CYNGOR CEFN GWLAD CYMRU
COUNTRYSIDE COUNCIL FOR WALES

CORE MANAGEMENT PLAN

INCLUDING CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

FOR

CRAIG YR ADERYN (BIRD'S ROCK) SPA

Version: Final

Date: 12th March 2008

Approved by: Tim Jones

More detailed maps of management units can be provided on request.
A Welsh version of all or part of this document can be made available on request.

Cyngor Cefn Gwlad Cymru
Countryside Council for Wales

NATURA 2000

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PREFACE

This document provides the main elements of CCW's management plan for the site named. It sets out what needs to be achieved on the site, the results of monitoring and advice on the action required. This document is made available through CCW's web site and may be revised in response to changing circumstances or new information. This is a technical document that supplements summary information on the web site.

One of the key functions of this document is to provide CCW's statement of the Conservation Objectives for the relevant Natura 2000 site. This is required to implement the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994, as amended (Section 4). As a matter of Welsh Assembly Government Policy, the provisions of those regulations are also to be applied to Ramsar sites in Wales.

1. VISION FOR THE SITE

This is a descriptive overview of what needs to be achieved for conservation on the site. It brings together and summarises the Conservation Objectives (part 4) into a single, integrated statement about the site.

Craig yr Aderyn or Birds Rock is an impressive outcrop rising from sea level to over 250 metres on the south side of the Dysynni valley, near Tywyn. Until the Eighteenth century the Dysynni estuary reached up to the foot of the Rock, but this was drained and the sea is now 7 kms away.

Craig yr Aderyn is a Special Protection Area because chough breed and roost here. Chough are an uncommon species of crow declining in much of Europe. Up to 6 pairs breed and up to 50-60 roosting birds can be present in some months. In recent years numbers have declined, however it is clear that the birds at Craig Yr Aderyn form part of a metapopulation, using a number of sites in the area. Numbers of chough within the metapopulation are thought to be stable or increasing.

We want chough to continue to breed and roost at Craig yr Aderyn and for this to happen it is important that there continues to be suitable undisturbed crevices for the choughs to nest in and short grassy vegetation nearby for them to feed on. We would not wish to see bracken encroaching any further, nor sheep numbers declining.

Craig Yr Aderyn also has a breeding colony of cormorants which was first recorded by Edward Lluyd in 1695 and was mentioned in Thomas Pennant's "'Tours in Wales" in" 1784. We want to see 60 to 100 pairs of cormorants nesting over the main rock face and occupying all available ledges.

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Areas and Designations Covered by this Plan

Grid reference(s): SH645067

Unitary authority:
Cyngor Gwynedd

Area (hectares):
89.26ha

Designations covered:
Craig Yr Aderyn/Birds Rock Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (This site underpins all of the above sections of European site.).

Detailed maps of the designated sites are available through CCW's web site: **http://www.ccw.gov.uk/interactive-maps/protected-areas-map.aspx**

For a summary map showing the coverage of this document see attached Unit Map.

2.2 Outline Description

The high crag of Craig Yr Aderyn, rising from sea level to over 250 metres is a striking landscape feature on the south side of the Dysynni valley. The site is a Special Protection Area because it is an important breeding and roosting site for chough.

Craig yr Aderyn itself forms the core of a large anticline where Ordovician rock comprising the Craig Cau formation outcrops. These predominantly igneous rocks consist of rhyolitic ash-flow tuffs that have in the past been quarried for road stone.

The crags used to regularly support over 1% of the British population of breeding chough, with five or six pairs nesting in holes and crevices, making this the densest population of breeding chough in the British Isles (six pairs in 0.5Km). However, in recent years breeding numbers have declined to 3-4 pairs. Craig yr Aderyn is also a roost site for chough throughout the year, with non-breeders in the summer and high numbers outside the breeding season. During the period 1991/92-1995/96 the average maximum count was 56, however since then the number of roosting birds has fallen to an average of 18 during the 1999/00-2004/05 period. It has become clear that the birds using Craig yr Aderyn are part of a metapopulation that spend much of the year in south Meirionydd, with the other principle roosting site being at Tonfannau Quarry, 8 kms away, near Tywyn.

