatland Restoration project, surveying and mapping areas of peat, will inform policies relating to agriculture-wetland interactions through the Peatland Register and Peatland Code of Practice, setting out guidelines for management of peatlands, for example relating to grazing densities and drainage;
- the Ramsar Programme in Alderney has included several surveys investigating climate change, including monitoring climate change indicator species, such as *Birucaria bifucata*, and tracking coastal erosion;
- activities in the UK Overseas territories include: (i) a report on the economic value of Bermuda's Coral Reefs (<https://environment.bm/coral-reef-economic-valuation>); (ii) an economic valuation of the importance of beaches and associated habitats on the British Virgin Islands; (iii) an initial review of natural capital accounting on the Turks and Caicos Islands (<https://hub.jncc.gov.uk/assets/0766c05e-0cfb-4510-81cd-b768701bce32>); and (iv) a valuation of ecosystem services on Anguilla as part of a cross-territory Darwin Plus project (<https://darwinplus.org.uk/project/DPLUS108/>);
- the Dasgupta Review (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/final-report-the-economics-of-biodiversity-the-dasgupta-review>) provided an independent, global review on the Economics of Biodiversity, setting out how countries and the global economy should account for nature in economics and decision-making, and demonstrating the critical need to assess the value of biodiversity and associated ecosystem services, including those delivered by healthy functioning wetlands e.g. through the restoration of mires in Exmoor, England.

**9.9 Has your country made efforts to conserve and wisely use urban and peri-urban wetlands in line with Resolutions XI.11 and XIV.10? {9.8}**

**A=Yes; B=No; C=Partially; D=Planned**

*9.9 Additional information:*

Various UK projects focus on the conservation and wise use of urban and peri-urban wetlands. The planning policy and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in England recognise the role that Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) have in managing surface water. They are increasingly being created to manage urban stormwater by mimicking natural drainage

systems and encouraging attenuation, infiltration and passive treatment (<https://www.susdrain.org/>). Several UK Water Companies have constructed wetlands to treat wastewater in a variety of situations, such as at the Yorkshire Water's Clifton Wastewater Treatment Works (<https://waterprojectsonline.com/case-studies/clifton-icw-2022/>). The Northern Ireland Environment Agency in partnership with others has produced a strategy to promote SuDS called Managing Stormwater (<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/managing-stormwater-strategy-promoting-use-sustainable-drainage-systems-within-northern>). Natural Resources Wales has published a policy on the use of constructed wetlands for treatment of wastewaters and, where appropriate, support their use to remove nutrients including phosphorus (<https://naturalresourceswales.gov.uk/guidance-and-advice/environmental-topics/water-management-and-quality/constructed-wetlands/constructed-wetlands-overview/>).

Natural England on behalf of Defra is implementing a £30 million Nutrient Mitigation Scheme designed to mitigate the additional nutrient inputs arising from new housing development, which may affect a number of protected sites, some of which are Ramsar Sites (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/natural-englands-nutrient-mitigation-scheme-for-developers>). To assist with this, Natural England has worked with industry experts to develop a Wetland Mitigation Framework that offers guidance on constructed wetlands to deliver nutrient neutrality (<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/collections/6543a2f8de0348f683187ff268a79687?item=4>).

In Scotland, the Nature Restoration Fund (NRF) (<https://www.nature.scot/funding-and-projects/scottish-government-nature-restoration-fund-nrf>) managed by NatureScot offers grants of £25,000 to £250,000 upwards to specifically encourage projects that restore wildlife and habitats and address biodiversity loss and climate change, as well as improving the health and wellbeing of local communities. The priority themes include 'Urban: enhancing and connecting nature across, and between, towns and cities'. Since its launch the NRF has supported more than 140 projects, worth nearly £40 million. The Lochend Park Reedbed Installation project created a reed and gravel bed in Lochend Park's loch (north-east Edinburgh), which will filter the surface water run-off from residential developments surrounding the park to mitigate against pollution in the water, in addition to creating a new habitat for waterfowl in an urban setting.

#### **9.10 Has your country made efforts to conserve small wetlands in line with Resolution XIII.21 and XIII.15? {9.9}**

**A=Yes; B=No; C=Partially; D=Planned**

##### *9.10 Additional information:*

Examples of schemes, projects, funding and other resources targeted on conserving small wetlands across the UK are given below:

- in England, Natural England launched its district level licensing scheme for Great Crested Newts in 2022 to enable more small wetland creation to benefit this species (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/great-crested-newts-advice-for-making-planning-decisions>), with more than 3000 new ponds having been created to further the conservation of this species, as well as providing wider benefits for wetland wildlife;
- Environmental Land Management schemes, such as Countryside Stewardship in England, provide payments to farmers and other land managers to manage and create a wide range of small wetland sites, with payment rates having recently increased greatly, for example, for the management of fen (from £35 to £920/hectare);

- the Scottish Government Nature Restoration Fund includes a ‘Helping Nature’ stream that can be targeted at smaller habitat restoration projects, offering grants from £25,000;
- the Freshwater Habitats Trust has created a Pond Creation Toolkit, which includes factsheets for landowners or managers who want to create small ponds (<https://freshwaterhabitats.org.uk/advice-resources/pond-creation-hub/pond-creation-toolkit/>);
- the Alderney Wildlife Trust conduct conservation management on several nature reserves which have small wetland habitats, in particular Longis Nature Reserve (<https://www.alderneywildlife.org/nature-reserves>), and the States of Alderney’s Public Works Department manage a common area around a small wetland area called Platte Saline pond;
- the Isle of Man has recently made efforts to protect smaller wetland sites, including the legal protection of a number of small wetlands as Areas of Special Scientific Interest, including Curragh Pharrick (4 hectare basin mire), Grenaby Garey (a 75 hectare fen meadow/wet woodland/flowing water), and Marine Drive (a 82 hectare coastal site);
- a new project led by the Anguilla National Trust in partnership with the Government of Anguilla, the Sandy Ground Community, Wildlife Management International Ltd., Fauna & Flora, and BirdsCaribbean, has been funded through the UK Government’s Darwin Plus Initiative and the US Fish and Wildlife Service to restore Road Salt Pond (within the Sandy Ground community) by creating biosecure seabird and shorebird nesting habitat, controlling invasive alien species, and the designation of the wetland as a protected area;
- in the Cyprus Sovereign Base Areas, a project has been undertaken in co-operation with NGOs and Republic of Cyprus Government Departments to conserve and restore important wetlands, such as blocking access points to sensitive areas, placing interpretation signs and CCTV cameras to enhance enforcement actions – more practical conservation actions at the Akrotiri Wetlands have been undertaken as part of a Darwin Plus project (<https://visitakrotiri.cy/darwin-plus-project/>).

**Target 10.** *The traditional knowledge innovations and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities relevant for the wise use of wetlands and their customary use of wetland resources, are documented, respected, subject to national legislation and relevant international obligations and fully integrated and reflected in the implementation of the Convention with a full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities at all relevant levels.*  
 [Reference to Global Biodiversity Framework Target 22]

**10.1 Do you have national legislation or equivalent on indigenous and local communities at all relevant levels in wetland management, and/or Site management?**

A=Yes; **B=No**; C=In preparation; C1= Partially; D= Planned; X= Unknown; Y=Not relevant

*10.1: Additional information:*

There are no recognised groups of indigenous communities in the UK, so official national legislation does not exist. The UK Government nonetheless continues to work overseas and through multilateral institutions to improve the situation of indigenous people around the world.

**10.2 If the answer to question 10.1 is “yes”, have the guiding principles for considering the cultural values of wetlands including traditional knowledge for the effective management of Sites (Resolution VIII.19) been used?**

A=Yes; B=No; C=In preparation; **C1= Partially**; D= Planned; X= Unknown; Y=Not relevant

*10.2 Additional information:*

Although the UK does not have any official national legislation related to indigenous communities, local stakeholders have been involved in the management of Ramsar Sites. For example:

- In 2024, the Government of Anguilla formally designated the Fisheries Unit-Department of Natural Resources as the principal marine parks management body, supported by a Marine Park Technical Advisory Committee with representatives from the relevant Government of Anguilla Departments and Ministries, the Anguilla National Trust, and local fisherfolk, dive operators and charter boat operators. In addition, a Marine Parks Management Planning Committee was established in 2017, as part of a Darwin Plus project that focused on the Prickly Pear Marine Park and cays (<https://darwinplus.org.uk/project/DPLUS060>). This Committee, which also includes local stakeholders, assisted with the development of a management plan for the Sombrero Island Ramsar Site (as part of the Sombrero Island Marine Park and Nature Reserve (<https://darwinplus.org.uk/project/DPLUS086>)).
- In Alderney, the local community is represented on the Alderney Ramsar Stakeholder's forum by the Warden of Burhou.
- Effective management of the Sark Ramsar Site is implemented using local knowledge and periodic conservation activities organised by the NGO Société Sercquaise.
- Volunteer participation is encouraged in many UK National Nature Reserves, such as the Humberhead Peatlands, including practical habitat and access management, scientific surveying, events and wardening, social media and administration (<http://www.humberheadpeatlands.org.uk/>).

**10.3 Have case studies on the participation of indigenous people in projects or successful experiences on cultural aspects of wetlands been compiled? (Resolutions VIII.19 and IX.21) {10.1}**

**A=Yes; B=No; C=In preparation; D=Planned**

*10.3 Additional information:*

Examples of successful experiences of cultural aspects of wetlands are set out below.

The cultural importance of Lough Beg, Northern Ireland, is recognised in the poetry of the late poet Seamus Heaney who was born nearby. This cultural relationship with the landscape has been recorded in conservation projects (e.g. the Lough Beg Futurescapes project) and peatland and wetland habitat restoration around the Lough Neagh basin through support for a Rebuilding the Countryside Programme.

In Wales, the Snowdonia (Eryri) National Park Authority completed a project entitled Cyfoeth Ein Corsydd (roughly translated as "The richness of our marshes"), which researched, celebrated and promoted the history of human utilisation of peatlands in Wales. The project collected oral and documentary records, provided educational visits for schools and other groups, and produced a static and travelling exhibition.

The IUCN UK Peatland Programme has produced a comprehensive review of peatlands and the historic environment in the UK, including their cultural value (<https://www.iucn-uk-peatlandprogramme.org/about-peatlands/peatland-benefits/culture-history>).

The Anguilla National Trust completed a socio-economic assessment of the Sombrero Island Ramsar Site in 2024, a key component of which was cultural heritage/use.

