European Community Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (92/43/EEC)

Fourth Report by the United Kingdom under Article 17

on the implementation of the Directive
from January 2013 to December 2018

Supporting documentation for the
conservation status assessment for the habitat:

H1110 - Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time

NORTHERN IRELAND

IMPORTANT NOTE - PLEASE READ

- The information in this document is a country-level contribution to the UK Report on the conservation status of this habitat, submitted to the European Commission as part of the 2019 UK Reporting under Article 17 of the EU Habitats Directive.
- The 2019 Article 17 UK Approach document provides details on how this supporting information was used to produce the UK Report.
- The UK Report on the conservation status of this habitat is provided in a separate document.
- The reporting fields and options used are aligned to those set out in the European Commission guidance.
- Explanatory notes (where provided) by the country are included at the end. These provide an audit trail of relevant supporting information.
- Some of the reporting fields have been left blank because either: (i) there was insufficient information to complete the field; (ii) completion of the field was not obligatory; and/or (iii) the field was only relevant at UK-level (sections 10 Future prospects and 11 Conclusions).
- For technical reasons, the country-level future trends for Range, Area covered by habitat and Structure and functions are only available in a separate spreadsheet that contains all the country-level supporting information.
- The country-level reporting information for all habitats and species is also available in spreadsheet format.

Visit the JNCC website, https://jncc.gov.uk/article17, for further information on UK Article 17 reporting.

Report on the main results of the surveillance under Article 17 for Annex I habitat types (Annex D)

NATIONAL LEVEL

1. General information

1.1 Member State	**UK (Northern Ireland information only)**
1.2 Habitat code	**1110 - Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time**

2. Maps

2.1 Year or period	2013-2018
2.3 Distribution map	Yes
2.3 Distribution map Method used	Based mainly on extrapolation from a limited amount of data
2.4 Additional maps	No

BIOGEOGRAPHICAL LEVEL

3. Biogeographical and marine regions

3.1 Biogeographical or marine region where the habitat occurs	**Marine Atlantic (MATL)**
3.2 Sources of information	DAERA, 2018. Skerries and Causeway Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Condition Assessment 2018. Internal Document (hyperlink to follow). DAERA, 2018. Rathlin Island Coast Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Condition Assessment 2018. Internal Document (hyperlink to follow). DAERA, 2018. Murlough Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Condition Assessment 2018. Internal Document (hyperlink to follow). OSPAR, 2017. Extent of Physical Damage to Predominant and Special Habitats. https://www.ospar.org/documents?v=37641 JNCC, 2016. Method for creating version 2 of the UK Composite Map of Annex I Sandbanks slightly covered by seawater at all times. http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-3058 DAERA (formerly DARD), 2014. Inshore Fisheries Strategy. https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dard/final-inshore-fisheries-strategy.pdf DAERA, 2017. NI quota management rules. https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-quota-management-rules DAERA, 2018. Fishing gear selection which is allowed in Cod Recovery Zone to catch Nephrops but allow cod and other fish to escape while fishing. https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/guidance-daera-approved-highly-selective-fishing-gears DAERA, 2018. Inshore Fisheries Policy: https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/inshore-fisheries-policy DAERA, 2018 Sea Fisheries Conservation and Enforcement Programme https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/conservation-and-protection-enforcement-programme Seafish, 2018. Queen Scallop in Northern Ireland Waters, Management and Fisheries Risk Assessment. www.seafish.org/rass/do_pdf.php?id=6925&section=all JNCC, 2013. Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time H1110 NORTHERN IRELAND, 3rd Reporting Cycle. http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/pdf/Article17Consult_20131010/H1110_NORTHERNIRELAND.pdf DAERA, 2017. River Basin Management Plan WFD 2nd Cycle Classification Summary-North Channel. Internal Document

Report on the main results of the surveillance under Article 17 for Annex I habitat types (Annex D)

4. Range

4.1 Surface area (in km²)	1105.73
4.2 Short-term trend Period	
4.3 Short-term trend Direction	Stable (0)
4.4 Short-term trend Magnitude	a) Minimum b) Maximum
4.5 Short-term trend Method used	Based mainly on extrapolation from a limited amount of data
4.6 Long-term trend Period	
4.7 Long-term trend Direction	
4.8 Long-term trend Magnitude	a) Minimum b) Maximum
4.9 Long-term trend Method used	
4.10 Favourable reference range	a) Area (km²) b) Operator c) Unknown No d) Method
4.11 Change and reason for change in surface area of range	No change The change is mainly due to:
4.12 Additional information	

