

Supporting document

Methodology to Identify Surface Water Dependant Sites within the UK National Site Network that are in unfavourable condition due to water related impacts

Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.

Introduction

The process of identifying water dependant UK National Site Network Sites (formerly N2K sites), that are in unfavourable condition due to impacts from the water environment, is laid out below. Explanation of the method is given below. The process has been applied to sites which are designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or Special Protection Areas (SPAs).

1. NIEA Natural Environment Division (NED) identify all SAC/ SPA sites that conceptually may have some degree of water dependence, based on their feature designation.



2. NIEA NED provide summary of latest condition assessment for each site identified site in step 1 to NIEA Water Management Unit (WMU). The summary includes information on favourable/ unfavourable condition of the site and reason for unfavourable conditions.



3. WMU review sites with un-favourable condition assessments to identify those sites where pressures relate to the water environment.



4. WMU produce a list of sites that are un-favourable due to a potential water quality or quantity impact.

Review of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs)

In collaboration with Natural Environment Division (NED) within the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, a review was carried out to identify water dependant UK National Site Network Sites (formerly N2K sites) in Northern Ireland. NED identified any SAC/ SPA sites that conceptually may have some degree of water dependence, based on their feature designation.

Condition Assessments

A condition assessment is undertaken on each SAC to assess if the habitat and species interests of a designated site are meeting the objectives for which the site was declared. These condition assessments involve a detailed survey of each site involving significant resource and expertise. A survey is performed on each site once every six years. A site can be assessed on a range of different habitats and species interests. For wetland SACs, some of these are water related.

NED reviewed the most recent condition assessment results for the water dependant sites to identify any that have an unfavourable condition assessment. Each of these assessments was reviewed to identify if they are relevant to the water environment. For example, an unfavourable condition due to evidence of over-grazing is itself not directly relevant to the water environment.

Depending on the relevant unfavourable condition assessment for each site, it was determined if this was possibly due to an impact from a deterioration in water quality.



For further information:

Integrated Catchment Planning Team
NIEA Water Management Unit
17 Antrim Road, Tonagh, Lisburn Co. Antrim
BT28 3AL

Tel: 028 9263 3481

Email: catchmentplanning@daera-ni.gov.uk

www.daera-ni.gov.uk