In the Cyprus Sovereign Base Areas, considerable effort has been put into documenting, maintaining, promoting and teaching traditional basketry skills (from plants collected from



local wetlands) through the Akrotiri Environmental Centre and different projects (most recently through a Darwin Plus project <https://visitakrotiri.cy/darwin-plus-project/>).

Many of the plants found in the booklet published as part of the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) grant (<https://www.ukotcf.org.uk/key-projects/blue-iguanas-to-blue-vervain/>) can be found in Montserrat's coastal wetlands (<https://www.ukotcf.org.uk/key-projects/blue-iguanas-to-blue-vervain/wp1-knowledge-of-the-human-environment-interplay-on-the-ukots/wp1-3-montserrat/>). The booklet included capturing oral histories from within Montserrat's community on traditional use of medicinal plants, resulting in a publication of 15 plants beautifully illustrated and described, with a children's version also for colouring in. Extending this further a Darwin Plus project has published 30 medicinal plants from Montserrat (<https://darwinplus.org.uk/project/DPLUS192>).

As part of the development of the original management plan for the Turks and Caicos Islands Ramsar Site, sustainable traditional uses were documented and highlighted as avenues for developing sustainable livelihoods and small businesses. A later project assessed the viability of alternative and improved livelihoods based on traditional cultural ecotourism within the East Caicos Ramsar Site (see Wood, K. and Stark, D. 2018. *Assessing the Viability of Alternative and Improved Livelihoods in Ecotourism at the East Caicos Key Biodiversity Area*. Cornell University Sustainable Tourism Asset Management Program).

**10.4 Have the guidelines for establishing and strengthening local communities' and indigenous people's participation in the management of wetlands been applied? (Resolution VII. 8) {10.2}**

A=Yes; **B=No**; C=In Preparation; D=Planned

*10.4 Additional information: If "yes" please list national legislation/policies and actions that consider the needs and participation of indigenous and local communities in wetland management at all relevant levels.*

The guidelines for establishing and strengthening local communities' and people's participation in the management of wetlands have not been applied, but The States of Alderney's Strategy for Nature and Agriculture aims to connect the island's community with nature. In Anguilla, the Marine Parks Act and supporting Regulations are currently being revised to formalize the establishment and operation of the Marine Park Technical Advisory Group.

**10.5 Have traditional knowledge and management practices relevant to the wise use of wetlands been documented and their application encouraged {10.3}**

A=Yes; **B=No**; C=In Preparation; D=Planned

*10.5 Additional information:*

The UK supports the use of traditional knowledge and management practices in relation to the wise use of wetlands, and encourages this in the countries and regions where local communities possess appropriate experience.



**Target 11.** Wetland functions, services and benefits are widely demonstrated, documented and disseminated. {1.4.}

[Reference to Global Biodiversity Framework Targets 11, 12 and 13]

**Has an assessment been made of the ecosystem benefits/services provided by Ramsar Sites and other wetlands? {11.1}**

A=Yes; B=No; C=In Preparation; **C1=Partially**; D=Planned; X= Unknown; Y=Not relevant

*11.1 Additional information: If “yes” or “partially”, please indicate how many Ramsar Sites and their names:*

The UK National Ecosystem Assessment reviewed the state and value of the UK natural environment and ecosystem services, including wetlands, based on a comprehensive synthesis of information on ecosystems, ecosystem services and the interlinkages between habitats, ecosystem services and biodiversity (<http://uknea.unep-wcmc.org/>).

A comprehensive review of the importance and ecosystem services of peatlands has been produced by the IUCN UK Peatland Programme, including wildlife habitat, global carbon store, drinking water filtration, flood prevention, historical archive, grazing land and recreational areas (<https://www.iucn-uk-peatlandprogramme.org/about-peatlands/peatland-benefits>). Peatlands play an important role in the provision of potable water with 43% of the UK population being dependent on peatlands for their drinking water, although this is not widely appreciated and better monitoring of peatlands within catchments to identify sources of dissolved and particulate organic carbon has been recommended.

Natural England collaborated with many partners to produce a new State of Nature report in 2023, including information on the importance, extent, protection, condition and trends of open waters and wetland habitats (<https://stateofnature.org.uk/>). The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 ensures that an assessment of the resilience and sustainable management of natural resources in Wales is reported every five years through the publication of a State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR). The report for 2020 provides information on the diversity, extent, condition and connectivity and benefits of key ecosystems in Wales, including wetlands (<https://naturalresources.wales/evidence-and-data/research-and-reports/state-of-natural-resources-report-sonarr-for-wales-2020/>).

An assessment of carbon budgets and potential blue carbon stores in Scotland’s coastal and marine environment has been conducted (<https://www.nature.scot/naturescot-commissioned-report-761-assessment-carbon-budgets-and-potential-blue-carbon-stores>). In another study, undertaken as part of a programme of Natural Capital Assessment (NCA) in the UK's South Atlantic Overseas Territories, the extent and density of *Macrocystis* kelp forest around the Falkland Islands was examined and a monetary valuation applied to both the carbon stored and sequestered annually to deep-sea sediments (<https://hub.incc.gov.uk/assets/72c89fdc-a14b-4176-b543-81fe1ecd94bc>). Research by WWT and Manchester Metropolitan University at Steart Marshes indicates that the carbon accumulation rate for restored saltmarsh is far greater than estimates for terrestrial ecosystems such as forests (<https://features.wwt.org.uk/blue-carbon/index.html#article>). In addition, an assessment of carbon stocks within eelgrass beds and grazed wetlands is being undertaken in Guernsey, and carbon storage in the Central Mangrove Wetland of Grand Cayman has been assessed (see Childs et al. (2015) *Ecosystem services provided by two potential protected areas in the Cayman Islands*. National Trust for the Cayman Islands).

Preliminary ecosystem service assessments have been made for the Isle of Man as a whole for terrestrial and marine areas, Ecosystem services have been investigated on Anguilla as part of a cross-territory Darwin Plus project (<https://darwinplus.org.uk/project/DPLUS108/>). The Turks and Caicos Islands Government are being funded with Environment Systems Limited and other partners by Darwin Plus to gather evidence of the dynamic resilience of their wetlands, and how they support biodiversity, coastal protection and natural capital (<https://darwinplus.org.uk/project/DPLUS129/>).

Section 9.8 sets out other examples of research to inform wetland policies and plans based on the valuation of ecosystem services.

**11.2 Since COP14, have wetland programmes or projects that contribute to food and water security and hence poverty alleviation been implemented? {11.2}**

A=Yes; B=No; C=Partially; D=Planned; X= Unknown; Y=Not relevant

*11.2 Additional information:*

**11.3. Since COP14 have wetland programmes or projects that contribute to other benefits for human well-being been implemented?**

A=Yes; B=No; C=Partially; D=Planned;

*11.3 Additional information:*

A variety of wetland-based initiatives have been undertaken that contribute to mental and physical health, recreation and communities. Examples include:

- the provision of visiting and volunteering opportunities for local communities, corporations and individuals at the Lower Derwent Valley National Nature Reserve, England, which includes over 600 hectares of floodplain meadows that support nationally and internationally important breeding, passage and wintering bird populations – an estimated 40,000 visitors enjoy and benefit from the reserve every year;
- the (WWT Urban Wetlands for Wellbeing Route Map, which sets out the benefits of urban wetlands for mental and physical health and as a means to connect us with others and the natural world (<https://www.wwt.org.uk/uploads/documents/2022-06-08/wwt-creating-urban-wetlands-for-wellbeing.pdf>);
- the WWT Blue Prescribing Project, which is a new, innovative, nature-based form of social prescribing that enables health care professionals to refer people to non-clinical services in the community to improve their health and wellbeing (<https://www.wwt.org.uk/our-work/projects/wetlands-and-wellbeing-our-science/>);
- the Environment Agency Blue Space Forum: Health and Inequalities project, which gathered the lived experiences of people who use blue space to improve their health and wellbeing, as well as those living with barriers to accessing blue space and its benefits (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-wellbeing-benefits-of-blue-space-lived-experience>);
- a broad programme of public activities are centred around marine wetlands in Alderney – these promote nature connectivity, for example through foraging activities, and there is a plan to create soundscapes of Alderney’s wild spaces, to improve nature connectivity and wellbeing for isolated members of the community.

**11.4 Have socio-economic values of wetlands been included in the management planning for Ramsar Sites and other wetlands? {11.3}**

A=Yes; B=No; C=Partially; D=Planned

11.4 Additional information: If “yes” or “partially”, please indicate, if known, how many Ramsar Sites and their names:

Socio-economic values of wetlands are increasingly seen as an important component of the management planning of UK Ramsar Sites and other wetland areas. This includes the provision of potable water, flood, flow and water quality regulation, carbon regulation, food and other products (notably fish, beef, reeds and osiers). Consideration of site-specific values allows landowners and relevant authorities to tailor management arrangements to suit local circumstances.

An example is the coastal realignment scheme at Steart Marshes, south-west England, a joint project between the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust and Environment Agency, which provides natural coastal flood management that protects local homes, businesses and surrounding infrastructure and flood defences from storm surges and erosion, helps address climate change, provides farmland, a nature reserve, a nursery for commercial fish stocks, footpaths and bridleways, and opportunities for young people to learn conservation and heritage skills (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/biggest-coastal-flood-management-scheme-completed>).

The IUCN UK Peatland Programme has produced a briefing note on Natural Capital Financing for Peatland, which highlights opportunities for financing peatland restoration and conservation and proposes a framework for structuring such finance (<https://www.iucn-uk-peatlandprogramme.org/funding-finance/natural-capital>). The related Peatland Code, which provides a means of validating the carbon gains achieved through peatland restoration and thus offers a tool for promoting investor confidence, has over 250 projects supported by private finance – version 2.1 of the code has undergone consultation and is expected to be published in the near-future (<https://www.iucn-uk-peatlandprogramme.org/funding-finance/peatland-code>).

The UK Natural Capital Committee has provided independent advice to Government on natural capital, such as ecosystems, soils, freshwaters, and oceans, and recently published ‘Green Book’ guidance on embedding natural capital into public policy appraisal (<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/natural-capital-committee>).

On Alderney, socio-economic considerations, especially around tourism and quality of life have been integrated into the current 5-Year Management Strategy and Annual Action Plans for the Ramsar Site (<https://alderney.gov.gg/article/198131/Ramsar-Site>). This is being considered as part of the Alderney State of Nature Project (<https://www.alderneywildlife.org/current-projects/alderney-state-of-nature>).