5. Area covered by habitat

5.1 Year or period	2006-2017		
5.2 Surface area (in km²)	a) Minimum	b) Maximum	c) Best single value 423.63
5.3 Type of estimate	Best estimate		
5.4 Surface area Method used	Based mainly on extrapolation from a limited amount of data		
5.5 Short-term trend Period	2007-2017		
5.6 Short-term trend Direction	Uncertain (u)		
5.7 Short-term trend Magnitude	a) Minimum	b) Maximum	c) Confidence interval
5.8 Short-term trend Method used	Based mainly on extrapolation from a limited amount of data		
5.9 Long-term trend Period			
5.10 Long-term trend Direction			
5.11 Long-term trend Magnitude	a) Minimum	b) Maximum	c) Confidence interval
5.12 Long-term trend Method used			
5.13 Favourable reference area	a) Area (km²) b) Operator c) Unknown No d) Method		
5.14 Change and reason for change in surface area of range	No change The change is mainly due to:		
5.15 Additional information			

6. Structure and functions

6.1 Condition of habitat	a) Area in good condition (km²)	Minimum 260.84	Maximum 260.84

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	b) Area in not-good condition (km²)	Minimum 121.44	Maximum 121.44	
	c) Area where condition is not known (km²)	Minimum 41.35	Maximum 41.35	
6.2 Condition of habitat Method used	Based mainly on extrapolation from a limited amount of data			
6.3 Short-term trend of habitat area in good condition Period	2007-2018			
6.4 Short-term trend of habitat area in good condition Direction	Stable (0)			
6.5 Short-term trend of habitat area in good condition Method used	Based mainly on extrapolation from a limited amount of data			
6.6 Typical species	Has the list of typical species changed in comparison to the previous reporting period?	No		
6.7 Typical species Method used				
6.8 Additional information				

7. Main pressures and threats

7.1 Characterisation of pressures/threats

Pressure	Ranking
Shipping lanes and ferry lanes transport operations (E02)	M
Shipping lanes, ferry lanes and anchorage infrastructure (e.g. canalisation, dredging) (E03)	M
Modification of coastline, estuary and coastal conditions for development, use and protection of residential, commercial, industrial and recreational infrastructure and areas (including sea defences or coastal protection works and infrastructures) (F08)	M
Marine fish and shellfish harvesting (professional, recreational) causing reduction of species/prey populations and disturbance of species (G01)	H
Marine fish and shellfish harvesting (professional, recreational) activities causing physical loss and disturbance of seafloor habitats (G03)	H

Threat	Ranking
Extraction of minerals (e.g. rock, metal ores, gravel, sand, shell) (C01)	M
Wind, wave and tidal power, including infrastructure (D01)	M
Shipping lanes and ferry lanes transport operations (E02)	M
Shipping lanes, ferry lanes and anchorage infrastructure (e.g. canalisation, dredging) (E03)	M
Modification of coastline, estuary and coastal conditions for development, use and protection of residential, commercial, industrial and recreational infrastructure and areas (including sea defences or coastal protection works and infrastructures) (F08)	M

Marine fish and shellfish harvesting (professional, recreational) causing reduction of species/prey populations and disturbance of species (G01)	M
Marine fish and shellfish harvesting (professional, recreational) activities causing physical loss and disturbance of seafloor habitats (G03)	M

7.2 Sources of information

7.3 Additional information

8. Conservation measures

8.1 Status of measures	a) Are measures needed?	Yes
	b) Indicate the status of measures	Measures identified and taken
8.2 Main purpose of the measures taken		Maintain the current range, population and/or habitat for the species
8.3 Location of the measures taken		Both inside and outside Natura 2000
8.4 Response to the measures		Medium-term results (within the next two reporting periods, 2019-2030)

8.5 List of main conservation measures

Adapt/manage extraction of non-energy resources (CC01)
Adapt/manage renewable energy installation, facilities and operation (CC03)
Manage/reduce/eliminate marine pollution from transport (CE04)
Manage changes in hydrological and coastal systems and regimes for construction and development (CF10)
Management of professional/commercial fishing (including shellfish and seaweed harvesting) (CG01)
Reduce bycatch and incidental killing of non-target species (CG05)