In recent years the origin of individuals using Craig yr Aderyn has been established by tracing colour–ringed chicks. The results to date indicate that the birds using this site were born in Ceredigion and Montgomeryshire and have fledged from nests up to 70kms away. There are only a few records of birds from north Gwynedd.

Craig yr Aderyn was formerly located on the Dysynni estuary. This was drained in the Eighteenth century and so the rock now overlooks farmland and is 7 kms from the sea. Despite this the Rock supports a breeding colony of cormorants, the only regular inland nesting site in Wales. The colony was first recorded by Edward Lluyd in 1695 and was mentioned in Thomas Pennant's "Tour in Wales " in 1784. Over 60 pairs of cormorant nest on the crags, which represent about 1% of the GB breeding population. Other breeding species include barn owl, peregrine, redstart, wheatear, linnet and little owl.

To the north and east of the crags, there is a large area of unimproved acid grassland mixed with bracken. This is one of the major factors influencing the number of breeding and roosting chough, as they require an unimproved sward, rich in their main food, soil invertebrates and short enough for chough to be able to use their beaks to probe for food. Acidic, dry heathland occurs in the south-eastern part of the site. A small area of base-enriched marshy grassland above Gesail adds to the plant diversity with species such as common butterwort *Pinguicula vulgaris*, many-stalked spike-rush *Eleocharis multicaulis* and pale sedge *Carex Pallescens* and mosses such as *Campylium stellatum, Ctenidium molluscum and Fissidens adianthiodes.*

The north facing cliffs and slopes support a good range of moss and liverwort species. Of particular note are the nationally scarce mosses growing on boulders in the scree; *Grimmia decipens*, which appears to be decreasing in its national range and *Hedwigia integrifolia* which occurs here at its southernmost location in Britain. The uncommon liverwort *Jubula hutchinsiae* has been recorded from streamside rocks. On rocky areas above the main cliff face Wilson's filmy fern *Hymenophyllum wilsonii* and oak fern *Gymnocarpium dryopteris* have been recorded.

2.3 Outline of Past and Current Management

The UK chough population suffered a significant decline during the 20th Century as a result of persecution and changing agricultural practice. These pressures led to a contraction of the species range and the fragmentation and reduction of most remaining populations. This national trend mirror one seen throughout Europe where the species is still reported to be in decline in parts of its European range (Birdlife International, 2004). The past two or three decades have seen the UK chough population as a whole stabilising while populations around the Welsh coast chough appear to be increasing.

One or two pairs of chough have been recorded nesting on Craig yr Aderyn since the 1960's and it is likely that they have nested here for centuries. During the 1990's the numbers of breeding chough increased to five or six pairs, with a further two non-breeding pairs, although more recently there have usually been 3-4 pairs nesting. This density is the result of the number of suitable cavities for nesting on the cliff face and the large areas of short, sheep grazed turf on Craig yr Aderyn and in the surrounding area, which provide ideal feeding areas for chough.

In order to maintain the current breeding population of chough it is important that the cliffs retain a large number of sheltered crevices and cavities that are suitable for chough to nest. Whilst there is unlikely to be any threat to these, it is also important that these are not disturbed during the breeding season. The cliff face is used by climbers, however there is an agreement with the British Mountaineering Council that climbing should not take place during the breeding season. Although Craig yr Aderyn is open for public access, the inaccessible location of chough and cormorant nests on the cliff face means that they are unlikely to be disturbed by walkers.

Most of Craig yr Aderyn consists of common land, grazed by one grazier. The maintenance of unimproved, short grazed turf on as much of the site as possible is crucial for chough breeding and roosting. This is in order to encourage sufficient soil invertebrates, which are main food source for chough. The vegetation needs to be short to enable chough to use their beaks to probe for these invertebrates. The main threat to this is the spread of bracken and western gorse, which is encroaching on to part of this area. In recent years the grazier has entered Craig yr Aderyn into agri-environment schemes and payments are available through these to prevent the spread of scrub. In addition, sufficient sheep numbers need to graze the common in order to keep the turf short. The use of veterinary drugs to control intestinal worms in sheep can have a significant effect on invertebrate abundance and these should be avoided if possible. If they are used, it is thought that pour-on solutions are less damaging than bolus applications. Since the birds at Craig yr Aderyn form part of a

metapopulation of chough that spend much of the year in south Meirionnydd it is important that other feeding areas in the area are also appropriately managed.