In the UK Overseas Territories the following have been produced: (i) a valuation of ecosystem services on Anguilla as part of a cross-territory Darwin Plus project (<https://darwinplus.org.uk/project/DPLUS108/>); (ii) a report on the economic value of Bermuda’s Coral Reefs (<https://environment.bm/coral-reef-economic-valuation>); (iii) an economic valuation of the importance of beaches and associated habitats on the British Virgin Islands; (iv) an initial review of natural capital accounting on the Turks and Caicos Islands (<https://hub.jncc.gov.uk/assets/0766c05e-0cfb-4510-81cd-b768701bce32>); and (v) an assessment of the extent and density of *Macrocystis* kelp forest around the Falkland Islands and a monetary valuation of the carbon stored and sequestered annually to deep-sea sediments (<https://hub.jncc.gov.uk/assets/72c89fdc-a14b-4176-b543-81fe1ecd94bc>). In addition, socio-economic variables were considered in the Sombrero Island Nature Reserve Marine Park and Ramsar Site management/action plan (Anguilla), Akrotiri Ramsar Site

management plan (Cyprus Sovereign Base Area), and management plans for the Turks and Caicos Island Ramsar Site.

#### **11.5 Have cultural values of wetlands been included in the management planning for Ramsar Sites and other wetlands in general? {11.4}**

A=Yes; B=No; C=Partially; D=Planned

##### *11.5 Additional information:*

Cultural values of wetlands are increasingly seen as an important component of the management planning of UK Ramsar Sites and other wetland areas. This includes recreational use, tourism, education, scientific research, sense of place and historical values. Consideration of site-specific cultural values allows landowners and relevant authorities to tailor management arrangements to suit local circumstances. An example is the coastal realignment scheme at Steart Marshes, south-west England (see sections 11.3-11.4).

On Alderney, consideration of species with cultural significance and areas of the site, which have longstanding community cultural value are being taken into consideration within: (i) the Alderney State of Nature Project (<https://www.alderneywildlife.org/current-projects/alderney-state-of-nature>); and (ii) the current five-year management strategy (<https://alderney.gov.gg/article/198131/Ramsar-Site>). Furthermore, the States of Alderney's Strategy for Nature and Agriculture aims to list species and habitats of cultural value and identify the best possible management strategies for them.

On Sark, awareness of critical land management issues is promoted by the Société Sercquaise (history), the Island Visitor Centre (tourism) and the Island Chief Pleas (Government). Cultural values have been assessed and partially included in the management plan for the Turks and Caicos Island Ramsar Site. They have also been taken into account in the Sombrero Island Nature Reserve Marine Park and Ramsar Site management/action plan on Anguilla.

**Target 12.** Restoration is in progress in degraded wetlands, with priority to wetlands that are relevant for biodiversity conservation, disaster risk reduction, livelihoods and/or climate change mitigation and adaptation.

[Reference Global Biodiversity Framework Targets 2, 8 and 11].

#### **12.1 Have national wetland restoration targets been established?**

A=Yes; B=No; C= Partially; D=Planned; X=Unknown; Y=Not relevant

##### *12.1 Additional information:*

Implementation of the England Peat Action Plan commits to restore 35,000 hectares of peatland by 2025, with the Nature for Climate Peatland Grant scheme having already brought over 15,000 hectares of peatland under active restoration management since 2020, as well as securing a future pipeline of 10,000 hectares (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nature-for-climate-peatland-grant-scheme>). This includes 12 new peatland restoration projects announced in 2023 with the support of £16 million in funding (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/thousands-of-hectares-of-peatlands-set-to-be-restored-to-help-tackle-climate-change>).

Peatland ACTION funding from Scottish Government has restored over 43,000 hectares of peatlands since 2012 and has a target of 250,000 hectares by 2030, with an interim target of 110,000 hectares by 2026 (<https://www.nature.scot/climate-change/nature-based-solutions/peatland-action>). The planned target for 2024-2025 is of 7,900 hectares, and tools

to stimulate demand further (e.g. a new funding route for monitoring projects), expand design of the required pipeline of projects, and support increased delivery are to be put in place to meet this increase. To address this, NatureScot has introduced a Project Development Support Scheme (<https://www.nature.scot/doc/peatland-action-project-development-support-scheme>) to encourage more peatland restoration project designers to develop and submit applications for funding. Six case studies have been published in 2023-24 to help potential applicants better understand the benefits and challenges of restoring peatlands (<https://www.nature.scot/climate-change/nature-based-solutions/peatland-action/peatland-action-resources/peatland-action-case-studies>).

In Wales, the National Peatlands Action Programme has been launched with a five-year programme to restore target peatland bodies at a rate of 600-800 hectares annually; restoration action took place on over 1650 hectares in the first two years (2020-2022) (<https://naturalresourceswales.gov.uk/evidence-and-data/maps/the-national-peatland-action-programme/>).

On the Isle of Man, the Biodiversity Strategy 2015-2025 includes an action to restore at least 16% of the area of degraded marine, freshwater and terrestrial ecosystems by 2025. Work towards this includes peatland restoration, the protection and sustainable management of marine nature reserves, and plans and works to reduce mine spoil pollution in rivers. Further, the Climate Change Plan 2022-2027 includes a commitment to undertake and facilitate tree planting, peatland restoration and other nature-based solutions, where possible leveraging private sector investment and the peatland restoration initiative aims to restore the natural function of 1,000 acres of peatland.

## **12.2 Have priority sites for wetland restoration been identified? {12.1}**

**A=Yes; B=No; C= Partially; D=Planned; X=Unknown; Y=Not relevant**

*12.2 Additional information: If “yes”, please provide a list of sites, specifying wetland types:*

The Natural England Improvement Programme for England Natura2000 Sites (IPENS) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improvement-programme-for-englands-natura-2000-sites-ipens>) developed a strategic approach to achieving favourable condition in SACs and SPAs (including most Ramsar Sites). This resulted in the production of individual site improvement plans that identified potential mechanisms to bring sites and species into favourable condition, and strategic theme plans addressing issues across multiple sites. Over 30% of the improvement plans identified water pollution as an issue and over 25% identified hydrological functioning. As a result, themed plans were produced for these key pressures and also reflected in Natural England’s freshwater and wetland habitats narrative (<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6524433387749376>). The atmospheric nitrogen theme plan set out an approach for tackling atmospheric pollution impacts on wetlands and other sensitive habitats.

Similarly, the LIFE Natura 2000 Programme for Wales project (<https://www.naturalresources.wales/about-us/our-projects/nature-projects/life-n2k-wales/life-n2k-reports/>) developed a strategic forward plan that set out the requirements for the management and restoration of SACs and SPAs in Wales, including Prioritised Improvement Plans, Thematic Action Plans, Cross-cutting Action Plans, and a Prioritised Action Framework.

The new Natural Flood Management (NFM) programme in England (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-flood-management-programme#the-nfm-programme>)

has identified 40 new projects to receive funding for works during 2024-2027. These will carry out a mixture of NFM measures at a range of scales and seek to manage flood risk from a variety of sources, including new NFM features, such as leaky barriers, wet woodlands, ponds and wetlands to help slow and store high flows in upper catchments, soil and land management to slow and store surface water runoff, reduce soil erosion and improve water quality, and expansion and enhancement of saltmarsh and sand dune systems to break wave action and reduce the risk of tidal flooding.

The Natural Resources Wales Peatland Survey Programme has identified some restoration priorities for sites and a National Peatlands Action Programme lays out a five year plan for restoring peatlands in Wales (<https://naturalresourceswales.gov.uk/about-us/strategies-and-plans/national-peatland-action-programme/>). Natural Resources Wales also runs a River Restoration Programme with a number of large-scale projects underway, including the DeeLIFE, 4 Rivers for LIFE and work to address physical modifications – and they host an Actions Database that identifies site management priorities and key partners for designated sites, including Ramsar Sites.

On the Isle of Man, a flooding and coastal protection risk assessment has prioritised sites with such issues (see the National Strategy on Sea Defences, Flooding and Coastal Erosion, 2016), which is currently under review. A Flood Management Division was set up in 2020, bringing together the various government responsibilities relating to flood risk management, including coastal defence. Peatland restoration efforts on the Isle of Man will focus on the most degraded sites so that they eventually become carbon sinks. A restoration site has been identified in the catchment of a reservoir, which will also provide a water regulation function of value to the island's water security and store rainwater, mitigating against flood risks.

The Alderney State of Nature project will see priority wetland habitats identified and appropriate conservation actions taken where feasible (<https://www.alderneywildlife.org/current-projects/alderney-state-of-nature>); this is also reflected in the States of Alderney's Strategy for Nature and Agriculture.

Priority sites in Anguilla have been identified through a Darwin Plus project led by the Government of Anguilla Department of Disaster Management in partnership with the Anguilla National Trust and Department of Natural Resources (<https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DPLUS091/>). On the British Virgin Islands, a Caribbean Development Bank project on Smart Communities identified mangroves as a key component to protect shorelines and land-based assets with community engagement and participation in replanting and restoration efforts; key sites have been identified and prioritised. On Montserrat, the Adopt a Home for Wildlife project (run by the UKOTCF and Montserrat National Trust) has successfully piloted work to reinstate rare coastal wetlands infilled by volcanic outwash; and further work has been advanced by RSPB and partners through funding assistance from Darwin Plus to rehabilitate wetlands in the Belham Valley. On the Turks and Caicos Islands, the Wheeland Ponds on Providenciales have been targeted for clean-up and restoration (<https://darwinplus.org.uk/project/DPLUS098/>).

### **12.3 Since COP14 have wetland restoration/rehabilitation programmes, plans or projects been implemented? {12.2}**

**A=Yes; B=No; C= Partially; D=Planned; X=Unknown; Y=Not relevant**

If applicable provide information on the extent of restored wetland area and types since last COP, in square kilometres



Wetland types	Restoration planned m <sup>2</sup> or km <sup>2</sup>	Under restoration	Total Restored
Marine/Coastal:	-	-	-
Inland:	-	-	-
Human-made:	-	-	-

### 12.3 Additional information: Explain/clarify the data/statistics presented in the table above

The UK has implemented a range of wetland restoration/rehabilitation programmes, plans or projects in recent years, examples of which are given below. Statistics on the area covered by these have not been collated.

