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:

H1230 - Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts

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	**1230 - Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic Coasts**

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	**Atlantic (ATL)**
3.2 Sources of information	Data on aerial Nitrogen deposition taken from Air Pollution Information System website - http://www.apis.ac.uk/ Cooper, E.A., Crawford, I., Malloch, A.J.C. & Rodwell, J.S. (1992). Coastal vegetation survey of Northern Ireland. Lancaster, Lancaster University Environment and Heritage Service, Belfast. Northern Ireland Habitat Action Plan - Maritime Cliff and Slopes - March 2005 JNCC (1997). Coasts and seas of the United Kingdom, Region 17 Northern Ireland. Coastal Directories Series NIEA. Internal Condition Assessment Reports (various sites and years). Rodwell, J.S. (2000). British Plant Communities. Volume 5, Maritime Communities and Vegetation of Open habitats. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press Rodwell, J.S., Dring, J.C., Averis, A.B.V., Proctor, M.C.F., Malloch, A.J.C., Schaminee, J.H.J & Dargie, T.C.D. 1998. Review of Coverage of the National Vegetation Classification. Lancaster: Unit of Vegetation Science report to the Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

4. Range

4.1 Surface area (in km²)		
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		
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	

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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	2013-2018		
5.2 Surface area (in km²)	a) Minimum	b) Maximum	c) Best single value 3
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	2007-2018		
5.6 Short-term trend Direction	Stable (0)		
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	1994-2018		
5.10 Long-term trend Direction	Stable (0)		
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 2	Maximum 2
	b) Area in not-good condition (km²)	Minimum 0.45	Maximum 0.45
	c) Area where condition is not known (km²)	Minimum 0.65	Maximum 0.65
6.2 Condition of habitat Method used	Complete survey or a statistically robust estimate		
6.3 Short-term trend of habitat area in good condition Period	2013-2018		
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	Complete survey or a statistically robust estimate		
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			

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6.8 Additional information

7. Main pressures and threats

7.1 Characterisation of pressures/threats

Pressure	Ranking
Abandonment of grassland management (e.g. cessation of grazing or mowing) (A06)	H

Threat	Ranking
Abandonment of grassland management (e.g. cessation of grazing or mowing) (A06)	M
Sea-level and wave exposure changes due to climate change (N04)	M
Agricultural activities generating air pollution (A27)	M
Other invasive alien species (other then species of Union concern) (I02)	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, but none yet 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

Reinstate appropriate agricultural practices to address abandonment, including mowing, grazing, burning or equivalent measures (CA04)

Management, control or eradication of other invasive alien species (CI03)

Implement climate change adaptation measures (CN02)

Reduce/eliminate air pollution from agricultural activities (CA12)

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

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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	
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 1.75
11.2 Type of estimate	Best estimate
11.3 Surface area of the habitat type inside the network Method used	Complete survey or a statistically robust estimate
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	Complete survey or a statistically robust estimate
11.6 Additional information	