8.6 Additional information

9. Future prospects

9.1 Future prospects of parameters	a) Range
	b) Area
	c) Structure and functions

9.2 Additional information

10. Conclusions

10.1. Range

10.2. Area

10.3. Specific structure and functions (incl. typical species)

10.4. Future prospects

10.5 Overall assessment of Conservation Status

10.6 Overall trend in Conservation Status

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10.7 Change and reasons for change in conservation status and conservation status trend	a) Overall assessment of conservation status No change The change is mainly due to: b) Overall trend in conservation status No change The change is mainly due to:
10.8 Additional information	

11. Natura 2000 (pSCIs, SCIs, SACs) coverage for Annex I habitat types

11.1 Surface area of the habitat type inside the pSCIs, SCIs and SACs network (in km² in biogeographical/ marine region)	a) Minimum b) Maximum c) Best single value 119.88
11.2 Type of estimate	Best estimate
11.3 Surface area of the habitat type inside the network Method used	Based mainly on extrapolation from a limited amount of data
11.4 Short-term trend of habitat area in good condition within the network Direction	Stable (0)
11.5 Short-term trend of habitat area in good condition within network Method used	Based mainly on extrapolation from a limited amount of data
11.6 Additional information	

12. Complementary information

12.1 Justification of % thresholds for trends	
12.2 Other relevant information	

Distribution Map

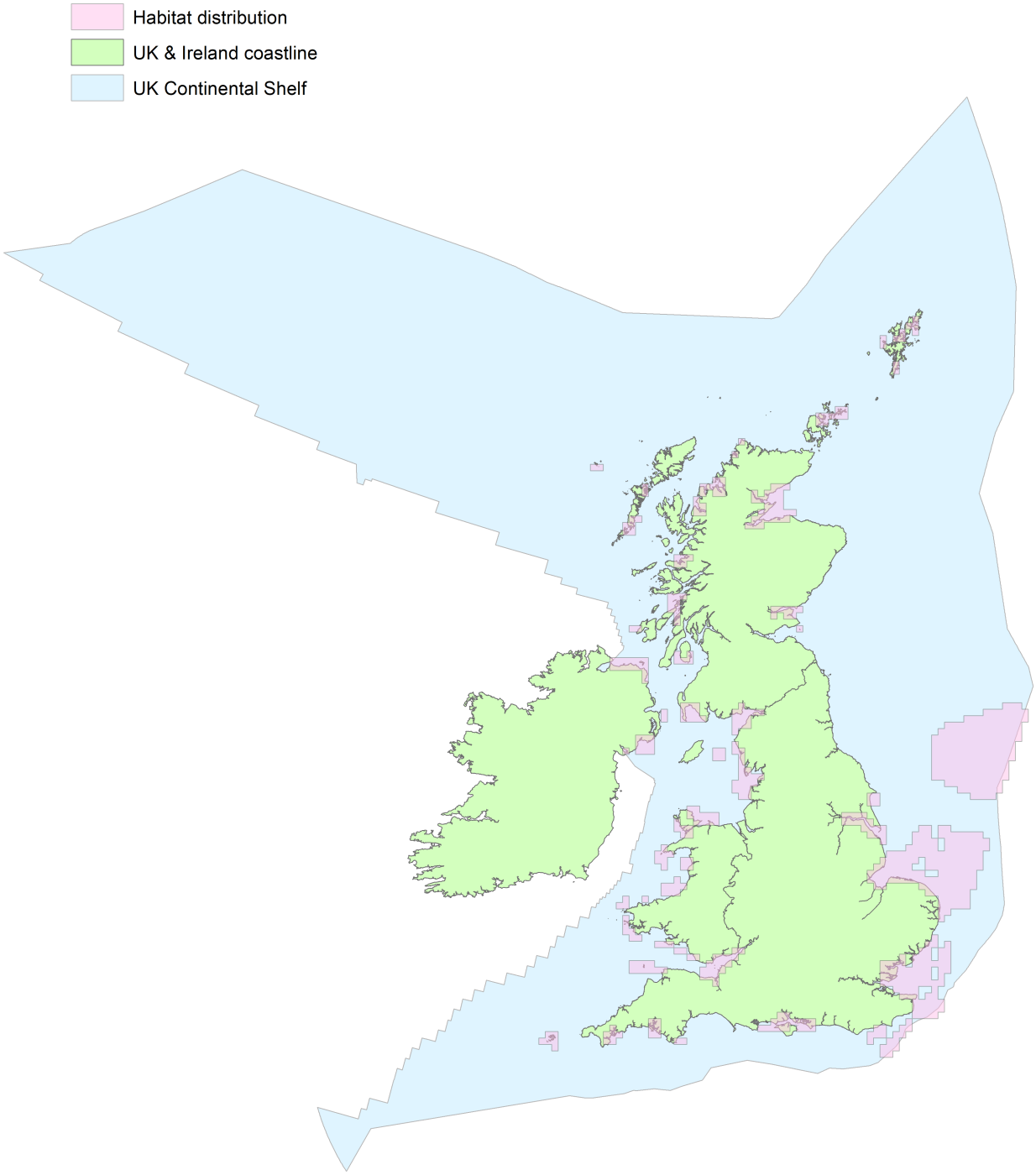

Figure 1: UK distribution map for H1110 - Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time.

The 10km grid square distribution map is based on available habitat records which are considered to be representative of the distribution within the current reporting period. For further details see the 2019 Article17 UK Approach document.