Twelve landscape-scale Nature Recovery Projects have been launched in England over the past two years, half of which include wetland habitat elements. This includes the Somerset Coast, Levels and Moors project (launched in 2022), which aims to restore this wetland landscape across 41,000 hectares (<https://www.somersetlnp.org.uk/coast-levels-and-moors-recovery>), with a new 6,140-hectare super National Nature Reserve at its heart. Similarly, the Lost Wetlands, Cheshire to Lancashire project (launched in 2023) extends across 5,184 hectares and aims to reclaim, restore and rewet a mosaic of wetland habitats that had been lost through historic industrialisation.

In 2023, the Environment Agency and Defra announced £25 million funding for improving flood resilience in England through a new NFM programme (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-flood-management-programme#the-nfm-programme>). This builds on the £15 million NFM pilot programme, which included 60 projects undertaken between 2017-2021. 40 new projects have been selected to receive funding for works during 2024-2027. These will carry out a mixture of NFM measures at a range of scales and seek to manage flood risk from a variety of sources. These include:

- new NFM features, such as leaky barriers, wet woodlands, ponds and wetlands to help slow and store high flows in upper catchments, reducing the chance and impact of flooding downstream;
- soil and land management to slow and store surface water runoff, while also reducing soil erosion and improving water quality;
- new woodland areas and hedgerows to support wetland complexes and create new habitats; and
- expansion and enhancement of saltmarsh and sand dune systems to break wave action and reduce the risk of tidal flooding.

In March 2024, Defra announced the Species Survival Fund, in which 20 conservation projects will each receive a share of £25 million. These projects will create or restore a range of habitat types, some of which include wetlands. For example, funding awarded to WWT will rewet and restore over 370 hectares of coastal floodplain grazing marsh and freshwater habitats (<https://www.wwt.org.uk/news-and-stories/news/somerset-nature-reserves-will-be-made-better-for-waders-with-800k-funding-boost>).

The LIFE Water and Disturbance Environmental Restoration (WADER) project, led by Natural England, is a five-year project working with farmers, land managers and other stakeholders to restore damaged river and coastal habitats in the North East of England. It aims to improve water quality and the ecological condition of more than 49,000 hectares of habitat through a range of measures, including creating new reed beds, delivering demonstration projects to address pollution from agriculture and other sources, planting trees and installing fencing along river corridors, sympathetically removing macroalgae smothering intertidal habitats, reducing disturbance to birds and sensitive habitats, improved control of invasive species, and



inspiring more sustainable management from different users, volunteers, stakeholders, businesses and communities (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/life-wader-water-and-disturbance-environmental-restoration/life-wader-project-information-note-1>).

The Moors for the Future (<http://www.moorsforthefuture.org.uk/>) is a major partnership that has transformed over 35 square km of degraded peat across the Peak District and South Pennine Moors in northern England. An example of a recently completed project involved thousands of gully blocks and planting of 400 hectares of sphagnum moss at the South Pennine Moors Special Area of Conservation (<https://www.moorsforthefuture.org.uk/our-work/our-projects>).

The LIFE Moor Space project focuses on the restoration of degraded lowland raised bog at Thorne Moor Special Area of Conservation. This 5-year project started in October 2021, is led by Natural England, working closely with Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, and (amongst other things) involves removing scrub and trees to reduce evapo-transpiration and remove invasive species, restore water levels to optimum levels, and plant sphagnum species to create and stimulate peat-forming vegetation to recolonise (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/life-moor-space-habitat-restoration/life-moor-space-project-information-note-1>).

The target for 2023-24 restoration work carried out under the Scotland Peatland ACTION project aimed to recover a further 6,100 hectares of damaged peatland habitat (<https://www.nature.scot/climate-change/nature-based-solutions/peatland-action-project>). As of January 2024, applications for over 5,800 hectares of work have been approved and are on schedule for completion, with a further 4,000 hectares of potential projects forthcoming. Resultingly, the 2023-24 target was surpassed with over 6,800 hectares of degraded peatlands being put on the road to recovery, representing a 35% increase from 2022/23. Restoration techniques stabilise the peat surface and hydrology e.g. forming peat dams in man-made ditches to increase water levels, allowing peat-building mosses, sphagnums, to re-establish, and peat hag re-vegetating of bare eroding peat using surrounding vegetation.

Since its launch in 2021 the Scottish Government's Nature Restoration Fund has supported more than 140 projects, worth nearly £40 million. Under the Green Shores Project, the University of St Andrews and the local authority are currently working to combat the loss of saltmarsh habitat through propagation and plantings of saltmarsh plants at locations to create 30,000 square metres of young, actively developing saltmarsh within the Dornoch Firth as well as, the Firth of Tay and the Eden Estuary. The project includes the funding of a Community Engagement Officer who works with volunteers from local communities.

In Wales, the LIFE Quake Project is currently focussing on wetland transition mire and quaking bog habitats. This is a partnership between Natural Resources Wales, Snowdonia National Park Authority, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority and the National Trust. The main focus is on the National Nature Reserve at Crymlyn Bog in Swansea, where a well-resourced visitor centre is being showcased to engage visiting learners and community groups in self-led education sessions and volunteer tasks. Information is being shared via social media channels, events and newsletters to encourage stakeholders, landowners and farmers to use of their peatland habitats more sustainably. They are also committed to developing a programme of outreach to local schools and educators to enable a greater understanding, appreciation and use of transition mire and quaking bog landscapes. LIFE Quake has run a number of events including Bog Fest, the first of three annual events to showcase and celebrate transition mire and quaking bog landscapes. Other activities include guided walking tours of project sites,

hosting delegates of national peatland conferences on field visits, working with volunteers, and production of video content to increase understanding of and participation in peatland restoration.

On the Isle of Man, work has been undertaken to restore an old turbary and to protect and improve the character and interest of two upland peatland sites.

A Darwin Plus project is working to restore key wildlife habitats within the Cyprus Sovereign Base Areas, focusing on Akrotiri wetlands and native scrub on Cape Pyla (Dhekelia), while also developing eco-tourism opportunities to support the local economy and encourage wise use (<https://darwinplus.org.uk/project/DPLUS141/>).

Wetland restoration programmes on Anguilla have been conducted and continue on the mainland (East End Pond Conservation, Forest Bay Pond, Long Salt Pond, Cove Pond, and Meads Bay Pond), as well as on the offshore cays (Dog Island and the Prickly Pear cays, and Sombrero Island).

The Bermuda National Trust was awarded a Darwin plus local grant in 2023 to create a swale and berm to prevent run-off pollutants from a nearby dairy farm from entering Spittal Pond. The grant also funded the installation of a barrier fence, the removal of invasive vegetation, and planting of native species between the farm and the wetland.

**12.4 Have the *Guidelines for Global Action on Peatlands (Resolution VIII.1) and Resolution XII.11 on Peatlands, climate change and wise use: Implications for the Ramsar Convention* been implemented? {12.3}**

A=Yes; B=No; C= **Partially**; D=Planned; X=Unknown; Y=Not relevant

*12.4 Additional information: If “yes” or “partially”, please indicate the progress in implementation.*

The IUCN UK Peatland Programme (<https://www.iucn-uk-peatlandprogramme.org/>) promotes peatland restoration in the UK and advocates the multiple benefits of peatlands through partnerships, strong science, sound policy and effective practice. It also has strong links with international partners through the Global Peatlands Initiative (UNEP) and Wetlands International. The programme is overseen by partner bodies, including Government bodies, NGOs and Universities. It is currently hosted by the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts and primarily funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. In 2018, the programme launched a UK Peatland Strategy after more than a decade of work (<https://www.iucn-uk-peatlandprogramme.org/uk-strategy>). This aims to drive and co-ordinate action across the UK, supported by country level plans to establish a more detailed course for peatland conservation and management. It has produced a practical Management Handbook on Conserving Bogs, a Demonstrating Success Booklet series showcasing successful restoration projects across the UK and Internationally, a Project Map highlighting peatland restoration, management, research, communications and citizen science projects, and a Peatland Training Programme focusing on key issues relevant to the UK.

In Wales, progress on education and implementation has been made through the Natural Resources Wales New LIFE for Welsh Raised Bogs project (<https://naturalresources.wales/about-us/our-projects/nature-projects/new-life-for-welsh-raised-bogs/>). This greatly increased with the recent launch of the National Peatlands Action Programme, which includes a significant stakeholder engagement component, and the appointment of a Wales Peatlands Communication Officer. Swansea University have

established a Peatland Evidence fellowship to increase capacity in this area, and international links exist through initiatives such as Eurosite and LIFE, although formal project-based international working on peatlands is limited. The New LIFE for Welsh Raised Bogs project has now ended but LIFE Quake is another Part-EU funded project that has significant communication goals, administered by a Communication Officer ([https://naturalresources.wales/about-us/our-projects/nature-projects/LIFE Quaking Bogs/](https://naturalresources.wales/about-us/our-projects/nature-projects/LIFE%20Quaking%20Bogs/)).

Important areas of UK peatlands are protected through legislation and policies that allow them to be designated as SACs, SPAs and SSSIs. Proposed plans and projects potentially impacting such sites require Environmental and Ecological Impact Assessment. Public bodies are also required to take account of biodiversity conservation and sustainable management of natural resources in their decision-making, including in the planning processes, where key peatland habitats are recognised as priorities for conservation. Whilst there is greater awareness of the importance of the wise use concept, harmful and unsustainable use of peatlands for agricultural and silvicultural management remains an issue; the protection of peatland catchments could be improved; sites remain vulnerable to piecemeal damage and loss; and steps are required to improve the condition of peatlands Sites of Special Scientific Interest and manage soil loss and greenhouse gas emissions from lowland peat soils under intensive agricultural use.

On the Isle of Man, peat depths in the uplands are being assessed and potential remediation reviewed under the Manx Peatland Project (<https://www.iucn-uk-peatlandprogramme.org/projects/manx-peatland-project>). The last remaining public turbarry was closed in 2020 and action has been taken to remediate the site. The Isle of Man has a plan to restore to natural function 400ha of damaged peatland (<https://www.netzero.im/our-programme/natural-environment/>, <https://www.biosphere.im/news/peatland-restoration-project>).

**Target 13.** *Enhanced sustainability of key sectors such as water, energy, mining, agriculture, tourism, urban development, infrastructure, industry, forestry, aquaculture and fisheries when they affect wetlands, contributing to biodiversity conservation and human livelihoods.*  
[Reference to Global Biodiversity Framework Targets 10 and 14].

