

Explanation Note

to the article 17 Habitat Directive Report from the Netherlands 2013 including remarks concerning QAQC.

In italic blue new text as a result of QAQC and/or audit trail end 2013

Annex A – General Report

Marine sites:

Only real coastal and salty sites are considered marine: Noordzeekustzone, Voordelta, Vlake van de Raan, Doggersbank, Klaverbank, Waddenzee and Eems-Dollard. We did not consider Westerschelde (mostly 1130) and Oosterschelde (mostly 1160) marine.

Annex B – species and Annex D – habitat types

Reasons for reported change in Conservation Status:

In the Netherlands changed methods and new knowledge have great influence on the Conservation Status, especially in the direction of a more unfavourable.

For species, the use of other methods and thresholds are the main cause of change. We are in the final stage of a process in which we define the FRVs less ambiguous and more scientific, based on ecological grounds. This results in many changes in the FRV's. This affects the assessment of the range, populations and/or future prospects, and thus the overall Conservation Status in some cases. The period of 12 years for the future prospects is more severe than we used in 2007. This results in an (even) worse future prospects for some species.

For some species we would have assessed the conservation status of 2007 differently, based on the FRVs we have now.

If the conservation status of a species has become worse because of a different FRV, this is indicated in 2.8.2. other information.

For the habitat types the main cause of changes is that we have more information and knowledge than in 2007. This has also changed the interpretation of some habitat types. The improved method of assessing structure and function, including typical species has a major impact on the conservation status of the habitat types. The new FRV's that we have in the preparation for the habitat types appear to have less influence on the conservation status than that of the species.

For both species and habitat types the trend in range, area, population and habitat of the species is always a real trend. If the trend is stable, there is in reality no difference between the reporting periods.

In the fields "reason for reported change" only the reason why the figure has changed between the reporting in 2007 and 2013 is indicated. Only if the reported trend is in the same direction as the change in figure "genuine change" is possible. In all other cases another method and/or difference in knowledge is the reason for the change.

The change in Conservation Status is indicated in the audit trail and in the free text field "other relevant information". This concerns the change in overall conservation status, not of the underlying parameters separately. Sometimes there are more causes for the change in conservation status. The main reason is given. This means first the main reason for the change from one conservation status to another (U1 to U2 for example), then the main reason for change of qualifier. The qualifiers were not used in 2007, so the reason for the change in qualifier is expert opinion ("would we have reported the same qualifier in 2007?").

Overlap between distribution/range and Natura 2000 sites (SDF):

In the QAQC there is a check on the overlap between distribution/range and Natura 2000 site designated for the species/habitat type. This check is performed with the database of October 2012. Some species and habitat types appear not to occur in certain sites (anymore). In 2013 the database is updated for almost half of the sites. By this update most of the in the QAQC mentioned gaps are solved. A few differences still occur because the SDF for the site has not been updated yet.

For migratory fish the marine region is not reported, only the rivers systems. That is the reason why coastal sites that are designated for these species are not in covered in the range.

Annex B – species

Occasional species are only reported by name and biogeographic region. Most other requested information is meaningless or impossible to gather for these species, because of their rare occurrence.

Species reported by genus are only reported by the obligatory fields name, biogeographic region and conservation status. Most other requested information is useless or impossible to gather for these species, because of their broad range.

Otter (*Lutra lutra*)

This species has been reintroduced. The reintroduction seems to be successful, but it is still work in progress. Therefore, and because the species is not yet officially occurring in the Netherlands according to Dutch law, the species is not on the reference list for the Netherlands yet. Subsequently, no SCI's are designated yet. For this reason we did not report the section about Natura 2000. The part of the population within Natura 2000 and measures taken in Natura 2000 are not filled in. This does not mean no measures are taken to protect the species. These measures concentrate on species protection (infrastructure, genetic variation, fishery methods). They are however not taken as Natura 2000 measures.

2.3.1. Range of a species

To estimate the range of a species we used 10x10 km grids (based on data of 1x1 km grids or 5x5 km grids) in the Dutch projection (RD - Rijksdriehoek) and the range tool with a gap distance of 10 km. Because of the high density of data and the size of the country a larger gap distance would have caused a range covering the Netherlands completely also for less common species.

