

**CYNGOR CEFN GWLAD CYMRU  
COUNTRYSIDE COUNCIL FOR WALES**

**CORE MANAGEMENT PLAN  
INCLUDING CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES**

**FOR**

**TRAETH LAFAN/LAVAN SANDS, CONWAY BAY SPA**  
(incorporating a section of Y Fenai a Bae Conwy/Menai Strait and Conwy Bay  
SAC; refer also to the Regulation 33 Advice documents)

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**Approved by: Mike Willis**

**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.**



## **CONTENTS**

### **Preface: Purpose of this document**

- 1. Vision for the Site**
- 2. Site Description**
  - 2.1 Area and Designations Covered by this Plan**
  - 2.2 Outline Description**
  - 2.3 Outline of Past and Current Management**
  - 2.4 Management Units**
- 3. The Special Features**
  - 3.1 Confirmation of Special Features**
  - 3.2 Special Features and Management Units**
- 4. Conservation Objectives**  
**Background to Conservation Objectives**
  - 4.1 Conservation objectives for feature 1: Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*)**
- 5. Assessment of Conservation Status and Management Requirements:**
  - 5.1 Feature 1: Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*)**
- 6. Action Plan: Summary**
- 7. Glossary**
- 8. References**

## **PREFACE**

This document provides the main elements of CCW's management plan for the sites named. It sets out what needs to be achieved on the sites, 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 sites. 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.

Traeth Lafan should consist of a quiet and relatively undisturbed area of sandflats and mudflats where shellfish and invertebrate populations are self maintaining and sufficient to support good numbers of a range of over wintering migratory birds, particularly waders with nationally important numbers of oystercatcher. Other species of wader should occur along the shore including curlew, ringed plover, dunlin, knot, bar-tailed godwit, redshank and small numbers of greenshank. Turnstone should generally occur along the rockier sections of the coastline. Significant numbers of ducks should be present, especially shelduck, mallard, wigeon and teal where fresh water enters the site, such as at Aber Ogwen.

In late summer and early autumn, the inshore waters of the site should support large numbers of great crested grebe that gather to moult. During the winter, a range of divers, grebes and other ducks will be found, especially off Llanfairfechan including, red-throated diver, Slovenian grebe, the occasional black necked grebe, red-breasted merganser, goldeneye, and common scoter.

The site should comprise a variety of marine sediment habitats on the shore between low and high tide that reflect the range of wave action across the site and the influence of freshwater from the Afon Ogwen. The lower shore should consist mainly of clean mobile sands and gravels, supporting marine worms, shrimps and bivalves. Further away from the lower shore, where wave exposure is less, the shore should become muddier, with lugworm and cockle beds. The upper shore is characterised by muddy sediments with bivalves and ragworm. Dwarf eelgrass beds should persist on the upper shore at Aber and near Porth Penrhyn, and are an important marine habitat in their own right.

## **2. SITE DESCRIPTION**

### **2.1 Area and Designations Covered by this Plan**

Grid reference:  
SH 630750 (notional mid point):

Unitary authorities:  
Cyngor Gwynedd Council  
Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Conwy/ Conwy County Borough Council

Area (hectares):  
2,643 ha

Designations covered:  
Traeth Lafan/Lavan Sands, Conway Bay SPA  
Traeth Lafan SSSI  
Traeth Lafan LNR  
Y Fenai a Bae Conwy/ Menai Strait and Conwy Bay SAC. [part]  
(see associated Reg 33 advice package)

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**

Traeth Lafan / Lavan Sands is located in Conwy Bay lying between Bangor and Llanfairfechan in north-west Wales. This large area of intertidal sand- and mud-flats lies at the eastern edge of the Menai Strait. The area has a range of exposures and a diversity of conditions, enhanced by freshwater streams that flow across the flats. The site is of importance for wintering waterbirds, especially Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*) and Curlew (*Numenius arquata*). In conditions of severe winter weather, Traeth Lafan acts as a refuge area for Oystercatchers displaced from the Dee Estuary. The site is also an important moulting roost for Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*) in late summer/early autumn.

### **2.3 Outline of Past and Current Management**

This extensive area of sand and mud flats, prior to the construction of the Menai Bridge in the nineteenth century, provided an access route, albeit hazardous, to cross from the mainland to Anglesey. Travellers would walk across Traeth Lafan at low tide, with local guides, and be taken by boat across the narrow channel near Beaumaris.

