
STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

2017 No. 1012

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

PART 1

Introductory and General Provisions

Interpretation

3.—(1) In these Regulations—

“the 1949 Act” means the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 ^{M1};

“the 2010 Regulations” means the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 ^{M2};

“the Offshore Marine Conservation Regulations” means the Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 ^{M3};

“the appropriate authority” means the Secretary of State in relation to England and the Welsh Ministers in relation to Wales (but see modifications of the meaning of that term in regulations 9(4) and 10(12)(a), and modifications of references to that term in regulations 69(1)(b), (3)(c), (5) and (8)(b), 97(6), 110(3)(b) and 112(3)(c)), and any person exercising any function of the Secretary of State or the Welsh Ministers;

“competent authority” is to be construed in accordance with regulation 7 (competent authorities);

“conservation” has the meaning given by Article 1(a) of the Habitats Directive (definitions);

“conservation status” and “favourable conservation status” have the meanings given by paragraphs (e) (in relation to habitats) and (i) (in relation to species) of Article 1 of the Habitats Directive;

“destroy”, in relation to an egg, includes doing anything to the egg which is calculated to prevent it from hatching, and “destruction” is to be construed accordingly;

“the devolved administrations” means the Welsh Ministers, the Scottish Ministers, and, in Northern Ireland, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs;

“the Directives” means the Habitats Directive and the new Wild Birds Directive;

“enactment” includes a local enactment and an enactment contained in subordinate legislation, and “subordinate legislation” has the same meaning as in the Interpretation Act 1978 ^{M4};

“English inshore region” means the area of sea within the seaward limits of the territorial sea adjacent to England;

“European marine site” has the meaning given by regulation 8(3) (European sites and European marine sites);

“European offshore marine site” means a European offshore marine site within the meaning of regulation 18 of the Offshore Marine Conservation Regulations (meaning of European offshore marine site);

“European site” has the meaning given by regulation 8;

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“functions” includes powers and duties;

“the Habitats Directive” means Council Directive [92/43/EEC](#) on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora ^{M5};

“land” includes land covered by water;

“local planning authority” means, except as otherwise provided, any authority having any function as a local planning authority or mineral planning authority under the TCPA 1990;

“management agreement” means an agreement made, or having effect as if made, under regulation 20 (management agreements);

“the Marine Act” means the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 ^{M6};

“marine area” means (subject to regulations 9(5) and 10(12)(b)) the English inshore region and the Welsh inshore region;

[^{F1}“the national site network” means the network of sites in the United Kingdom’s territory consisting of such sites as—

- (a) immediately before exit day formed part of Natura 2000; or
- (b) at any time on or after exit day are European sites, European marine sites and European offshore marine sites for the purposes of any of the retained transposing regulations;]

“Natura 2000” means the European network of special areas of conservation, and special protection areas under the old Wild Birds Directive or the new Wild Birds Directive, provided for by Article 3(1) of the Habitats Directive (network of special areas of conservation: Natura 2000) [^{F2}(but see paragraphs (10) and (11))];

“natural habitats” has the meaning given by Article 1(b) of the Habitats Directive;

“nature conservation body” and “appropriate nature conservation body” have the meaning given by regulation 5 (nature conservation bodies);

“the new Wild Birds Directive” means Directive [2009/147/EC](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council on the conservation of wild birds ^{M7};

“Northern Ireland inshore region” means the area of sea within the seaward limits of the territorial sea adjacent to Northern Ireland;

“officer”—

- (a) in relation to a body corporate, means a director, member of the committee of management, chief executive, manager, secretary or other similar officer of the body, and
- (b) in relation to an unincorporated body, means any member of its governing body or a chief executive, manager or other similar officer of the body;

[^{F3}“offshore marine area” has the meaning given by regulation 4(2) (Plans or projects relating to offshore marine area or offshore marine installations)]

“the old Wild Birds Directive” means Council Directive [79/409/EEC](#) on the conservation of wild birds ^{M8};

“priority natural habitat types” has the meaning given by Article 1(d) of the Habitats Directive;

“priority species” has the meaning given by Article 1(h) of the Habitats Directive;

“relevant authorities”, in relation to marine areas and European marine sites, is to be construed in accordance with regulation 6 (relevant authorities in relation to marine areas and European marine sites);

“relevant licensing body” has the meaning given by regulation 58 (relevant licensing body);

[^{F4}“the requirements of the Directives” is to be interpreted in accordance with paragraphs (3) and (4) of regulation 3A;]

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“research” includes inquiries and investigations;

[^{F5}“the retained transposing regulations”, means—

- (i) the Offshore Marine Conservation Regulations 2017 ;
- (ii) the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995;
- (iii) the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994; and
- (iv) these Regulations;

and “the other retained transposing regulations” means the retained transposing regulations other than these Regulations;]

“sample” means a sample of blood, tissue or other biological material;