2.4 Management Units

The plan area has been divided into management units to enable practical communication about features, objectives, and management. This will also allow us to differentiate between the different designations where necessary. In this plan the management units have been based on

The following table confirms the relationships between the management units and the designations covered:

Unit number	**SPA&SSSI**	**Management Agreement**	**Tenure (o = owner, t = tenant)**
1	✔	1 TG on most of land	*Mainly common land with several legal interests.*
2	✔		*Former quarry now owned by SNPA*

3. THE SPECIAL FEATURES

3.1 Confirmation of Special Features

Designated feature	***Relationships, nomenclature etc***	***Conservation Objective in part 4***
SPA features		
Annex 1 species that are a primary reason for selection of ***Craig yr Aderyn SPA*** 1. The site qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) as it is used regularly by 1% or more of the Great Britain population of a species listed on Annex 1, in the breeding and non-breeding season: **Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*** 6^{p} breeding 1.8% GB 55^{i} wintering 8.0% GB ^{p} = pairs i = individuals Data source = RSPB 2000		Conservation Objective 1.
SSSI features		
2. Breeding Cormorant. This is the only inland breeding site in Wales and has a population of approximately 60 pairs		SSSI Conservation Objective 2.

3.2 Special Features and Management Units

This section sets out the relationship between the special features and each management unit. This is intended to provide a clear statement about what each unit should be managed for, taking into account the varied needs of the different special features. All special features are allocated to one of seven classes in each management unit. These classes are:

Key Features

KH - a 'Key Habitat' in the management unit, i.e. the habitat that is the main driver of management and focus of monitoring effort, perhaps because of the dependence of a key species (see KS below). There will usually only be one Key Habitat in a unit but there can be more, especially with large units.

KS – a 'Key Species' in the management unit, often driving both the selection and management of a Key Habitat.

Geo – an earth science feature that is the main driver of management and focus of monitoring effort in a unit.

Other Features

Sym - habitats, species and earth science features that are of importance in a unit but are not the main drivers of management or focus of monitoring. These features will benefit from management for the key feature(s) identified in the unit. These may be classed as 'Sym' features because:

a) they are present in the unit but may be of less conservation importance than the key feature; and/or
b) they are present in the unit but in small areas/numbers, with the bulk of the feature in other units of the site; and/or
c) their requirements are broader than and compatible with the management needs of the key feature(s), e.g. a mobile species that uses large parts of the site and surrounding areas.

Nm - an infrequently used category where features are at risk of decline within a unit as a result of meeting the management needs of the key feature(s), i.e. under Negative Management. These cases will usually be compensated for by management elsewhere in the plan, and can be used where minor occurrences of a feature would otherwise lead to apparent conflict with another key feature in a unit.

Mn - Management units that are essential for the management of features elsewhere on a site e.g. livestock over-wintering area included within designation boundaries, buffer zones around water bodies, etc.

x – Features not known to be present in the management unit.

The table(s) below sets out the relationship between the special features and management units identified in this plan:

	Unit 1	2
SPA feature		
Chough	**KS**	**KS**
SSSI Feature		
Breeding Cormorant	**Sym**	**Sym**

4. CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

Background to Conservation Objectives:

a. Outline of the legal context and purpose of conservation objectives.

Conservation objectives are required by the 1992 'Habitats' Directive (92/43/EEC). The aim of the Habitats Directives is the maintenance, or where appropriate the restoration of the 'favourable conservation status' of habitats and species features for which SACs and SPAs are designated (see Box 1).

In the broadest terms, 'favourable conservation status' means a feature is in satisfactory condition and all the things needed to keep it that way are in place for the foreseeable future. CCW considers that the concept of favourable conservation status provides a practical and legally robust basis for conservation objectives for Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites.