**13.1 Have actions been taken to enhance sustainability of wetlands when they are affected by key sectors including**

A=Yes; B=No; D=Planned

- a) Energy **Yes**
- b) Mining **Yes**
- c) Agriculture **Yes**
- d) Tourism **Yes**
- e) Urban development **Yes**
- f) Infrastructure **Yes**
- g) Industry **Yes**
- h) Forestry **Yes**
- i) Aquaculture **Yes**
- j) Fisheries **Yes**

*13.1 Additional information:*

Sections 1.1, 9.1, 9.2, 9.7 and 9.9 provide information on UK policies, regulations, statutory mechanisms, incentives and other measures that address the sustainable use of wetlands when affected by key sectors. Sections 3.1-3.2 set out examples of the way in which the

private sector is encouraged to conserve and make wise use of wetlands and relevant initiatives that focus on wetlands. Section 3.3 deals with incentive measures that deliver wetland wise use objectives, and section 3.4 covers actions taken to remove perverse incentive measures that lead to degradation or loss of wetlands.

**13.2 Are Strategic Environmental Assessment practices applied when reviewing policies, programmes and plans that may impact wetlands? {13.1}**

**A=Yes; B=No; C=Partially; D=Planned**

*13.2 Additional information:*

In the UK, the requirement for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) originally derives from the EU SEA Directive on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment. SEA is applied when reviewing policies, programmes and plans that may have impacts on the environment, including wetlands, where these fall within the prescribed thresholds of the transposing UK Regulations. SEA alone is required in limited situations, usually only where either neighbourhood plans or supplementary planning documents could have significant environmental effects. In most circumstances, all that is required is a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) to ensure that potential environmental effects are given full consideration alongside social and economic issues. Relevant Agencies must take account of SEA obligations when publishing Significant Water Management Issues in River Basin Management Planning. SEA is also applied to Water Resources Management Planning. Both SEA and SA are tools used at the plan-making stage to assess the likely effects of the plan when judged against reasonable alternatives.

In Guernsey, SEAs investigating future strategies for inert waste disposal and water storage provision have considered potential implications on the island's Ramsar Sites and functionally linked habitats by adopting an approach similar to that used in the UK when undertaking Habitat Regulation Assessments (HRA). Whilst HRA are not a legal requirement in Guernsey, this was utilised as it was considered to reflect best practice.

**13.3 Is there a legal requirement in your country to conduct environmental impact assessments for development projects (such as new buildings, new roads, extractive industry) from key sectors (e.g., water, energy, mining and agriculture) that may impact wetlands? {13.2}**

**A=Yes; B=No; C=Some Cases**

*13.3 Additional information:*

In the UK, the requirement for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) originally derives from the EU EIA Directive. EIA is applied to individual projects which are likely to have significant environmental effects, including upon wetlands and Ramsar Sites, where these fall within the prescribed thresholds of the transposing UK Regulations. The aim is to ensure that local planning authorities, when deciding whether to grant planning permission which is likely to have significant environmental effects, takes this into account. The process also ensures the public is given early and effective opportunities to participate in the decision-making procedures (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/environmental-impact-assessment#habitats-regs>). In addition, if a proposed plan or project is considered likely to have a significant effect on a SAC or SPA or Ramsar Site, then in most situations (see section 9.2) an Appropriate Assessment must be carried out to ascertain whether the proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of the site (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/habitats-regulations-assessments-protecting-a-european-site>).

Specific guidelines have been produced for Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) by the UK Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (<https://cieem.net/resource/guidelines-for-ecological-impact-assessment-ecia/>). These facilitate good practice in identifying, quantifying and evaluating potential effects of development-related or other proposed actions on habitats, species and ecosystems, and to allow competent authorities to understand ecological issues when determining applications for consent. EclA afford particular attention to a range of wetland habitats and species that are included on statutory lists of habitats of principal importance/ highest priority for biodiversity conservation.

Mandatory EIA is required for developments that might significantly impact the Alderney West Coast and Burhou Islands Ramsar Site and other wetland sites across the island. It is also a planning requirement for all projects in or near sensitive natural habitats on Jersey, including wetlands. On the Isle of Man, EIA requirements are set within the Strategic Plan (terrestrial developments) and the Marine Infrastructure Management Act 2016.

A large proportion of terrestrial wetlands on Guernsey are designated Sites of Special Significance (Island Development Plan, 2016). As such, any activities which may impact on the special interest of the site constitutes development and any such applications are screened to determine whether an EIA is required. Additional developments which have the potential to impact Ramsar Sites or wetlands, such as land reclamation or changes to water management on agricultural land, would also require scoping for an EIA (<https://www.gov.gg/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=3265&p=0>).

Some of the UK Overseas Territories have developed EIA policies, albeit that they generally are not mandatory. The UKOTCF has provided and sourced specialist guidance on the use of EIAs and integration of environmental aspects into physical planning for some Overseas Territories. EIAs are sometimes requested or required on Anguilla depending on the type of development. To protect groundwater in Bermuda, all planning applications within designated Water Resources Conservation Areas and Cave Protection Areas are vetted by the Government Hydrogeologist. EIAs are required for coastal development on the British Virgin Islands under the Physical Planning Act, which take account of impacts to wetlands, and may be required in the Cayman Islands at the discretion of the National Conservation Council under provisions in the National Conservation Law. The Cyprus Sovereign Base Areas Policy Statement on non-military development has gone through the Strategic EIA process, and EIAs are undertaken for projects/plans proposed within designated wetland areas, including the Akrotiri Ramsar Site. On the Turks and Caicos Islands, Environmental Assessments are required for certain development categories, based on the development type rather than the habitats which they impact. The Director of Planning may also require Environmental Assessment for any project which they deem to be detrimental to critical habitats.

## Goal 4. Enhancing implementation

*[Reference to Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 6, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17]*

**Target 15.** Ramsar Regional Initiatives with the active involvement and support of the Parties in each region are reinforced and developed into effective tools to assist in the full implementation of the Convention.

### 15.1 Has your country been part of the development and implementation of a Ramsar Regional Initiative? {15.1}

A=Yes; B=No; D=Planned

15.1 Additional information: If “yes”, please list the Ramsar Regional Initiatives in which your country is actively involved.

**15.2 Has your country supported or participated in the development of other regional (i.e., covering more than one country) wetland training and research centres? {15.2}**

A=Yes; B=No; D=Planned

15.2 Additional information If “yes”, please indicate the name(s) of the centre(s).

**Target 16.** Wetlands conservation and wise use are mainstreamed through communication, capacity development, education, participation and awareness.

[Reference to Global Biodiversity Framework Target 21].

**16.1 Has an action plan (or plans) for wetland CEPA been established? {16.1}**

A=Yes; B=No; C=In Progress; D=Planned

- a) At the national level **C=In Progress**
- b) Sub-national level **A=Yes**
- c) Catchment/basin level **A=Yes**
- d) Local/site level **A=Yes**

(Even if no CEPA plans have been developed, if broad CEPA objectives for CEPA actions have been established, please indicate this in the Additional information section below)

16.1 Additional information: (If “yes” or “in progress” to one or more of the four categories above):

The UK and its stakeholders recognize the need to embed conservation action and behaviour change within outreach and education programs as one method to meet global conservation targets. One example at the international level was the adoption in 2021 of the IUCN World Conservation Congress Resolution 064 on Promoting Conservation through Behaviour-Centred Solutions

([https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/resrecfiles/WCC\\_2020\\_RES\\_064\\_EN.pdf](https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/resrecfiles/WCC_2020_RES_064_EN.pdf)).

The 2024 UK Biodiversity Framework (<https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/uk-biodiversity-framework/>) sets out the shared objectives for co-operation and collaboration between the four countries of the UK and establishes a governance structure for overseeing and achieving the shared objectives, including to inform each other of domestic policy developments and collaborate to achieve shared aims where there is benefit in doing so at a UK level. It recognises that integration (mainstreaming) is needed across government policies to promote better consideration of nature whilst also addressing important societal needs. It notes the significant linkages and impacts of nature on other policy areas such as finance and trade, human health, food and energy security, flood risk management, and carbon storage, and highlights the need to work across policy areas for mutual benefit. It notes that action will need to come not only through governments and public bodies, but also through businesses, landowners/land users, environmental NGOs, and wider society.

WWT continues to work to deliver CEPA activities across its ten UK sites, including an innovative Inspiring Generations project (<https://www.wwt.org.uk/our-work/projects/inspiring-generations/>), aimed at supporting low income schools to visit WWT’s wetland centres/sites and bring their families with them for free. They are also running several local catchment-based projects looking at natural flood management and SuDS, which include outreach to and the active participation of local communities. A major focus of WWT’s



work is running health and well-being projects and looking at both physical and mental health benefits of spending time in wetlands.

WWT's international engagement programme supports 350 wetland centres worldwide through Wetland Link International (<https://wli.wwt.org.uk/about-wli/>). It also hosts a global Civil Society Organization network (the World Wetland Network) and runs a new online learning programme (the Wetland Learning Hub) with a pilot completed in January 2024, supporting over 40 participants worldwide. Funding from the UK Government's Darwin Initiative grants scheme will support regional development in West Africa, Madagascar and Indo-Burma.

In Wales, communication, education, participation, awareness raising and capacity building are built into the principles and legislative framework for achieving the sustainable management of natural resources set out in the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 (<http://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/consmanagement/natural-resources-management/environment-act/>). The State of Natural Resources Report and the Area Statements required under this Act allow information on the state of the environment and its benefits, both intrinsic and wellbeing, to be set out as the starting point for cross sectoral and multi-organisation working on the issues identified.

The Guernsey Nature Commission was set up in 2023 to raise awareness of the importance of Guernsey's natural environment. While there is not a specific goal for wetland engagement, one of their core aims is to enhance community awareness through all environments. Within wetlands, this includes citizen science surveys, events and communications. In spring 2024, a new code of conduct for wildlife watching was published which aims to reduce disturbance to wildlife in Guernsey's coastal and marine environments.

CEPA is integrated into the Anguilla National Trust workplan and strategic plan. CEPA activities are conducted generally for Anguilla wetlands, but also more specifically for certain wetlands (including the East End Pond Conservation Area, Road Salt Pond, and Sombrero Island Ramsar Site). CEPA activities are also formally included within the site management plan.

Further information on environmental education across the UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies is contained in the review produced by the UKOTCF in 2016 (<https://www.ukotcf.org.uk/env-charter/progress/>).