For migratory fish species we filled the complete river systems where they occur. *We did not add the coastal (marine) zone, because it is unknown where these fishes occur in the sea.* For all marine species that may occur all over the Continental shell (but are not registered everywhere), we filled the whole Continental Shell. For both species groups we did not use the range tool.

The surface of the range is based on the RD maps and can differ from the surface calculated from the maps that are translated to ETRS projection.

2.3.9 + 2.3.14 Favourable reference values:

Since the 2007 report we worked on a better approach of the Favourable Reference Values (FRVs). For the Netherlands the year that the Directive came into force was 1994. So the basis of the new FRVs is always the requirement "at least 1994" (in accordance to DocHab-04-03-03 rev3). So the first step is to define if "1994" was favourable for range and population. If not: as "1994" must (all) at least be maintained, how much should be

added? First the FRP is assessed. This is as much as possible based on population dynamics: on the minimum viable population, as much as possible based on literature, and a expert judgement on the number of necessary metapopulations. If that was not possible (because not known for example), historic information and expert judgement is used. The FRR is based on the concept: "what range is needed to accommodate the FRP?". Sometimes in the FRP there is already a condition on geographical distribution, that is taken into account in the FRR.

The work on the FRVs is not completely finished yet. For that reason, we did not yet report the FRVs themselves, but (still) used operators. If the actual range or population is more than 10% (resp 25%) smaller than the FRV, we used the qualifier ">>", if the difference is smaller ">". If the actual range or population is the same as the FRV or larger we used "≈". Sometimes the FRV is smaller than the actual value, because the species increased since 1994. For the range it is not possible to indicate "<", for population "only for exceptions". We choose to use always "≈" for both "=" and "<".

We did use the FRVs from draft report in the assessment of the range and population. This is why several species now have a different Conservation Status than in 2007. Mostly this turns out to be less favourable.

Reference:

Ottburg, F.G.W.A. en C.A.M. van Swaay, in prep. Habitatrichtlijnsoorten in Nederland; Referentiewaarden voor populatiegrootte en range voor soorten van bijlage II, IV en V. Wageningen, Wettelijke Onderzoekstaken Natuur & Milieu, WOt-werkdocument xxx.

2.3.10+2.4.15 Reason for reported change and trends:

For the species a reported trend is always a real trend, based on statistic methods. For many species we have a monitoring network where trends are assessed, independent of absolute numbers.

The change between the figure of the range and population differs. Sometimes it is a real change. However, often it is a result of another method (for example use of the range tool), use of another unit for the population or use of other data. During this reporting period a national database for species is developed and many new and old observations are added daily from everywhere. This sometimes even means that the change in figure and the real trend from the monitoring network are opposite.

2.9.4 Future prospects:

For the species the future prospects are assessed using the method proposed in the guidelines. This sometimes means that future prospects for a species is more unfavourable than in 2007. In 2007 we assessed any indication on improvement in the future, near or close, more or less favourable. The 12 years for foreseeable future and the criterion that the parameter should be on or above FRV is more strict than that.

2.9 Use of qualifiers:

In 2007 we did not use the qualifiers for conservation status. Now we used it for parameters and overall assessment if conservation status of the parameter or overall assessment is U1 or U2.

Annex D – habitat types

2.3.1 Range of the habitat

To estimate the range of a habitat we used 10x10 km grids (based on data of 1x1 km grids or 5x5 km grids) in the Dutch projection (RD – Rijksdriehoek – except for the marine habitat types) and the range tool with a gap distance of 10 km. Because of the high density of data and the size of the country a larger gap distance would have caused a range covering the Netherlands completely also for less common habitat types.

The surface of the range is based on the RD maps (except for the marine habitat types) and can differ from the surface calculated from the maps that are translated to ETRS projection.

2.4.1 surface area of the habitat

We have also been working on estimating more accurate the present area of the habitat types. For all the SCI/SAC sites there are now vegetation maps that are being translated to habitat types maps. This results in many cases in an other, and better figure for the national area of the habitat type.

References:

Janssen, J.A.M., E.J. Weeda, P. Schipper, R.J. Bijlsma & J.H.J. Schaminée, 2012. Habitattypen in Natura 2000-gebieden. Beoordeling van oppervlakte, representativiteit en behoudsstatus in de Standard Data Forms (SDF). WOT-IN Werkdocument versie 1 december 2012.