Box 1
Favourable conservation status as defined in Articles 1(e) and 1(i) of the Habitats Directive

"The conservation status of a natural habitat is the sum of the influences acting on it and its typical species that may affect its long-term natural distribution, structure and functions as well as the long term survival of its typical species. The conservation status of a natural habitat will be taken as favourable when:

- Its natural range and areas it covers within that range are stable or increasing, and
- The specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and
- The conservation status of its typical species is favourable.

The conservation status of a species is the sum of the influences acting on the species that may affect the long-term distribution and abundance of its populations. The conservation status will be taken as 'favourable' when:

- Population dynamics data on the species indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats, and
- The natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and
- There is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis."

Achieving these objectives requires appropriate management and the control of factors that may cause deterioration of habitats or significant disturbance to species.

As well as the overall function of communication, Conservation objectives have a number of specific roles:

- Conservation planning and management.

  The conservation objectives guide management of sites, to maintain or restore the habitats and species in favourable condition.

- Assessing plans and projects.

  Article 6(3) of the 'Habitats' Directive requires appropriate assessment of proposed plans and projects against a site's conservation objectives. Subject to certain exceptions, plans or projects may not proceed unless it is established that they will not adversely

affect the integrity of sites. This role for testing plans and projects also applies to the review of existing decisions and consents.

- Monitoring and reporting.

  The conservation objectives provide the basis for assessing the condition of a feature and the status of factors that affect it. CCW uses 'performance indicators' within the conservation objectives, as the basis for monitoring and reporting. Performance indicators are selected to provide useful information about the condition of a feature and the factors that affect it.

The conservation objectives in this document reflect CCW's current information and understanding of the site and its features and their importance in an international context. The conservation objectives are subject to review by CCW in light of new knowledge.

b. Format of the conservation objectives

There is one conservation objective for each feature listed in part 3. Each conservation objective is a composite statement representing a site-specific description of what is considered to be the favourable conservation status of the feature. These statements apply to a whole feature as it occurs within the whole plan area, although section 3.2 sets out their relevance to individual management units.

Each conservation objective consists of the following two elements:

1. Vision for the feature
2. Performance indicators

As a result of the general practice developed and agreed within the UK Conservation Agencies, conservation objectives include performance indicators, the selection of which should be informed by JNCC guidance on Common Standards Monitoring[1].

There is a critical need for clarity over the role of performance indicators within the conservation objectives. **A conservation objective, because it includes the vision for the feature, has meaning and substance independently of the performance indicators, and is more than the sum of the performance indicators**. The performance indicators are simply what make the conservation objectives measurable, and are thus part of, not a substitute for, the conservation objectives. Any feature attribute identified in the performance indicators should be represented in the vision for the feature, but not all elements of the vision for the feature will necessarily have corresponding performance indicators.

As well as describing the aspirations for the condition of the feature, the Vision section of each conservation objective contains a statement that the factors necessary to maintain those desired conditions are under control. Subject to technical, practical and resource constraints, factors which have an important influence on the condition of the feature are identified in the performance indicators.

4.1 Conservation Objective for Feature 1: Internationally important population (1% or more of the Great Britain population) of breeding and non-breeding season **Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*.**

[1] Web link: http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-2199

Vision for Feature 1, Chough.

The vision for this feature is for it to be in a favourable conservation status, where all of the following conditions are satisfied:

1. The breeding population of Chough is at least 5 pairs
2. The winter roosting population should be at least 27 birds
3. Sufficient suitable habitat is present to support the populations
4. The factors affecting the feature are under control

Performance indicators for Feature 1, Chough.

The performance indicators are part of the conservation objective, not a substitute for it. Assessment of plans and projects must be based on the entire conservation objective, not just the performance indicators.