12. Complementary information

12.1 Justification of % thresholds for trends	
12.2 Other relevant information	

Distribution Map

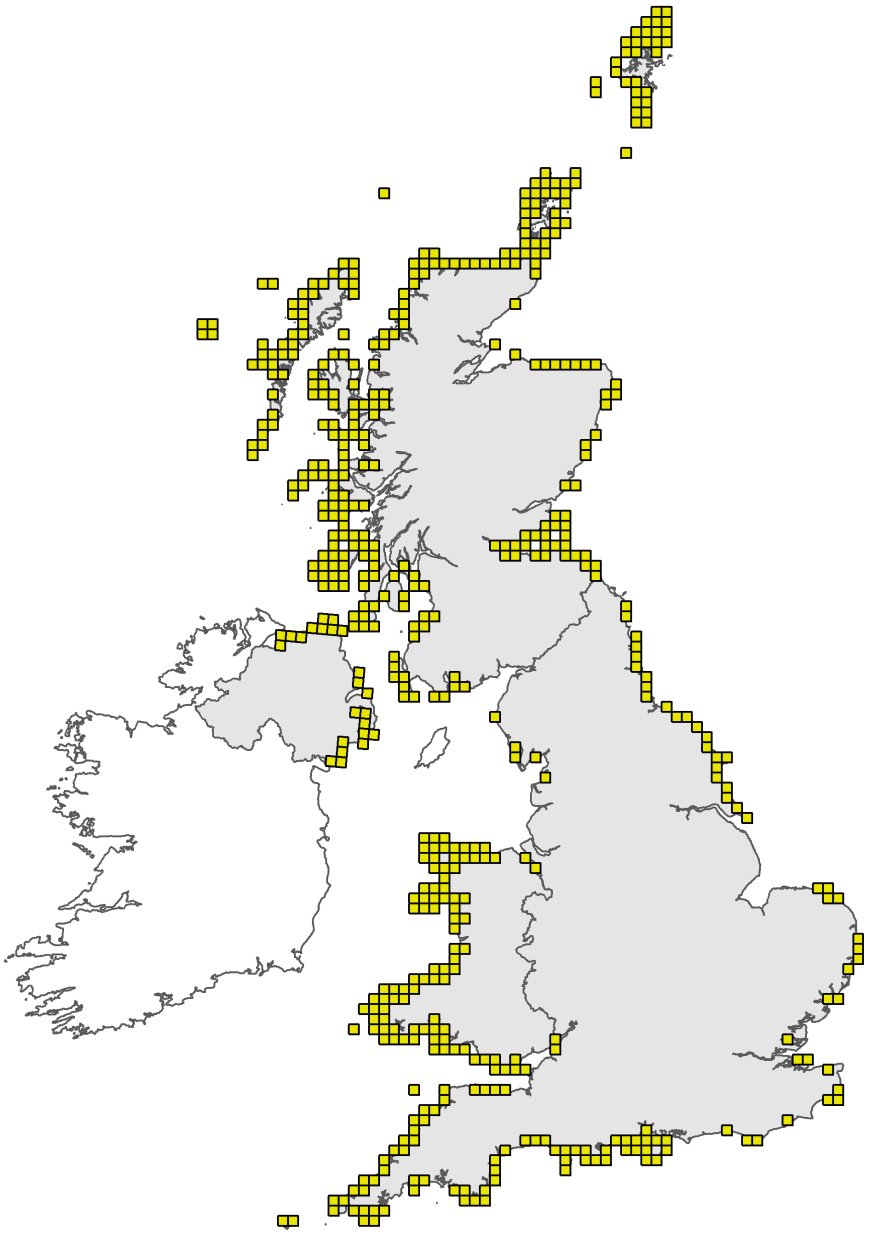

Figure 1: UK distribution map for H1230 - Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts. Coastline boundary derived from the Oil and Gas Authority's OGA and Lloyd's Register SNS Regional Geological Maps (Open Source). Open Government Licence v3 (OGL). Contains data © 2017 Oil and Gas Authority.