“Scottish inshore region” means the area of sea within the seaward limits of the territorial sea adjacent to Scotland;

“sea” includes—

- (a) any area submerged at mean high water spring tide, and
- (b) the waters of every estuary, river or channel, so far as the tide flows at mean high water spring tide,

and any reference to an area of sea includes the bed and subsoil of the sea within that area;

“ship” means any vessel (including hovercraft, submersible craft and other floating craft) other than one which permanently rests on, or is permanently attached to, the seabed;

“site” has the meaning given by Article 1(j) of the Habitats Directive;

“site of Community importance” has the meaning given by Article 1(k) of the Habitats Directive;

“special area of conservation” has the meaning given by Article 1(l) of the Habitats Directive [^{F6}, and includes any such site designated after exit day under the retained transposing regulations;]

“specimen”—

- (a) for the purposes of Part 7 (enforcement), means any animal or plant, or any part of, or anything derived from, an animal or plant; and
- (b) for all other purposes has the meaning given by Article 1(m) of the Habitats Directive;

“statutory undertaker” means a person who is, or is deemed to be, a statutory undertaker for the purposes of any provision of Part 11 of the TCPA 1990 (statutory undertakers);

“the TCPA 1990” means the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 ^{M9};

[^{F7}“the United Kingdom’s territory” means the United Kingdom and the offshore marine area;]

“the WCA 1981” means the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 ^{M10};

“Welsh inshore region” means the area of sea within the seaward limits of the territorial sea adjacent to Wales;

“wild bird” means a bird which is—

- (a) a member of a species referred to in Article 1 of the new Wild Birds Directive (scope of the Directive); and
- (b) wild.

(2) The area of sea referred to in sub-paragraph (a) of the definition of “sea” in paragraph (1) includes waters in any area—

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- (a) which is closed, whether permanently or intermittently, by a lock or other artificial means against the regular action of the tide, but
 - (b) into and from which seawater is caused or permitted to flow, whether continuously or from time to time.
- (3) Terms not defined in paragraph (1) which are used in these Regulations and also in the Habitats Directive have the meaning they bear in that Directive.
- (4) In these Regulations, any reference to an Annex to the Habitats Directive is a reference to that Annex to that Directive [^{F8}as it had effect immediately before exit day, or as subsequently amended under regulation 144].
- (5) Subject to regulation 86(1) (which relates to the construction of provisions of Chapter 2 of Part 6 as one with the TCPA 1990), these Regulations apply to the Isles of Scilly as if the Isles were a county and the Council of the Isles were a county council.
- (6) Except as provided by paragraph (7), for the purposes of these Regulations—
- (a) any reference to England includes the English inshore region;
 - (b) any reference to Wales includes the Welsh inshore region;
 - (c) any reference to Scotland includes the Scottish inshore region;
 - (d) any reference to Great Britain includes the English inshore region, the Welsh inshore region and the Scottish inshore region;
 - (e) any reference to Northern Ireland includes the Northern Ireland inshore region; and
 - (f) any reference to the United Kingdom includes its internal waters and the English inshore region, the Welsh inshore region, the Scottish inshore region and the Northern Ireland inshore region.
- (7) Paragraph (6) does not apply for the purposes of—
- (a) in paragraph (1), the definitions of “English inshore region”, “Welsh inshore region”, “Scottish inshore region” and “Northern Ireland inshore region”;
 - (b) paragraph (8); or
 - (c) sub-paragraph (b) of the definition of “offshore marine area” in regulation 4(2).
- (8) For the purposes of these Regulations—
- (a) the territorial sea adjacent to England is so much of the territorial sea adjacent to the United Kingdom as is not the territorial sea adjacent to Wales, the territorial sea adjacent to Scotland or the territorial sea adjacent to Northern Ireland;
 - (b) “the territorial sea adjacent to Wales” is to be construed in accordance with article 6 of and Schedule 3 to the National Assembly for Wales (Transfer of Functions) Order 1999 ^{M11};
 - (c) “the territorial sea adjacent to Scotland” is to be construed in accordance with article 3 of and Schedule 1 to the Scottish Adjacent Waters Boundaries Order 1999 ^{M12}; and
 - (d) “the territorial sea adjacent to Northern Ireland” is to be construed in accordance with article 2 of the Adjacent Waters Boundaries (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 ^{M13}.
- (9) Nothing in these Regulations is to be construed as excluding the application of the provisions of Part 1 of the WCA 1981 (wildlife) in relation to animals or plants also protected under Part 3, 4 or 5 of these Regulations.
- [^{F9}(10) For the purposes of these Regulations, and any guidance issued before exit day by the appropriate authority or the appropriate nature conservation body, relating to the application of these Regulations, on or after exit day, references to “Natura 2000” (other than in this regulation) are to be construed as references to the national site network.

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(11) Paragraph (10) does not affect the interpretation of these Regulations as they had effect, or any guidance as it applied, before exit day.]