Performance indicators for feature condition: chough		
Attribute	***Attribute rationale and other comments***	***Specified limits***
A1. Breeding population	Based on performance indicators and targets as set out in the SPA review site account.	Upper limit: None set Lower limit: To contribute towards maintaining the Chough population in a favourable condition where, in 3 out of 5 consecutive years: • The SPA breeding population is at least 5 pairs
A1.1 Breeding productivity	Based on annual productivity surveillance data	Upper limit: None set Lower limit: To contribute towards the maintenance of the chough population in favourable condition where, during a six year monitoring period: • The average number of young fledged per occupied territory will be at least 2
A2. Roosting chough	Based on performance indicators and targets as set out in the SPA review site account.	Upper limit: None set Lower limit: The SPA wintering population (maximum count) is at least 27 birds
A3. Foraging habitat condition	Acidic grassland requires grazing to prevent the encroachment of scrub, bracken and gorse. Ideally, cattle and ponies are preferable to sheep as they are less- selective grazers. Economic factors could result in a reduction in grazing, making the site unsuitable for chough to feed	Upper limit: Grazing levels will not lead to excessive poaching damage Lower limit: The site will be moderately grazed (0.34 LSU/ha, which is the current agreed Tir Gofal grazing level).
Performance indicators for factors affecting the feature		
Factor	***Factor rationale and other comments***	***Operational Limits***

F1. Disturbance of chough	Based on surveillance	Upper limit: no breeding attempts to be know to fail because of impact of human disturbance Lower limit: None set
F2 Burning	The western part of the site above Gesail is dominated by western gorse and bracken. Burning is likely to favour bracken and western gorse, so this should not be used as a management tool where these species are likely to invade. Cutting or spraying may be more appropriate in these areas. Some cutting, spraying or burning management is necessary to maintain a diverse age structure and prevent further spread of these species. This should occur as long-term small-patch burning on a 12-year rotation. Burning should not occur unless followed up by grazing.	Upper limit: To maintain open heathland the dwarf-shrub vegetation will be managed by burning or cutting on a 12 year rotation so that $^{1}/_{12}$ of the habitat will be managed each year. Lower limit: A quarter of the heathland vegetation will be in early pioneer stage (0-3 years old) at any time.
F3 Bracken	Bracken dominates large areas on the western side of the site cliffs and may be spreading into areas of acid grassland. Spraying is probably the most effective to prevent the spread of bracken, however the presence of species of uncommon ferns, means that spraying has to be very carefully targeted.	Upper limit: There should be no more than 5 fronds bracken within a 2m radius in 75% of the habitat. Lower limit: There should no more than 5% of unbroken stands of bracken.

5. ASSESSMENT OF CONSERVATION STATUS AND MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

This part of the document provides:

- A summary of the assessment of the conservation status of each feature.
- A summary of the management issues that need to be addressed to maintain or restore each feature.

5.1 Conservation Status and Management Requirements of Feature 1: Internationally important population (1% or more of the Great Britain population) of breeding and non-breeding season **Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*.**

Conservation Status of Feature 1:
The condition of the chough population at January 2008 is Favourable, Maintained.

The past two or three decades have seen the UK chough population as a whole stabilising while populations around the Welsh coast appear to be making a recovery in numbers. At a local level the breeding population has declined during the 2000's, in part because birds are nesting and roosting in other nearby areas, notably Tonfannau Quarry. It is not clear whether any other factors are responsible for this decline, however, monitoring during the late 1990's suggested that low productivity may be a significant factor.

Breeding

YEAR	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Total Pairs Nesting	6	6	5	5		5	3	4	4	3
Total Successful Pairs	4-6	2	0	2						
Number of chicks fledged	At least 14	4	0	3						

Roosting
(RSPB unpublished)

Year	Maximum Count (July-March)	Maximum Count (Nov-Feb)
1991/92	65	65
1992-93	62	53
1993/94	55	47
1994/95	42	34-40
1995/96	58	58
Mean 1991/92-1995/96	56.4	51+

(RSPB unpublished)

Year	Maximum Count (July-March)	Maximum Count (Nov-Feb)
1999/2000	21	8
2000/01	8	Not counted
2001/02	26	8
2002/03	18	6
2003/04	10	6-8
2004/05	8	6
6 Year Mean 1999/00 – 2004/05	15	7

Management Requirements of Feature 1:
Sufficient undisturbed breeding, roosting and feeding habitat needs to be available to support the population and allow expansion. Chough require short-grazed grassland, thin soils on rock outcrops and cliffs, open-structure heathland and grazed cloddiau for feeding; these habitats are available in the SPA, but the birds do spend a lot of time foraging on similar habitat outside the SPA boundary. Soil dwelling invertebrates form the principle component of the choughs diet. These invertebrates are most abundant in warm free-draining soils, while chough require short, open swards to feed efficiently. Coprophagus beetle larvae have been shown to be a very important component of the diet of some chough populations. The agriculture of the area is predominantly pastoral with sheep, beef cattle and widespread silage production. Additional control of bracken and heathland management will increase available habitat.