The flats have been used as an area for shell fishing since prehistoric times. Currently an area nearest to Bangor is designated under a Fisheries Order for seabed lay cultivation of mussels. [Refer to Y Fenai a Bae Conwy/ Menai Strait and Conwy Bay Reg 33 package for further details]. Shellfish, primarily cockles, are harvested spasmodically on the rest of Traeth Lafan. The main regulator is the North Western and North Wales Sea Fisheries Committee, though other agencies are also involved. Recently a working agreement has been developed with NWNWSFC and CCW whereby the fishery is only opened when there is considered to be an adequate resource to sustain harvesting without detrimental adverse impact on the wader species. [Refer to Y Fenai a Bae Conwy/ Menai Strait and Conwy Bay Reg 33 package for further details]

The majority of Traeth Lafan is designated as a Local Nature Reserve, managed by a joint committee that includes Conwy County Borough, Gwynedd Council, CCW, North Wales Wildlife Trust, RSPB and other organisations. . Most of the active management is undertaken by Gwynedd Council and Conwy County Borough Council and occurs on the LNR outside of the SPA. Facilities for visitors have been provided on the landward edge of the site, i.e. car parks and bird hides, and positive habitat management undertaken to provide scrapes and safe high tide roosting sites. The NWWT manage a nature reserve at the Spinnies, near to Aber Ogwen, which abut the SPA/SSSI boundary.

## 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 boundary of the SSSI/SPA that is demarked by MLW. Additionally the area of Traeth Lafan falling within the boundary of the Fishery Order has been further divided. See map showing the management units referred to in this plan.

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

Unit number	SAC	SSSI	CCW owned	SPA	LNR	Fishery order
<i>Traeth Lafan SSSI</i>						
8	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
9	✓	✓		✓	✓	

## 3. THE SPECIAL FEATURES

### 3.1 Confirmation of Special Features

<i>Designated feature</i>	<i>Relationships, nomenclature etc</i>	<i>Conservation Objective in part 4</i>
<i>SAC features</i>		
<b>Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:</b> Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide	The following SSSI features are a component part: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dwarf eel Grass (<i>Zostera noltei</i>)</li> <li>2. Moderately exposed sand</li> <li>3. Rockpools (pools and depressions in the mussel bed supporting hydroids or sea firs)</li> </ol>	[This feature is covered by the Y Fenai a Bae Conwy/ Menai Strait and Conwy Bay Reg 33 advice package]

<p><b>Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site:</b> Large shallow inlets and bays</p>	<p>The following SSSI features are a component part: 1. Eel Grass (<i>Zostera noltei</i>) 2. Moderately exposed sand 3. Rockpools (pools and depressions in the mussel bed supporting hydroids or sea firs)</p>	<p>[This feature is covered by the Y Fenai a Bae Conwy/ Menai Strait and Conwy Bay Reg 33 advice package]</p>
<p><i>SPA features</i></p>		
<p><b>ARTICLE 4.2 QUALIFICATION (79/409/EEC)</b> Over winter the area regularly supports: <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> (Europe &amp; Northern/Western Africa) 1.4% of the population in Great Britain 5 year peak mean 1991/92-1995/96</p>	<p>JNCC/EC SPA selection criteria</p>	<p>1</p>
<p><i>SSSI features</i></p>		
<p>Eel Grass (<i>Zostera noltei</i>)</p>	<p>This feature is covered by SAC feature “intertidal mudflats and sandflats”, see Reg 33 package.</p>	<p>[not complete]</p>
<p>Moderately exposed sand</p>	<p>This feature is covered by SAC feature “intertidal mudflats and sandflats”, see Reg 33 package.</p>	<p>[not complete]</p>
<p>Rockpools</p>	<p>This feature is covered by SAC feature “intertidal mudflats and sandflats”, see Reg 33 package</p>	<p>[not complete]</p>
<p>Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>)</p>	<p>[covered by SPA feature]</p>	<p>1</p>
<p>Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>)</p>		<p>[not complete]</p>
<p>Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>)</p>		<p>[not complete]</p>
<p>Red-breasted merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>)</p>		<p>[not complete]</p>
<p>Great crested grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>)</p>		<p>[not complete]</p>
<p>Running water</p>		<p>[not complete]</p>
<p>Saltmarsh</p>		<p>[not complete]</p>