## **16.2 How many centres (visitor centres, interpretation centres, education centres) that focus on wetlands have been established? {16.2}**

**E= # centres; F=Fewer than #; G=More than #; X=Unknown; y=Not relevant;**

- a) at Ramsar Sites **E=83 centres;**
- b) at other wetlands **G=>83 centres**

### *16.2 Additional information:*

About half of UK Ramsar Sites have some form of visitor/education centre and a significant number exist elsewhere. Those that specifically focus on wetlands include the WWT wetland centres at Arundel, London, Slimbridge, Welney, Caerlaverock, Llanelli, Castle Espie, Washington, Steart and Martin Mere (<http://www.wwt.org.uk/learn/>). These centres attract around one million visitors annually, including school visits for focused educational programmes, e.g. Inspiring Generations (<https://www.wwt.org.uk/our-work/projects/inspiring-generations/>). WWT also hosts the Wetland Link International project,



an international support network for wetland centres, which counts another ten UK wetland centres as members.

On the Isle of Man, interpretation centres manned by Manx Wildlife Trust volunteers are provided at two coastal sites that are not Ramsar Sites. Signage is provided at key sites elsewhere and further signage is planned. Coastal biodiversity signage and telescopes have been provided at key sites.

The Alderney Wildlife Trust maintain an on-island visitors centre with interpretational materials from within the Ramsar Site, which complements multiple additional information boards found at locations in the site itself. Educational tours of the site and talks have been provided by The Alderney Bird Observatory and Alderney Animal Welfare Society. Information on the Ramsar Site is integrated into the Island's Tourism Strategy through Visit Alderney (<https://www.visitalderney.com/our-island/nature/wild-protected-landscapes>). The webcams based within the Ramsar Site support online learning and serve to share the island's natural history with the world. In 2019, two telescopes were installed with information boards at two prime locations overlooking the Ramsar Site. A commitment has been made through the Island Ramsar management strategy to ensure that every local child is able to access the Ramsar Site by boat for free prior to their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. On Sark, a photographic guide to the Ramsar Site (by Sue Daley – experienced wildlife filmmaker) and extensive Guides to the Island coastline (La Trobe) are available at the Island Visitor Centre.

On Bermuda, visitor centres cannot be built in any Ramsar Sites because they are zoned as Nature Reserves and this zoning prevents the construction of buildings and roads within the Sites. The National Trust visitor centre on Little Cayman serves as a visitor and educational centre for the Booby Pond and Rookery Ramsar Site. At the Cyprus Sovereign Base Area Ramsar Site, the Akrotiri Environmental Education and Information Centre forms part of the Cyprus Network of Environmental Education Centres. Two birdwatching hides have been constructed as part of the Darwin Plus project completed at Akrotiri Marsh (<https://darwinplus.org.uk/project/DPLUS034>), and nature trails have been created as part of another Darwin Plus project (<https://visitakrotiri.cy/darwin-plus-project/>).

### **16.3 Does the Contracting Party:**

**a) ensure stakeholder participation in decision-making on wetland planning and management**

**b) specifically involve local stakeholders in the selection of new Ramsar Sites and in Ramsar Site management?**

**{16.3}**

**A=Yes for both; B=No; C=Partially; D=Planned**

#### *16.3 Additional information:*

In the UK, public consultation precedes all Ramsar Site designations, although these are selected on scientific criteria only. Stakeholder participation is central to the development of management plans for Ramsar Sites and other nationally designated wetland sites so that socio-economic and cultural factors and stakeholder views can be considered.

The UK Special Protection Area and Ramsar Scientific Working Group (SPAR SWG) (<https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/uk-spa-ramsar-avian-scientific-working-group/>) is a consultative group established by Defra to assist government administrations and their Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies in taking forward the further development of SPA and Ramsar Site networks within the UK. The Group comprises representatives from government Statutory

Nature Conservation Bodies and non-government organisations from the conservation, land use and marine sectors. As regards implementation of the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar Convention), it principally focuses on avian aspects.

The review and update of River Basin Management Plans in England provides an example of the scope of stakeholder participation in decision-making in wetland planning, including steps taken nationally and locally to ensure appropriate public consultation and engagement, with significant efforts made to make information easily accessible, hold consultations with relevant organisations, and to actively involve many different stakeholders in the planning process (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/river-basin-management-plans-updated-2022-record-of-consultation-and-engagement>).

WWT has hosted high profile events, including parliamentary receptions, to draw the attention of key politicians, decision-makers and influencers to World Wetlands Day, the Ramsar Convention and the importance of wetlands. The former Defra Minister (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at Defra) and former Shadow Minister for Nature and Rural Affairs have visited the WWT Wetland Centres. In 2024, a parliamentary event was attended by Dr Musonda Mumba (the Ramsar Convention Secretary General), Flore Lafaye de Micheaux (from the Ramsar Secretariat), together with a visit to the London Wetland Centre to learn about WWT's new strategy for wetland conservation, as well as viewing the "Spirit of Place" film featuring WWT's Ambassador Sir Mark Rylance and discussing WWT's International Engagement work. WWT's Parliamentary reception drew around 20 Members of Parliament and Peers, as well as a range of private, public and third sector attendees, with both the former Defra Minister and Ramsar Secretary General giving speeches. This highlighted the ambition for cross-sector working, and the need to collaborate to make wetland restoration a reality. The All Party Parliamentary Group for Wetlands held a meeting focused on wetlands as a nature-based solution for water quality. To understand the barriers and opportunity to implementation, a session was hosted with representatives from academia, agriculture, a water company, a regulator and Government.

Key stakeholders contribute to and review the Alderney Ramsar Strategies and Annual Action Plans. The Alderney Ramsar Stakeholder's forum has representatives from across the community, including local anglers, commercial ferry operators and wildlife organisations, as well as the States of Alderney. They have provided feedback on the upcoming draft Alderney Ramsar Five-Year Strategy. Public consultations have also been conducted on the States of Alderney's Strategy for Nature and Agriculture, and the Alderney Wildlife Trust's Nature Reserve Strategies and Alderney State of Nature project. The Alderney Marine Users Forum has carried out extensive surveys on use of the marine environment, including the Alderney Ramsar Site, and interests and opinions from stakeholders have been used to create a marine users management plan ([www.alderneymarineforum.com](http://www.alderneymarineforum.com)).

On Jersey, a new Ramsar Advisory Group has been established with the approval of the Minister of the Environment to work in tandem with the Government of Jersey. A key change to the group is that they are no longer responsible for the delivery of the management plans, but rather act as a support network to the Government. The Government of Jersey, as signatory to the Ramsar Convention, is responsible for the delivery of the management plans, the associated monitoring and reporting.

#### **16.4 Do you have an operational cross-sectoral national Ramsar/wetlands committee? {16.4}**

A=Yes; B=No; C= Partially; D=Planned; X=Unknown; Y=Not relevant

*16.4 Additional information:*

The SPAR SWG has provided scientific and technical advice on matters relating to the UK Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar Site network (<https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/uk-spa-ramsar-avian-scientific-working-group/>). Additionally, the Four Countries' Biodiversity Group (4CBG), through which the environment departments of all four governments in the UK work together, discuss issues relating to the Ramsar Convention as necessary, in addition to its work on the Convention on Biological Diversity and other relevant MEAs.

Managers of the Channel Islands Ramsar Sites meet regularly, with Alderney hosting an information sharing website ([www.ci-ramsar.com](http://www.ci-ramsar.com)), and inter-Channel Islands projects such as Fish-Intel (<https://alderney.gov.gg/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=172022&p=0>) and BEEP (<https://societe.org.gg/wp/beep/>) having greatly improved knowledge about wetlands across the area. The Alderney Ramsar Stakeholder's Forum acts as a cross-sectorial Ramsar Committee with representatives from NGOs, commercial operators and fishers, government officials, scientific advisors and public groups. This group was particularly successful in coordinating the island's response to Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza.

**16.5 Do you have an operational cross-sectoral body equivalent to a national Ramsar/wetlands committee? {16.5}**

A=Yes; B=No; **C= Partially**; D=Planned; X=Unknown; Y=Not relevant

*16.5 Additional information:*

See section 16.4.

**16.6 Are other communication mechanisms (apart from a national committee) in place to share the Convention's implementation guidelines and other information between the Administrative Authority and:**

- a) Ramsar Site managers
- b) other MEA national focal points
- c) other ministries, departments and agencies

{16.6}

A=Yes; B=No; **C=Partially for all**; D=Planned

*16.6 Additional information:*

Communication mechanisms are in place for Ramsar Sites across the UK, Crown Dependencies and UK Overseas Territories, as needed.

Focal points (both wetland specific and broader conservation) are established throughout the UK Government administrations and their respective country-level Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies and have established networks to ensure joined up implementation of the Ramsar wise use principles. JNCC provides a high-level coordination role across the Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies, such as on matters relating to the work of the Convention's Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP). Discussions on matters of mutual interest and importance between the UK Administrative Authority and scientific/technical focal points of the different MEAs take place whenever necessary on a case-by-case basis.

Ramsar Site managers from the Channel Islands (Jersey, Guernsey, Sark and Alderney) meet annually to discuss management issues, operational delivery, the development of conservation techniques, and to share ideas. The management of sites involves local government bodies and NGOs, who work together to achieve common goals, such as the

development of the Channel Island Ramsar code of conduct, which is publicized and available to all potential users and visitors, and a website to share resources ([www.ci-ramsar.com](http://www.ci-ramsar.com)).

**16.7 Has your country organized any Convention on Wetlands-branded World Wetlands Day events, whether led by government or NGOs, since COP14? {16.7}**

A=Yes; B=No

*16.7. Additional information:*

Since Ramsar COP 14, the UK has organised numerous events to celebrate World Wetlands Day. In 2024, one notable event was a ministerial visit by the former Defra Minister Pow to the London Wetland Centre, which highlighted the importance of wetlands and the UK's commitment to their conservation. Additionally, the UK hosted a visit from the Ramsar Secretary General, in the Defra London offices, with a Director highlighting the collaborative efforts in their commitment for the Convention. Likewise, in 2023, the former Government Ministers Siobhan Baillie and Trudy Harrison visited the WWT Slimbridge Weyland Centre, where the benefits of the All Party Parliamentary Group campaigns and how wetlands help wildlife, biodiversity, climate change and carbon capture were discussed.