Range Map

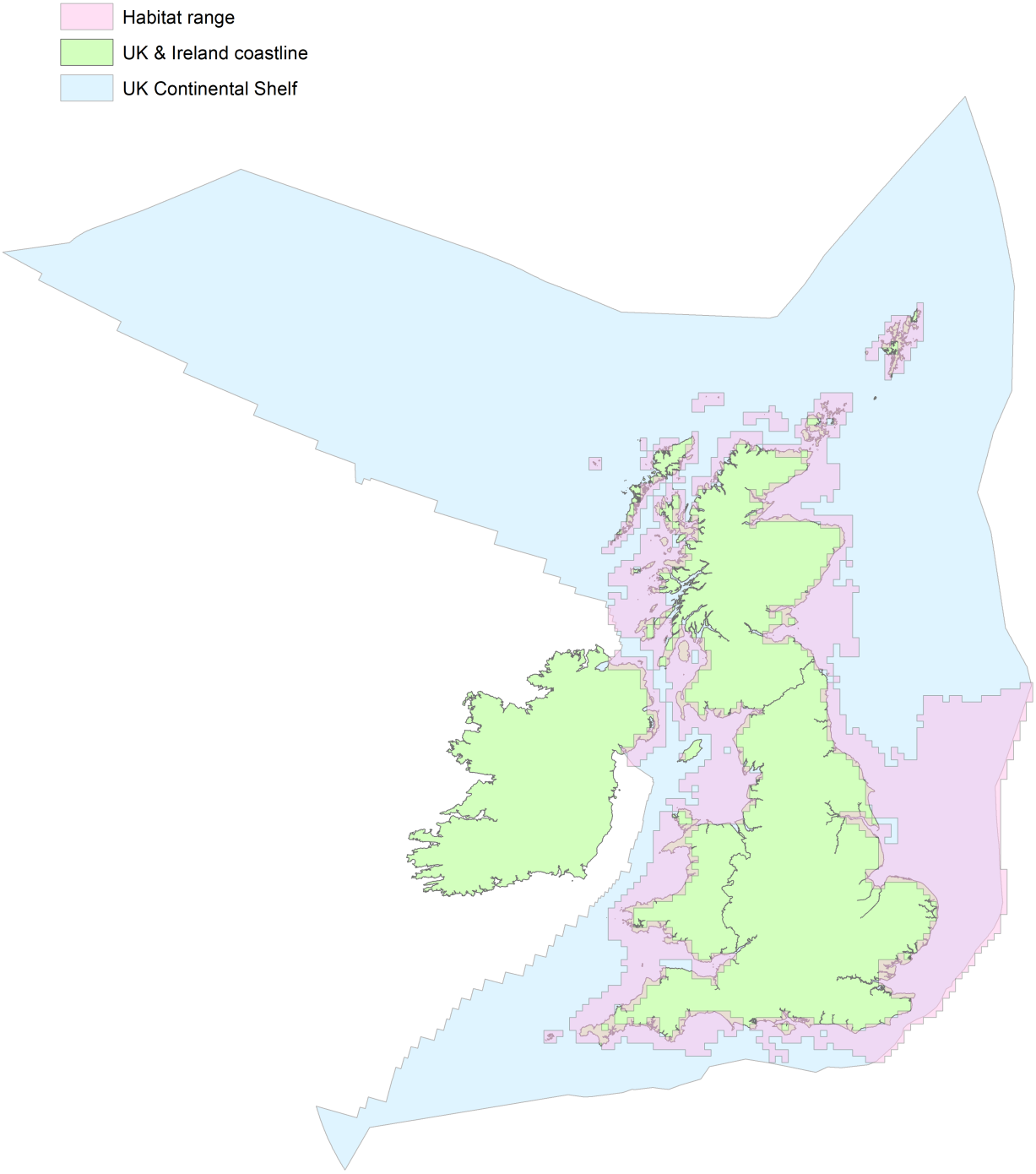

Figure 2: UK range map for H1110 - Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time.

Range was calculated by JNCC using mapped surface area of the habitat in addition to the area of sloping sandy sediment habitat down to 60m and connected to a sandbank in less than 20m of water. The 60m limit is equivalent to the deepest known sandbank contour (found at Dogger Bank SAC). Mapped data of the habitat has been created by combining existing data (i.e. sandbanks already mapped within SACs) with an analysis of bathymetric depth, slope and aspect and sediment data across UK waters' and is based on current best available evidence (JNCC, 2018a).

Explanatory Notes

Habitat code: 1110 Region code: MATL

Field label	Note
4.3 Short term trend; Direction	This was listed as 'Stable', after discussions with the Marine Habitats Expert Group, it was felt that although Sandbanks can change extent at a local level, its range (the geographic envelope in which it is located within NI & UK waters) is highly unlikely to have changed within this relatively short period of time.
4.11 Change and reason for change in surface area of range	There has been a comprehensive review of the Annex I Sandbanks slightly covered by seawater generated for 2013 report by JNCC. This review incoropated more accurate bathymetric tools to better define the Sandbank as defined by the Habitats Directive. This was QA'd be the individual SNCBs. In addition the boundary to the North was amended to agreed UKHO NI waters which reduced the range slightly to the North.
5.2 Surface area	This figure was provided by JNCC and was amended at the northern boundary to be in keeping with the agreed UKHO boundary line
5.6 Short term trend; Direction	Uncertain was chosen based on the fact that we do have data but not enough to idenitify a trend which is in line with EU Guidance.
5.14 Change and reason for change in surface area	See 4.11