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

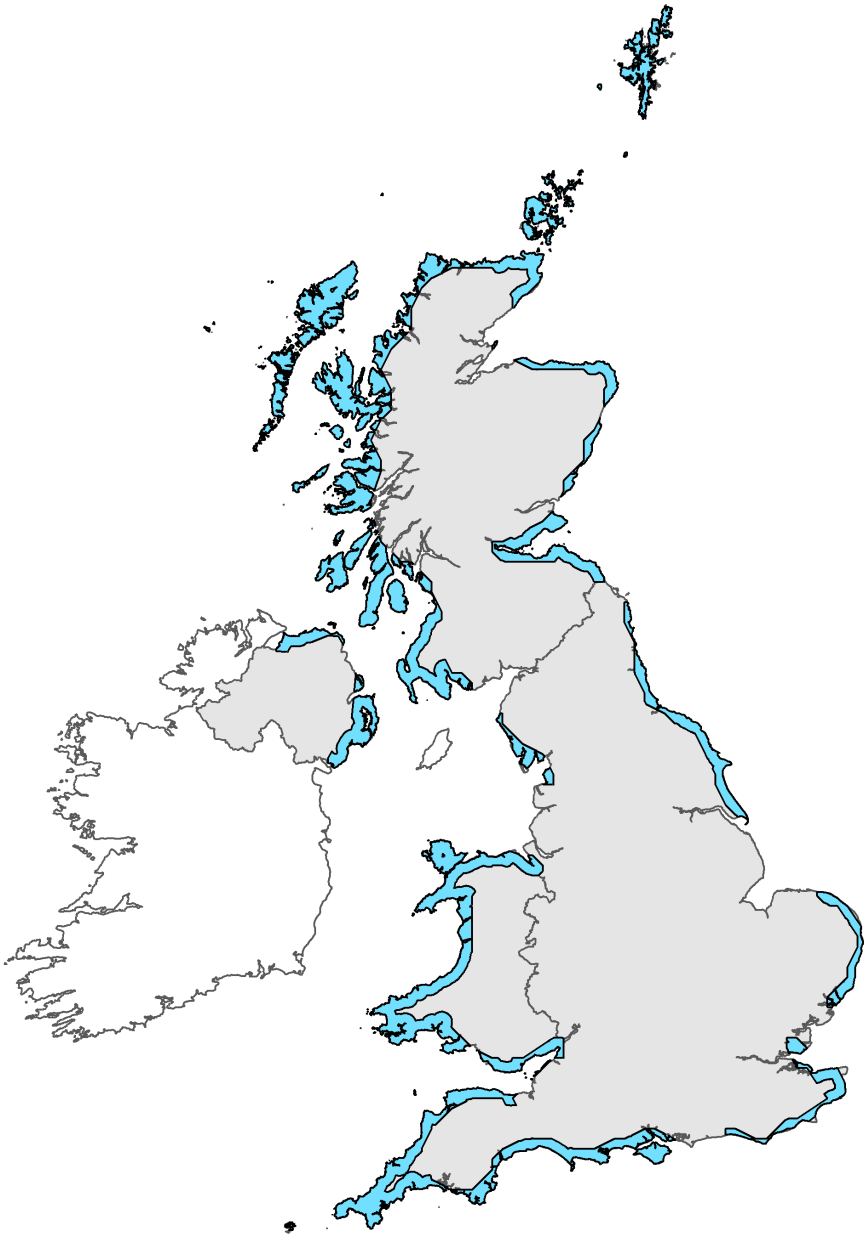

Figure 2: UK range map for H1230 - Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts. Coastline boundary derived from the Oil and Gas Authority's OGA and Lloyd's Register SNS Regional Geological Maps (Open Source). Open Government Licence v3 (OGL). Contains data © 2017 Oil and Gas Authority.

The range map has been produced by applying a bespoke range mapping tool for Article 17 reporting (produced by JNCC) to the 10km grid square distribution map presented in Figure 1. The alpha value for this habitat was 25km. For further details see the 2019 Article 17 UK Approach document.

Explanatory Notes

Habitat code: 1230

Field label	Note
2.2 Distribution map	In NI the habitat is frequent on the north and north-east coasts in particular. The complete resource has not been surveyed in detail. However, the NI Coastal Survey (Cooper et al, 1992) examined a number of sites around the coast and identified some significant ecological variants. Maritime cliff communities recorded by Coastal Survey: MC1 - Crithmum maritimum-Spergularia rupicola maritime crevice community (MC1c recorded from Giant's Causeway and w end of Rathlin); MC5 - Armeria maritima-Cerastium diffusum maritime therophyte community (best developed at Giant's Causeway; less commonly at Rathlin) - MC5a only recorded); MC6 - Atriplex hastata-Beta vulgaris sea-bird cliff community (mostly confined to Giant's Causeway and Rathlin); MC7 - Stellaria media birdcliff community (most extensively developed along the cliffs at Giant's Causeway and on Rathlin Island); MC8 - Festuca rubra-Armeria maritima maritime grassland community (again most extensively developed along the exposed slopes of the Giant's Causeway and Rathlin Island); MC9 - Festuca rubra-Holcus lanatus maritime grassland (quite a widespread and complex community, with a range of different sub-communities - some of them apparently unique to NI. Giant's Causeway in particular, Whitepark Bay and Rathlin contain the best developed examples of these). Note that the Annex 1 habitat forms part of the BAP Priority Habitat Maritime Cliff and Slope.
2.3 Distribution map; Method used	The maps are largely based upon the NI Coastal Vegetation Survey (1990) with subsequent fieldwork to confirm presence in these locations, plus other known locations.