It is also essential that disturbance during the breeding season is kept to a minimum. The most likely cause of disturbance is climbing and hence maintenance of the current voluntary agreement with the British Mountaineering Council prohibiting climbing between April and July is crucial.

6. ACTION PLAN: SUMMARY

This section takes the management requirements outlined in Section 5 a stage further, assessing the specific management actions required on each management unit. This information is a summary of that held in CCW's Actions Database for sites, and the database will be used by CCW and partner organisations to plan future work to meet the Wales Environment Strategy targets for sites.

Unit Number	CCW Database Number	Unit Name	Summary of Conservation Management Issues	Action needed?
1	001447	Unit 1	1) Climbing - could disturb chough and other breeding birds, therefore maintain agreement with BMC 2) Carry out monitoring to assess numbers of breeding pairs and their productivity and also to check that no climbing takes place during the breeding season	Yes
2	001448	Unit 2	Grazing - maintain grazing level and prevent spread of western gorse. Unit is in TG agreement and grazing levels are probably ok Monitor - to assess numbers of roosting birds	Yes

7. GLOSSARY

This glossary defines the some of the terms used in this **Core Management Plan**. Some of the definitions are based on definitions contained in other documents, including legislation and other publications of CCW and the UK nature conservation agencies. None of these definitions is legally definitive.

Action A recognisable and individually described act, undertaking or **project** of any kind, specified in section 6 of a **Core Management Plan** or **Management Plan**, as being required for the **conservation management** of a site.

Attribute A quantifiable and monitorable characteristic of a **feature** that, in combination with other such attributes, describes its **condition**.

Common Standards Monitoring A set of principles developed jointly by the UK conservation agencies to help ensure a consistent approach to **monitoring** and reporting on the **features** of sites designated for nature conservation, supported by guidance on identification of **attributes** and monitoring methodologies.

Condition A description of the state of a feature in terms of qualities or **attributes** that are relevant in a nature conservation context. For example the condition of a habitat usually includes its extent and species composition and might also include aspects of its ecological functioning, spatial distribution and so on. The condition of a species population usually includes its total size and might also include its age structure, productivity, relationship to other populations and spatial distribution. Aspects of the habitat(s) on which a species population depends may also be considered as attributes of its condition.

Condition assessment The process of characterising the **condition** of a **feature** with particular reference to whether the aspirations for its condition, as expressed in its **conservation objective**, are being met.

Condition categories The **condition** of **feature** can be categorised, following **condition assessment** as one of the following[2]:

Favourable: maintained;
Favourable: recovered;
Favourable: un-classified
Unfavourable: recovering;
Unfavourable: no change;
Unfavourable: declining;
Unfavourable: un-classified
Partially destroyed;
Destroyed.

Conservation management Acts or undertaking of all kinds, including but not necessarily limited to **actions,** taken with the aim of achieving the **conservation objectives** of a site. Conservation management includes the taking of statutory and non-statutory measures, it can include the acts of any

[2] See JNCC guidance on Common Standards Monitoring http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-2272

party and it may take place outside site boundaries as well as within sites. Conservation management may also be embedded within other frameworks for land/sea management carried out for purposes other than achieving the conservation objectives.

Conservation objective The expression of the desired **conservation status** of a **feature,** expressed as a **vision for the feature** and a series of **performance indicators**. The conservation objective for a feature is thus a composite statement, and each feature has one conservation objective.

Conservation status A description of the state of a **feature** that comprises both its **condition** and the state of the **factors** affecting or likely to affect it. Conservation status is thus a characterisation of both the current state of a feature and its future prospects.

Conservation status assessment The process of characterising the **conservation status** of a **feature** with particular reference to whether the aspirations for it, as expressed in its **conservation objective**, are being met. The results of conservation status assessment can be summarised either as 'favourable' (i.e. conservation objectives are met) or unfavourable (i.e. conservation objectives are not met). However the value of conservation status assessment in terms of supporting decisions about **conservation management**, lies mainly in the details of the assessment of feature **condition**, **factors** and trend information derived from comparisons between current and previous conservation status assessments and condition assessments.