Events take place annually at WWT centres involving visitors and local schools, as well as in public places, such as a wetland ground mural in a Bristol Shopping centre which the toured the country in 2023 (<https://www.wwt.org.uk/news-and-stories/blog/picture-this-thriving-wetlands>) and a campaign on wetlands and mental health in 2024 (<https://www.wwt.org.uk/discover-wetlands/world-wetlands-day/>).

To mark World Wetlands Day, the Natural Resources Wales LIFE Welsh Raised Bogs Project has organised guided walks followed by free family activities (<https://naturalresourceswales.gov.uk/about-us/news-and-events/news/citizen-science-life-wrb/>). Natural England (in collaboration with the Carstairs Countryside Trust) announced a major extension to the Lower Derwent Valley National Nature Reserve, home to areas of traditionally-farmed hay meadows and a crucial sanctuary to large numbers of breeding and wintering birds. In Northern Ireland, the British Trust for Ornithology held a birdwatching event at Antrim Lough Shore and Rea's Wood, Armagh Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council held two events engaging with dozens of pupils from four schools in the Borough, as well as local volunteers, on 2 and 3 February 2024 at Peatlands Park (<https://www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk/council-lead-world-wetlands-day-celebration-at-peatlands-park/>). WWT hosted a World Wetland Day walk at Castle Espie (<https://www.wwt.org.uk/news-and-stories/news/duck-the-stress-this-world-wetlands-day-and-visit-wwt-castle-espie-for-a-moment-of-calm/>), and RSPB Northern Ireland organised a birdwatching event to identify the wildfowl and wading birds and a discussion on wetland conservation at Portmore Reserve (Lough Neagh).

The States of Guernsey and local NGOs run annual events to promote World Wetlands Day. These are organised at one of Guernsey's Ramsar Sites and include outreach and educational activities and conservation actions, such as beach cleaning, eelgrass condition assessments, invasive species control and intertidal surveys. Celebratory World Wetlands Day events are organized every year In Cyprus Sovereign Base Areas; for example, the event in 2024 focused on citizen science, the importance of Akrotiri Marsh, studying the biodiversity of the area and the recording of plants and insects using a specialized application. Biosplash, a bioblitz took place on Montserrat's coastal wetland (Belham River Mouth) in August 2023 to provide educational opportunities.

**16.8 Did your country undertake any campaigns, programmes or projects to raise awareness about the importance of wetlands to people and wildlife during the World Wetlands Days since COP14? {16.8}**

A=Yes; B=No

*16.8 Additional information:*

The UK has actively participated in social media campaigns to raise awareness about the importance of wetlands and wildlife to people during World Wetlands Days. Leveraging ministerial events organised in 2023 and 2024, the UK published posts emphasizing its commitment to wetland conservation. Additionally, the UK used materials from the Ramsar Secretariat's World Wetlands Day website, sharing statistics on how wetlands contribute to climate change mitigation, flood control, and biodiversity enhancement. The Broads Society published 120 articles on their website covering many topics, including the state of the Broads in the Family of national parks to mark the day in 2024.

WWT has continued to undertake extensive communications to raise awareness of wetlands, for example:

- from Oscar-winning Sir Mark Rylance to black-founded birding collective Flock Together, WWT has continued to work with a range of ambassadors to encourage more people to fall in love with wetlands and their wildlife;
- WWT toured a 3D wetland mural around the UK in 2021 to highlight the many benefits of wetlands and launch their Wetlands Can! Campaign – they went on to encourage people to build their very own mini-wetland and sign a pledge of support for wetlands and WWT;
- WWT events programme continues to bring wetlands and their unique species to people – in 2022, WWT hosted Mary Colwell (Curlew expert) and singer-songwriter David Gray to celebrate one of the UK's most evocative wetland species, raising money to support their work and engage with new audiences;
- WWT continues to build partnerships with organisations that can help them reach new audiences, including the National Garden Scheme who hosted a well-attended wetland webinar that shared the significant impact these habitats have on the health and biodiversity of gardens and wider landscapes;
- WWT's Waterlands podcast was launched in 2022 and continues to grow in popularity, consistently making the number two slot on the Great British Nature podcast charts.

Since April 2021, WWT has seen the UK public's awareness of loss of wetland habitats and wildlife grow (from 51% to 62% in April 2024), and similarly, awareness of the role of wetlands in reducing the effects of climate change (47% to 57%) (NFP Research Charity Awareness Monitor April 2024).

The LIFE for Welsh Raised Bogs project and LIFE Quake projects have raised awareness of the importance of wetlands in Wales, arranging numerous events at sites (e.g. The Bog Day and volunteer days). Peatland education resources have also been published, with wetlands and specifically peatlands promoted through social media channels (<https://naturalresources.wales/about-us/our-projects/nature-projects/new-life-for-welsh-raised-bogs/>). LIFE Quake is delivering objectives around community and stakeholder engagement on seven project sites. They are also committed to developing a programme of outreach to local schools and educators to enable a greater understanding, appreciation and use of transition mire and quaking bog landscapes.

On Alderney, public awareness raising has been achieved through citizen science research projects, educational engagement, and school activities. The Alderney Bird Observatory and Alderney Wildlife Trust conduct wildlife walks and tours for visitors and islanders. There are several boat tour operators, including the Alderney Bird Observatory, Alderney Wildlife Trust and Avante Boat Tours, providing educational tours to the public. Free boat tours of the Ramsar Site are provided to local school children by Alderney Wildlife Trust. They run a diverse citizen science programme with a focus on wetland research. Members of the public take part in surveys of intertidal species and habitats, plankton, and water quality.

The Bailiwick Eelgrass Exploration Project (BEEP) charity runs regular events to promote the importance of eelgrass beds across the Bailiwick of Guernsey. The States of Guernsey in collaboration with a host of local NGOs hosted a Bioblitz within the Lihou Island Ramsar Site in September 2021, which local school groups attended.

On the Isle of Man, an annual Manx Wildlife Week includes guided walks and other events, and a Festival of the Sea involving the Manx Wildlife Trust highlighting marine interests. The 'Curragh Nature Trail' has been established on a section of the Ballaugh Curragh Ramsar Site to raise awareness of the wetland, its wildlife and cultural significance through a variety of interpretative installations designed to engage families (<https://www.curraghswildlifepark.im/whats-here/trails-boardwalks/>). There has also been a significant increase in wetlands covered on the Isle of Man by volunteers under BTO Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) (see section 8.2).

The Anguilla National Trust has run programmes, including school-based and general public activities, to raise awareness and understanding of Anguilla wetlands. The Bermuda National Trust has continued their annual children's walk at Spittal Pond Ramsar Site guided by local experts. On the Cayman Islands, a Darwin Plus project has implemented a Coastal Education Guide, with emphasis on coral reef, mangrove, and seagrass ecosystems. The curriculum is adapted specifically to the Cayman Islands, including a general educational guide, educators' workshops, and hands-on activities and field trips for students. This has proven popular at schools and for training mangrove rangers. On the Turks and Caicos Islands, a wide variety of activities, including clean-ups, mangrove planting, and public awareness activities took place through a Darwin Plus project (<https://darwinplus.org.uk/project/DPLUS098>). UKOTCF published a Saving Our Special Nature of Montserrat newsletter series, which includes much on wetland importance and conservation, raising awareness on Montserrat and beyond (<https://www.ukotcf.org.uk/newsletters/project-newsletter-1/>).

**16.9 Has information about your country's wetlands and/or Ramsar Sites and their status been made public (e.g., through publications or a website)? {18.5}**

**A=Yes; B=No; C=Partially; D=Planned**

*16.9 Additional information:*

Sections 8.1, 8.2 and 8.4 set out sources of publicly available information and monitoring on wetlands, Ramsar Sites and other protected wetland areas. Examples of other sites that provide information on wetlands are hosted by JNCC (<https://hub.jncc.gov.uk/assets/b0b5e833-7300-4234-8ae5-bdbf326e854c>), NatureScot (<https://www.environment.gov.scot/our-environment/land/wetlands/>), The Rivers Trust (<https://theriverstrust.org/>), The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (<https://www.wwt.org.uk/discover-wetlands/wetlands/>), and The Wildlife Trusts (<https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/habitats/wetlands>).



**Target 17.** Financial and other resources for effectively implementing the Convention's fourth Strategic Plan 2016 – 2024 from all sources are made available.  
[Reference to Global Biodiversity Framework Target 19]

**17.1 [For Contracting Parties with a development assistance agency (“donor countries”)] Since COP14, has the agency provided funding to support wetland conservation and management efforts in other countries? {17.3}**  
A=Yes; B=No; Z=Not Applicable

*17.1 Additional information:*

The Darwin Initiative (<https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/about-us/>) is a UK Government grants scheme that helps to protect biodiversity and the natural environment by funding projects in developing countries. Over the years there have been various projects with wetland focus or providing benefits to wetland areas. Darwin Initiative-funded projects usually aim to help preserve biodiversity and the local community that lives alongside it. Most projects will include one or more of:

- building environmental knowledge;
- capacity building;
- research;
- implementing international biodiversity agreements.

Recent Darwin Initiative projects in developing countries relevant to wetlands (see <http://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/ecosystems-biomes/wetlands/>) include:

- community livelihood and capacity support for securing Zimbabwe's wetland biodiversity;
- healthy wetlands for the cranes and people of Kabale Uganda;
- building future resilience for communities and wildlife in Ambondrobo;
- community-based integrated catchment management to conserve the Upper Chindwin River;
- conserving Myanmar's wetland biodiversity through sustainable rice standards;
- increasing the resilience of biodiversity and livelihoods in Colombo's wetlands.

The separate UK Government Darwin Plus fund provides for environmental projects across both ODA-eligible and non-ODA-eligible UK Overseas Territories (<https://darwinplus.org.uk/>). Since 2012, Darwin Plus has committed over £55 million to more than 320 individual projects in the UK Overseas Territories to support conservation in marine, terrestrial and freshwater environments (<https://dplus.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/funding-scheme/darwin-plus/>). Examples of the success of Darwin Plus projects outside of the UK Overseas Territories include:

- the development of the WWT Wetland Learning Hub in West Africa, Madagascar and Indo-Burma, building on a pilot phase to create an online training platform tailored to these regions with face-to-face training sessions for trainers (<https://www.wwt.org.uk/news-and-stories/blog/picture-this-thriving-wetlands>);
- a WWT project on long term resilient conservation management of Lake Tseny in Madagascar (<https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAR28001>).