Specific for 9120/9190:

Bijlsma, R.J., G.J. van Dorland, D. Bal & J.A.M. Janssen. 2010. Oude bossen en oude bosgroeiplaatsen. Een referentiebestand voor het karteren van de habitattypen Beuken-eikenbossen met hultst en Oude eikenbossen. Alterra-rapport 1967, Wageningen.

2.3.9 + 2.4.12 Favourable Reference Values:

Since the 2007 report we worked on a better approach of the Favourable Reference Values (FRV's). This is not completely finished yet. For that reason, we did not yet report the FRVs themselves, but (still) used operators. We did use the draft report in the assessment of the range and area.

For the Netherlands the year that the Directive came into force was 1994. So the basis of the new FRVs is always the requirement "at least 1994" (in accordance to DocHab-04-03-03 rev3). So the first step is to define if "1994" was favourable for range or area. If not: as "1994" must (all) at least be maintained, how much should be added? First the FRA is assessed. This is based on the trend since a historic reference (mostly 1950), on ecological variation, the conservation status of Structure & Function (based on SDF assessments) and the Red List status of typical species and plant communities that define the habitat type. Depending on the trends and status the degree of extension is determined. This also depends on if expansion of the area will help the typical species to become less threatened. The FRR is based on the concept: "what range is needed to accommodate the FRP?". Sometimes in the FRA there is already a condition on geographical distribution, that is taken into account in the FRR.

For two habitat types the FRA is considered less than actual. These habitat types, 2160 and 7120, may decrease in favour of more rare, species rich and priority habitat types.

Reference:

Janssen, J.A.M., R.J. Bijlsma, J.H.J. Schaminée & E.J. Weeda, in prep. Werkwijze vaststelling favourable reference values habitattypen. Versie 8, april 2013. Alterra concept rapport.

2.3.10 + 2.4.13 Reason for reported change and trends:

For habitat types there is too little information to determine trends in area or range. Because most habitat types have not changed much during the last 12 years, in most

cases area and range trend are assessed stable. Only if the expert knew there is an indication that there is a decrease or increase (for example a negative trend that is continuing for a long time already or large-scale nature development) the trend is negative or positive. If it is not certain the habitat type is stable, the trend is unknown. The change between the figure of the range is mostly a result of the use of the European range tool instead of the range tool we used in 2007. The area mostly differs because we now have better data on the area (see "present area of the habitat types) differs. Besides some interpretation of habitat type changed. This caused some changes in areas as well, for example for heathlands (2310 vs. 4030) and forests (9120 vs. 9190).

2.7 Assessment quality of the habitat type

The assessment of quality of the habitat type is based on two parameters: an assessment on the structures and function and on the typical species. The first is based on assessment of the degree of conservation in SDF for Natura 2000 sites, transformed into relative areas and scored as FV/U1/U2 at a national scale and on trends and measurements in samples (NEM/LMF). Typical species assessment is based on national Red List status of typical species transformed into FV/U1/U2 at national scale. If there are less than 4 typical species, only the exclusive and characteristic typical species are taken into account in expert judgement. If one typical species is recently (i.e. less than 50 years) extinct or in urgent danger of extinction, then the quality of the habitat type cannot be favourable.

The final S&F score is based on the most limiting S&F component (data analyses) and by considering the percentage area outside Natura 2000 (expert opinion).

References:

- Knecht, B. de, T. van der Meij, S. Hennekens, J.A.M. Janssen, W. Wamelink, in prep. Status en trend van structuur- & functiekenmerken van Natura 2000-habitattypen op basis van het Landelijk Meetnet Flora (LMF) en de Landelijke Vegetatie Databank (LVD). Achtergrondrapport voor de Artikel 17-rapportage Alterra/CBS. Concept WOT-rapport en Excel-bestand S&F habitattypen 3-12-2012.
- Bijlsma, R.J., J.A.M. Janssen & F.G.W.A. Ottburg, in prep. Einddoelen voor Natura 2000-kwaliteit. Concept Alterra-rapport en Excel-bestand S&F habitattypen op basis van SDF Behoudsstatus 11-12-2012 en Excel-bestand Typische soorten (sub)typen beoordeling 2-12-2012.

2.8 Use of qualifiers:

In 2007 we did not use the qualifiers for conservation status. Now we used it only for the overall assessment if the conservation is U1 or U2.