6.1 Condition of habitat	Condition assessments carried out on Skerries & Causeway, Rathlin and Murlough SACs concluded that the designated Sandbank feature in these SACs was in 'Good Condition'. The BH3 Tool, developed by OSPAR and adapted by JNCC to incorporate biotope sensitivity to disturbance caused by surface and subsurface abrasion from demersal fishing activity, was used to identify the condition of Annex I Sandbanks outside the SACs.
6.4 Short term trend of habitat area in good condition; Direction	This was listed as 'Stable' for NI Sandbanks in Good Condition based on the management measures which were put in place since the last reporting cycle and the lack of any notable impacts to the SACs since 2007. The management measures include a Fisheries Regulation (2016) to ban on the use of mobile gear within the Rathlin Island SAC and a voluntary ban in Red Bay and zoned areas of Skerries and Causeway SAC while fisheries regulations are being developed & consulted on.
7.1 Characterisation of pressures/ threats	E02 & E03: Shipping lanes and ferry lanes transport operations including anchorage were identified as activities to which the Annex I Sandbanks in NI waters have medium risk of damage based on exposure and sensitivity. (The MarESA tool was used for this assessment).
7.1 Characterisation of pressures/ threats	D01: Wind, wave and tidal power, including infrastructure- a number of Annex I Sandbanks are located in, or adjacent to Offshore Renewable Energy Strategic Plan (ORESAP) 2012-2020 Tidal, Wind and Wave Resource Zones. This is an activity that Annex I Sandbanks have a medium risk of damage from based on exposure and sensitivity to the pressure. Under the Marine and Coastal Access Act any development which would impact the Annex I features would be subject to EIA through the Marine Licensing process.
7.1 Characterisation of pressures/ threats	F08: Modification of coastline, estuary and coastal conditions- This pressure in NI primarily covers repair/installation of shoreline reinforcement for roads, flood defences & coastal rail infrastructure. Under the Marine and Coastal Access Act licences are required for any activity in which the seabed is impacted. Using MarESA Sandbanks were shown to have medium risk of damage to pressures associated with this activity.