### 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 below sets out the relationship between the special features and management units identified in this plan:

[management units relate to the Y Fenai a Bae Conwy/ Menai Strait and Conwy Bay Reg 33 package]

Traeth Lafan SSSI	Management unit	
	8	9
SAC	✓	✓
SSSI	✓	✓
SPA	✓	✓
<b>SAC features</b>		
Intertidal mudflats and sandflats	<b>KH</b>	<b>KH</b>
Reefs	<b>sym</b>	<b>sym</b>
Large shallow inlets and bays	<b>sym</b>	<b>sym</b>
<b>SPA features</b>		
Over wintering <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> (Oystercatcher)	<b>KS</b>	<b>KS</b>
<b>SSSI features</b>		
Redshank ( <i>Tringa totanus</i> )	<b>sym</b>	<b>sym</b>
Red-breasted merganser ( <i>Mergus serrator</i> )	<b>sym</b>	<b>sym</b>
Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide	<b>sym</b>	<b>sym</b>
Eel Grass ( <i>Zostera noltei</i> )	<b>sym</b>	<b>sym</b>
Moderately exposed sand	<b>sym</b>	<b>sym</b>
Rockpools	<b>sym</b>	<b>sym</b>
Oystercatcher ( <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> )	<b>sym</b>	<b>sym</b>
Curlew ( <i>Numenius arquata</i> )	<b>sym</b>	<b>sym</b>
Running water	<b>sym</b>	<b>sym</b>
Saltmarsh	<b>sym</b>	<b>Sym</b>
Great crested grebe ( <i>Podiceps cristatus</i> )	<b>sym</b>	<b>sym</b>

## 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<sup>1</sup>.

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 that have an important influence on the condition of the feature are identified in the performance indicators.

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<sup>1</sup> Web link: <http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-2199>

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#### 4.1 Conservation Objective for Feature 1: Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*)

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##### Vision for feature 1

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 5 year mean peak of the number of wintering oystercatchers is at least 4,000.
2. The abundance and distribution of cockles of 15mm or larger and other suitable food are maintained at levels sufficient to support the population with a 5 year mean peak of 4,000 individuals.
3. Oystercatchers are not disturbed in ways that prevent them spending enough time feeding for survival.
4. Roost sites, including high tide roost sites, remain suitable for oystercatchers to roost undisturbed.
5. The management and control of activities or operations likely to adversely affect the oystercatchers, is appropriate for maintaining the feature in favourable condition and is secure in the long term.

##### Performance indicators for Feature 1

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.

<i>Performance indicators for feature condition</i>		
<i>Attribute</i>	<i>Attribute rationale and other comments</i>	<i>Specified limits</i>
<b>A1.</b> Number of wintering oystercatchers	Annual WeBS data, to be compared with SPA baseline data 4,000, the 5 year mean peak between 1985/86-1989/90	<i>Upper limit:</i> n/a <i>Lower limit:</i> 4000
<b>A2.</b> The extent of intertidal flats and the broad-scale spatial distribution of their constituent sediment and community types is maintained		<i>Upper limit:</i> n/a <i>Lower limit:</i> As shown in map for SAC objectives for “mudflats and sandflats” and “large shallow bay” [See Y Fenai a Bae Conwy/ Menai Strait and Conwy Bay Reg 33 package]
<b>A3.</b> The abundance and distribution of cockles => 15mm are maintained at levels sufficient to support the population at 4,000 individuals.	To be ascertained by the CEH bird food model	<i>Upper limit:</i> n/a <i>Lower limit:</i> To be determined

<i>Performance indicators for factors affecting the feature</i>		
<i>Factor</i>	<i>Factor rationale and other comments</i>	<i>Operational Limits</i>
<b>F1.</b> Disturbance of roosting or feeding oystercatcher is not significant	Annual WeBS data, to be compared with SPA baseline data 4,000, the 5 year mean peak between 1985/86-1989/90	<i>Upper limit:</i> none set <i>Lower limit:</i> none Activities and developments which could cause significant disturbance should be controlled as far as is possible.
<b>F2.</b> High tide roost sites do not deteriorate in habitat quality and suitability for birds.	Annual WeBS data, to be compared with SPA baseline data 4,000, the 5 year mean peak between 1985/86-1989/90	<i>Upper limit:</i> none set <i>Lower limit:</i> $\geq 4000$ oystercatchers Grazed fields adjacent to the shore used as high tide roosts should be maintained and sightlines for the oystercatchers retained.