**17.2 [For Contracting Parties with a development assistance agency (“donor countries”)] Have environmental safeguards and assessments been included in development proposals proposed the development of projects by the agency? {17.4}**  
A=Yes; B=No; C= Partially; X= Unknown; Y=Not relevant; Z=Not applicable



*17.2 Additional information:*

Projects funded under the UK Government biodiversity conservation grants scheme, the Darwin Initiative, are monitored and evaluated to ensure that they will have a lasting impact and legacy on biodiversity in host countries and help them to meet their obligations under MEAs.

**17.3 [For Contracting Parties that have received development assistance since COP14] Has your country received financial support specifically for national wetland conservation and management: {17.5}**

A=Yes; B=No; Z=Not applicable

- a) from development assistance agencies of another country?
- b) from non-national or multilateral development assistance agencies?

*17.3 Additional information: for example from which countries or agencies?*

**17.4 Has any financial support from the national budget been provided by your country to facilitate the implementation of the Convention on Wetlands? {17.6}**

A=Yes; B=No; Z=Not applicable

*17.4 Additional information: If "yes" please state the amounts, and for which activities.*

The UK provides annual contributions to facilitate the implementation of the Ramsar Convention. In 2024, this amounted to CHF 214,212.00. In addition, £71,000 of voluntary contributions were made to support two resolutions relating to the conflict in Ukraine and commissioning the scientific and technical guidance of criteria for designating Wetlands of International Importance.

**Target 18. International cooperation is strengthened at all levels**

**18.1 Are the national focal points of other MEAs invited to participate in the national Ramsar /wetland committee? {18.1}**

A=Yes; B=No; C=Partially; D=Planned

*18.1 Additional information:*

**18.2 Are mechanisms in place at the national level for collaboration between the Convention on Wetland's Administrative Authority and the focal points of UN and other global and regional bodies and agencies (e.g. UNEP, UNDP, WHO, FAO, UNECE, ITTO)? {18.2}**

A=Yes; B=No; C=Partially; D=Planned

*18.2 Additional information:*

Defra coordinates the UK's participation in all international and multilateral environmental and biodiversity fora, and co-ordinates with the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero on our collaboration with international climate bodies and agencies.

**18.3 Has your country received assistance from any of the following UN or other global and regional bodies and agencies in implementing the Convention on Wetlands since COP14? {18.3}**

- a) UNEP No
- b) FAO No

- c) UNECE **No**
- d) UNFCCC **No**
- e) Global Environment Facility **No**
- f) UNDP **No**
- g) UNESCO **No**
- h) World Health Organization **No**
- i) World Meteorological Organization **No**
- j) ITTO **No**
- k) The Convention's IOPs<sup>2</sup> **No**

*18.3 Additional information: For example describe the support and indicate the amount of funding.*

**18.4 Has your country established international network(s), such as twinning arrangements, to facilitate knowledge sharing and training related to wetlands that share common features? {18.4}**

**A=Yes; B=No; C=Partially; D=Planned**

*18.4 Additional information:*

Twinning arrangements exist for some Ramsar Sites in the UK, for example between the Wash and Waddensee (Netherlands) and between Strangford Lough and sites in Canada and Iceland.

Networks have also been established through Wetland Link International (WLI), a support network for wetland centres which provide education and visitor activities on site. The project has around 350 members across six continents, with WWT acting as the coordinator in the UK (<http://www.wwt.org.uk/wli>). Particularly relevant is the MBP (Migratory Birds for People) network, which links wetland centres along the East Atlantic Flyway, including West Africa and western Europe. Centres regularly communicate and take part in joint projects and an annual meeting (in 2022 this formed part of a regional capacity-building meeting in Senegal). MBP also runs an 'optics for Africa' scheme, collecting used optics from WWT members and visitors to send on to colleagues in West Africa. WWT also supports the World Wetland Network (<https://worldwetland.network/>) and played an active role in coordinating Civil Society input to COP14. They also worked with the Society of Wetland Scientists, amongst others, to run the second round of a World Wetland Survey, with results shown at a side event at COP14.

In Northern Ireland, DAERA staff were invited by the National Parks and Wildlife Service in the Republic of Ireland to attend and present a talk on Ramsar Site work in Northern Ireland at the Irish Ramsar Wetlands Committee (IRWC) Meeting on 4 May 2022 in County Cavan. In September 2023, with assistance from DAERA, the IRWC held a two-day visit to two Northern Ireland Ramsar Sites in County Fermanagh (Cuilcagh Mountain and Upper Lough Erne), both of which are also transboundary wetland systems. This event involved meetings and site visits to learn about and see at first hand two Ramsar Sites in Northern Ireland.

The Jersey International Centre for Advanced Studies (JICAS) has bursaries for students from the UK Overseas Territories. So far two UKOT nationals have undertaken the MSc course in

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<sup>2</sup> The IOPs are BirdLife International, the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature), Wetlands International, WWF and Wildfowl & Wetland Trust (WWT).

Island Biodiversity and Conservation ([www.jicas.je](http://www.jicas.je)); and two non-UKOT nationals have carried out projects there in invasive species and climate change.

Knowledge and skills sharing between UKOTs is facilitated by various organisations. For example, the UKOTCF (whose member organisations are mainly UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies bodies) and its three regional working groups (Wider Caribbean, Southern Oceans and Europe Territories), the Caribbean Conservation Network (comprised of representatives from the Caribbean UKOT National Trusts and affiliated environmental NGOs) and BirdsCaribbean (with representatives from across the Caribbean Region).

**18.5 Have all transboundary wetland systems been identified? {18.6}**

**A=Yes; B=No; D=Planned; Z=Not applicable**

*18.5 Additional information:*

Three International River Basin Districts are shared between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland (Neagh Bann, North Western and Shannon). A report prepared by the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) on 'Shared wetlands and river basins of the world' provided a preliminary basis for the identification of shared wetlands. This report identified a number of UK sites which may be subject to impacts from adjoining jurisdictions and could therefore benefit from cooperative management approaches between countries. The report identified two UK Ramsar Sites within 10km of an international border (Upper Lough Erne and Pettigoe Plateau) and one UK Ramsar Site within an international catchment basin (Upper Lough Erne).

**18.6 Is effective cooperative management in place for shared wetland systems (for example, in shared river basins and coastal zones)? {18.7}**

**A=Yes; B=No; C=Partially; D=Planned; Y=Not relevant**

*18.6 Additional information:*

Co-operation between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland occurs through a number of mechanisms. Cross-border River Basin Management Plans (RBMP) have been produced for three shared River Basin Districts. These apply to groundwater, all surface water bodies, transitional and coastal waters out to one nautical mile, as well as European protected areas that are directly associated with ground or surface water and address cross-border considerations. A draft RBMP for Northern Ireland for the 3rd cycle 2021-2027 has been consulted on. In addition to other government agencies, a cross-border body (The Loughs Agency) addresses protection, management and liaison of cross-border catchments centred on shared coastal areas (Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough - both Ramsar Sites) and their associated catchments. It hosted an International Symposium on Transboundary Water Management in September 2024, which brought together leading experts, policymakers, researchers, practitioners, and stakeholders from around the globe to address the management of transboundary water resources.

**18.7 Does your country participate in regional networks or initiatives for wetland-dependent migratory species? {18.8}**

**A=Yes; B=No; D=Planned; Z=Not applicable**

*18.7 Additional information: If "yes", please list which regional networks or initiatives.*

The UK is Party/Signatory to and an active participant in a number of Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding under the Convention on Migratory Species, which have implications for the conservation of wetland-dependent species. These include:

- Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds;
- Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels;
- Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas;
- MoU on the Aquatic Warbler;
- MoU on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles in the Indian Ocean and South East Asia;
- MoU on Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia;
- Sharks MoU.

WWT hosts the Migratory Birds for People network, a group of wetland centres at internationally important wetlands along the East Atlantic Flyway (<https://wli.wwt.org.uk/initiatives/migratory-birds-for-people/>). They are also actively involved in the East Asia Australasia Flyway Partnership.

The Turks and Caicos Islands currently participates in an annual winter shorebird census, which is a collaboration between the Department of Environment and Coastal Resources, Turks and Caicos Reef Fund, Turks and Caicos National Trust, US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Geological Survey, Canadian Wildlife Service and RSPB.

**Target 19.** Capacity building for implementation of the Convention and its 4th Strategic Plan 2016 – 2024 is enhanced.

[Reference to Global Biodiversity Framework Target 20]

**19.1 Has your country conducted any national needs assessment since COP14 to inform capacity building planning to implement the Convention’s Strategic Plan? {19.1}**

A=Yes; B=No; C=Partially; D=Planned

*19.1 Additional information:*

A significant evaluation of the training needs of wetland conservationists was carried out to inform development of the WWT Wetland Learning Hub (<https://wetlandlearninghub.org/>). This online tool acts as a one-stop digital home for wetland education and training, and provides a community and resource for wetland professionals working in NGOs, civil society, local or national government and wetland reserves or centres.

**19.2 Does your country or institution implement capacity development strategies or actions for the Convention’s Strategic Plan?**

A=Yes; B=No; C=Partially; D=Planned

*19.2 Additional information:*

The assessment of capacity requirements and delivery of capacity development are delivered on an organisation-by-organisation basis and are not centrally co-ordinated. There are a range of capacity initiatives delivered through UK stakeholders such as WWT. A range of post-graduate programmes in wetlands conservation available in the UK.

**19.3 Are wetland conservation and wise-use issues included in formal education programmes (Resolution XIV.11)? {19.2}**

A=Yes; B=No; C=Partially; D=Planned

*19.3 Additional information:*

Wetland conservation and wise-use issues are included in multiple education programmes, including the England national curriculum science programme, various initiatives run by WWT, and a range of other activities as detailed in section 2 J.

**19.4 How many training events for wetland site managers have occurred since COP14? {19.3}**

E= # opportunities; F=Fewer than #; G=More than #; X=Unknown for both; Y=Not relevant

a) at Ramsar Sites

b) at other wetlands

*19.4 Additional information:*

Figures on training events for wetland site managers have not been collated centrally. An example of training used to educate mangrove rangers comes from a Darwin Plus project, which has implemented a Coastal Education Guide that has been adapted specifically to the Cayman Islands and has emphasis on coral reef, mangrove and seagrass ecosystems (<https://darwinplus.org.uk/project/DPLUS117>).

**19.5 Have you (AA) used your previous National Reports in monitoring implementation of the Convention? {19.4}**

A=Yes; B=No; D=Planned; Z=Not applicable

*19.5 Additional information:*

The information contained in this report is based in part on a review and updating of the previous UK Ramsar National Report.