7.1 Characterisation of pressures/ threats	G01 & GO3: Marine fish and shellfish harvesting (professional, recreational) causing reduction of species/prey populations and disturbance of species & physical loss & disturbance of seabed habitats. This pressure was assessed as high in Sandbank areas which are associated with Scallop fishery in NI. Fisheries regulations have been put in place to protect the feature in Rathlin & Murlough SACs. While in Skerries and Causeway and Red Bay voluntary bans are in place while Fisheries Regulations are being drafted. Fish stocks are managed through quotas allocated to the 4 Devolved Administrations to ensure that fish stocks remain sustainable and to help reduce bycatch. In Northern Ireland DAERA, Sea Fisheries Team allocate the quotas and monitor fish landings through inspections at sea, in port and at fish markets to ensure compliance. Exploitation of Northern Ireland's inshore fisheries is mainly through pot fishing from comprises fishing vessels that target mostly shellfish such as crab (brown & velvet), lobster and prawns. Within the inshore region a number of gear restrictions apply to the Queen scallops fishery to try to reduce by-catch and, within the cod recovery zone, fishing has been incentivised through arrangements for gear selectivity with open panels to allow non-target fish to escape. An inshore fishery review carried out in 2013 resulted in a strategy for the inshore sector which is consistent with the delivery of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (2014-2020), Europe 2020 and the aim of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive for the achievement of Good Environmental Status by 2020.
7.1 Characterisation of pressures/ threats	C01: Extraction of minerals - Although we don't have any extraction at the moment the potential for future applications must be considered along with the risk of damage to Sandbanks which were assessed as having a medium risk of damage from this type of activity (MarESA). Any application for aggregate extraction will require a Marine License under the Marine and Coastal Access Act and an EIA would have to be completed to assess the impacts on the habitats in the vicinity of the proposed activity.
8.5 List of main conservation measures	CC01: Adapt/manage extraction of non-energy resources- Under the Marine and Coastal Access Act aggregate extraction from the seabed is a licencable activity and is subject to an EIA through the Marine Licensing process.
8.5 List of main conservation measures	CE04: Manage/reduce/eliminate marine pollution from transport- Anchorage areas can be designated in SACs to minimise the impact on the Sandbanks along with measures such as speed restrictions should they be deemed necessary by the Department. Two such anchorages have been charted to avoid damage to sensitive sandbank features such as Maerl & Seagrass beds in Rathlin SAC.
8.5 List of main conservation measures	CF10: Manage changes in hydrological and coastal systems and regimes for construction and development- New policy is currently being developed to consider the impact of coastal infrastructure and its affect on coastal processes which would include the stability of slightly submerged sandbanks.

8.5 List of main conservation measures	CG01 & CG05: Management of professional/commercial fishing (including shellfish and seaweed harvesting)- Fisheries regulations have been put in place to protect Sandbanks, a designated feature in Rathlin & Murlough SACs. While in Skerries and Causeway and Red Bay voluntary bans are in place while the appropriate fisheries regulations are being drafted. Fish stocks are managed through quotas allocated to the 4 Devolved Administrations to ensure that fish stocks remain sustainable and to help reduce bycatch. In Northern Ireland DAERA, Sea Fisheries Team allocate the quotas and monitor fish landings through inspections at sea, in port and at fish markets to ensure compliance. Exploitation of Northern Ireland's inshore fisheries is mainly through pot fishing from comprises fishing vessels that target mostly shellfish such as crab (brown & velvet), lobster and prawns. Within the inshore region a number of gear restrictions apply to the Queen scallops fishery to try to reduce by-catch and, within the cod recovery zone, fishing has been incentivised through arrangements for gear selectivity with open panels to allow non-target fish to escape. An inshore fishery review carried out in 2013 resulted in a strategy for the inshore sector which is consistent with the delivery of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (2014-2020), Europe 2020 and the aim of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive for the achievement of Good Environmental Status by 2020.
9.1 Future prospects of parameters	Stable as conservation measures put in place through management listed above will mitigate against the pressures and threats identified
11.1 Surface area of the habitat type inside the pSCIs, SCIs and SACs network	This figure was calculated by using GIS to clip the Sandbank Polygons provided by JNCC to all Marine SACs within NI waters.