## **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.

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### **5.1 Conservation Status and Management Requirements of Feature 1: Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*)**

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#### **Conservation Status of Feature 1**

FAVOURABLE:

The most recent five-year peak mean from 2004/2005 is at 6,971 birds that is above the lower limit of 4,000 (Banks et al, 2006). The extent of intertidal flats and the broad-scale spatial distribution of their constituent sediment and community types have been maintained, as well as the abundance and distribution of oystercatcher prey species. This is ascertained due to the good level of birds, which are utilising the site. It also would appear that the birds have not been disturbed significantly; otherwise a reduction in population may well have occurred.

#### **Management Requirements of Feature 1**

The main risk to the population of oystercatchers at Traeth Lafan arises from human disturbance associated with the cockle fishery. CCW and other partners are actively working with the North West and North Wales Sea Fisheries Committee to ensure that any cockling is undertaken in a sustainable manner and in a way which does not cause unacceptable disturbance or loss of food resource to oystercatchers and other waders.

Management of the landward fringe of the site (which is not currently covered by SPA or SSSI designation) as an LNR with appropriate birdwatching hides and public access, provides some suitable high tide roosts. However there is open access to the shore and localised disturbance from people and

their dogs is difficult (or impossible) to control. Some of the high tide roosts are in fields close to the shore outside the SPA and LNR and it is important that these roosts are not subjected to excessive disturbance, particularly in periods of severe weather when the birds' energy reserves are low.

High tide roosting sites are characterised by having good sightlines (i.e. open spaces where the birds can see any potential predators). Any significant increase in grass height through cessation of grazing, in hedge height or changes by means of tree planting or installation of tall structures could impact on the roosts and consequently the oystercatcher population. This should be considered in assessing any plans or projects close to the shore.

Disturbance from increased or new types of recreation e.g. wind kites, small hovercraft etc could potentially threaten the oystercatchers but is mostly confined to the summer months and less likely to occur in the winter when they are roosting on Traeth Lafan.

## **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.

<b>Unit Number</b>	<b>CCW Database Number</b>	<b>Unit Name</b>	<b>Summary of Conservation Management Issues</b>	<b>Action needed?</b>
1	001760	Unit 8 - Traeth Lafan SPA in Fishery Order	<p>The import of mussels into the fishery has an associated risk of accidentally introducing non-native species.</p> <p>Ongoing issues with the management of the mussel fishery.</p> <p>It is therefore considered that there is some scope for improvement of management of certain activities within this unit.</p> <p>The SPA feature overwintering oystercatcher population is in favourable condition.</p>	Yes
2	001761	Unit 9 - Traeth Lafan SPA & SSSI	<p>Commercial gathering of cockles occurring seasonally on Traeth Lafan results in disturbance and damage to benthic habitats and species.</p> <p>Vehicular access (particularly quad bikes used to access the cockle fishery) has damaged sensitive benthic habitats and species on Traeth Lafan in the past. Efforts to restrict access, to avoid particularly sensitive areas of the foreshore and limit damage have been of some success.</p> <p>The SPA feature overwintering oystercatcher population is in favourable condition.</p> <p>It is therefore considered that there is some scope for restoration of areas and improvement of management of certain activities within this unit.</p>	Yes
21	002967	Traeth Lafan SPA and SSSI (outside SAC)	<p>The SPA feature overwintering oystercatcher population is in favourable condition. This unit is believed to be in appropriate conservation management.</p>	No

## **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<sup>2</sup>:

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 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.

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<sup>2</sup> See JNCC guidance on Common Standards Monitoring <http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-2272>

### **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**.<sup>3</sup>

### **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.

### **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.

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<sup>3</sup> A full definition of favourable conservation status is given in Section 4.

### **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**

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Cranswick, P.A., Waters, R.J., Evans, J. & Pollit, M.S. (1995) The Wetland Bird survey 1993-94: Wildfowl and Wader Counts (The Result of the Wetland Bird Survey in 1993-94) B.T.O., W.W.T., R.S.P.B. & J.N.C.C.