Core Management Plan A CCW document containing the conservation objectives for a site and a summary of other information contained in a full site **Management Plan**.

Factor Anything that has influenced, is influencing or may influence the **condition** of a **feature**. Factors can be natural processes, human activities or effects arising from natural process or human activities, They can be positive or negative in terms of their influence on features, and they can arise within a site or from outside the site. Physical, socio-economic or legal constraints on **conservation management** can also be considered as factors.

Favourable condition See **condition** and **condition assessment**

Favourable conservation status See **conservation status** and **conservation status assessment.**[3]

Feature **The species population, habitat type or other entity for which a site is designated. The ecological or geological interest which justifies the designation of a site and which is the focus of conservation management.**

Integrity See **site integrity**

Key Feature The habitat or species population within a **management unit** that is the primary focus of **conservation management** and **monitoring** in that unit.

[3] A full definition of favourable conservation status is given in Section 4.

Management Plan The full expression of a designated site's legal status, **vision**, **features**, **conservation objectives**, **performance indicators** and management requirements. A complete management plan may not reside in a single document, but may be contained in a number of documents (including in particular **the Core Management Plan**) and sets of electronically stored information.

Management Unit An area within a site, defined according to one or more of a range of criteria, such as topography, location of **features**, tenure, patterns of land/sea use. The key characteristic of management units is to reflect the spatial scale at which **conservation management** and **monitoring** can be most effectively organised. They are used as the primary basis for differentiating priorities for conservation management and monitoring in different parts of a site, and for facilitating communication with those responsible for management of different parts of a site.

Monitoring An intermittent (regular or irregular) series of observations in time, carried out to show the extent of compliance with a formulated standard or degree of deviation from an expected norm. In **Common Standards Monitoring**, the formulated standard is the quantified expression of favourable **condition** based on **attributes**.

Operational limits The levels or values within which a **factor** is considered to be acceptable in terms of its influence on a **feature**. A factor may have both upper and lower operational limits, or only an upper limit or lower limit. For some factors an upper limit may be zero.

Performance indicators The **attributes** and their associated **specified limits**, together with **factors** and their associated **operational limits,** which provide the standard against which information from **monitoring** and other sources is used to determine the degree to which the **conservation objectives** for a **feature** are being met. Performance indicators are part of, not the same as, conservation objectives. See also **vision for the feature**.

Plan or project **Project:** Any form of construction work, installation, development or other intervention in the environment, the carrying out or continuance of which is subject to a decision by any public body or statutory undertaker.
Plan: a document prepared or adopted by a public body or statutory undertaker, intended to influence decisions on the carrying out of **projects.**
Decisions on plans and projects which affect Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites are subject to specific legal and policy procedures.

Site integrity The coherence of a site's ecological structure and function, across its whole area, that enables it to sustain the habitat, complex of habitats and/or the levels of populations of the species for which it is designated.

Site Management Statement (SMS) The document containing CCW's views about the management of a site issued as part of the legal notification of an SSSI under section 28(4) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as substituted.

Special Feature See **feature**.

Specified limit The levels or values for an **attribute** which define the degree to which the attribute can fluctuate without creating cause for concern about the **condition** of the **feature**. The range within the limits corresponds to favourable, the range outside the limits corresponds to unfavourable. Attributes may have lower specified limits, upper specified limits, or both.

Unit See **management unit.**

Vision for the feature The expression, within a **conservation objective**, of the aspirations for the **feature** concerned. See also **performance indicators.**

Vision Statement The statement conveying an impression of the whole site in the state that is intended to be the product of its **conservation management.** A 'pen portrait' outlining the **conditions** that should prevail when all the **conservation objectives** are met. A description of the site as it would be when all the **features** are in **favourable condition**.

8. REFERENCES AND ANNEXES

Birdlife Internationa.l (2004) Birds in Europe: population estimates, trends and conservation status.

Cambridge, UK: Birdlife International. (Birdlife Conservation Series No 12).