Habitat code: 1230 Region code: ATL

Field label	Note
4.1 Surface area	The habitat is a robust one that is not easily lost. Therefore range believed to be stable over the short and long-term periods.
5.2 Surface area	Surface area estimated from known sites and extrapolation.
6.1 Condition of habitat	Structure and function assessed for the part of the resource that is within designated sites, including SACs (North Antrim Coast and Rathlin Island), plus those ASSIs where the Maritime Cliff and Slope selection feature conforms to the Annex 1 habitat definition (Ballycastle Coalfield, Carrickarade, Sheepland Coast and the Gobbins). Currently, some sites are in unfavourable condition and there is no reason to assume that the resource outside of designated sites is different.
7.1 Characterisation of pressures/ threats	Current and historic factors impacting on H1230 are relatively minor, as the habitat is robust, and often inaccessible to damaging management impacts. More accessible cliff-slopes benefit from light grazing to maintain species-richness, and changing agricultural practices have led to some areas being abandoned, or under-grazed. There may also be localised problems caused by invasive non-native species (e.g. Cotoneaster). Predicting the future impacts of climate change (including associated sea level rise and increased storminess) is more difficult and may lead to changes in species composition. Due to its steep nature, the habitat is generally well-buffered against the impacts of atmospheric Nitrogen deposition; furthermore, the habitat does not have an established critical load estimate available. However, the habitat includes a range of vegetation communities, and species-rich stands of the vegetation on more gently slopes (e.g. NVC types MC8, CG10, etc) may be vulnerable to eutrophication effects.
7.2 Sources of information	Threats and pressures information comes from Common Standards monitoring of the habitat at designated sites, which cover much of the resource in NI.

8.1 Status of measures	Some areas occupied by the habitat require a low level of grazing to maintain them, so the main measure is to re-introduce grazing, or encourage the maintenance of extensive grazing, where appropriate. Some of the sites are owned and managed by NIEA and other nature conservation bodies, so there is effective control of the management regime within these. Wider countryside measures to mitigate climate change impacts and reduce atmospheric Nitrogen are required.
8.2 Main purpose of the measures taken	This is a robust habitat that generally needs virtually no management (i.e. on sheer-sided cliffs) or low-intensity grazing (on less steeply sloping ground). Some of the sites need a marginal increase in grazing to maintain species-richness.
10.1 Range	The habitat is a robust one, and is difficult to destroy. There is no evidence of loss from any of the major sites for the habitat in NI. Therefore current range occupied by the habitat in NI judged favourable.
10.2 Area	The habitat is a robust one, and is difficult to destroy. There is no evidence of loss from any of the major sites for the habitat in NI. Therefore current area occupied by the habitat in NI judged favourable.
10.3 Specific structure and functions	The bulk of the habitat is in favourable condition at designated sites, and these include a significant amount of the resource in NI. Hence structure and function in NI are judged unfavourable inadequate.
10.4 Future prospects	Although many of the issues currently affecting the structure and function of the habitat can - and are likely to - be relatively easily addressed through management, future prospects are judged to be uncertain in the light of potential impacts of sea level rise and climate change, in addition to atmospheric deposition of Nitrogen.
10.5 Overall assessment of Conservation Status	Range and extent are both favourable. However, structure and function is unfavourable inadequate, and future prospects are uncertain, due to atmospheric Nitrogen and climate change (including potential impacts of sea-level rise); hence overall conservation status unfavourable inadequate.
11.1 Surface area of the habitat type inside the pSCIs, SCIs and SACs network	Habitat is present at two SACs - North Antrim Coast and Rathlin Island.
11.5 Short term trend of habitat area in good condition within the network; Method used	Area in good condition based upon recent condition assessment data.