Textual Amendments

- F1** Words in [reg. 3\(1\)](#) inserted (31.12.2020) by [The Conservation of Habitats and Species \(Amendment\) \(EU Exit\) Regulations 2019 \(S.I. 2019/579\)](#), regs. 1, [4\(2\)\(a\)](#); 2020 c. 1, Sch. 5 para. 1(1)
- F2** Words in [reg. 3\(1\)](#) inserted (31.12.2020) by [The Conservation of Habitats and Species \(Amendment\) \(EU Exit\) Regulations 2019 \(S.I. 2019/579\)](#), regs. 1, [4\(2\)\(b\)](#); 2020 c. 1, Sch. 5 para. 1(1)
- F3** Words in [reg. 3\(1\)](#) inserted (31.12.2020) by [The Conservation of Habitats and Species \(Amendment\) \(EU Exit\) Regulations 2019 \(S.I. 2019/579\)](#), regs. 1, [4\(2\)\(c\)](#); 2020 c. 1, Sch. 5 para. 1(1)
- F4** Words in [reg. 3\(1\)](#) inserted (31.12.2020) by [The Conservation of Habitats and Species \(Amendment\) \(EU Exit\) Regulations 2019 \(S.I. 2019/579\)](#), regs. 1, [4\(2\)\(d\)](#); 2020 c. 1, Sch. 5 para. 1(1)
- F5** Words in [reg. 3\(1\)](#) inserted (31.12.2020) by [The Conservation of Habitats and Species \(Amendment\) \(EU Exit\) Regulations 2019 \(S.I. 2019/579\)](#), regs. 1, [4\(2\)\(e\)](#); 2020 c. 1, Sch. 5 para. 1(1)
- F6** Words in [reg. 3\(1\)](#) inserted (31.12.2020) by [The Conservation of Habitats and Species \(Amendment\) \(EU Exit\) Regulations 2019 \(S.I. 2019/579\)](#), regs. 1, [4\(2\)\(f\)](#); 2020 c. 1, Sch. 5 para. 1(1)
- F7** Words in [reg. 3\(1\)](#) inserted (31.12.2020) by [The Conservation of Habitats and Species \(Amendment\) \(EU Exit\) Regulations 2019 \(S.I. 2019/579\)](#), regs. 1, [4\(2\)\(g\)](#); 2020 c. 1, Sch. 5 para. 1(1)
- F8** Words in [reg. 3\(4\)](#) substituted (31.12.2020) by [The Conservation of Habitats and Species \(Amendment\) \(EU Exit\) Regulations 2019 \(S.I. 2019/579\)](#), regs. 1, [4\(3\)](#); 2020 c. 1, Sch. 5 para. 1(1)
- F9** [Reg. 3\(10\)\(11\)](#) inserted (31.12.2020) by [The Conservation of Habitats and Species \(Amendment\) \(EU Exit\) Regulations 2019 \(S.I. 2019/579\)](#), regs. 1, [4\(4\)](#); 2020 c. 1, Sch. 5 para. 1(1)

Marginal Citations

- M1** 1949 c. 97.
- M2** [S.I. 2010/490](#), as amended by [S.I. 2011/603](#), 625, 2012/630, 2012/635, 637, 1927, 2013/755 (W. 90), 2015/377, 2020 and 2016/1154.
- M3** [S.I. 2017/1013](#).
- M4** 1978 c. 30. See section 21 of that Act for the meaning of “subordinate legislation”.
- M5** OJ No. L 206, 22.7.1992, p.7, as last amended by Council Directive 2013/17/EU (OJ No. L 158, 10.6.2013, p.193).
- M6** 2009 c. 23.
- M7** OJ No. L 20, 26.1.2010, p.7, as last amended by Council Directive 2013/17/EU (OJ No L 158, 10.6.2013, p.193).
- M8** OJ No. L 103, 25.4.1979, p.1; the old Wild Birds Directive was repealed by the new Wild Birds Directive.
- M9** 1990 c. 8.
- M10** 1981 c. 69.
- M11** [S.I. 1999/672](#), to which there are amendments not relevant to these Regulations. These provisions continue to have effect as if made under section 158(3) of the [Government of Wales Act 2006 \(c. 32\)](#), by virtue of paragraph 26(3) of Schedule 11 to that Act.
- M12** [S.I. 1999/1126](#).
- M13** [S.I. 2002/791](#).

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Changes and effects yet to be applied to the whole Instrument associated Parts and Chapters:

Whole provisions yet to be inserted into this Instrument (including any effects on those provisions):

- reg. 41(2)(aa) inserted by [2023 c. 55 Sch. 8 para. 38\(5\)](#)
- reg. 108(6) inserted by [2023 c. 55 Sch. 8 para. 39\(6\)](#)
- reg. 111(2)(aa)(ab) substituted for reg. 111(2)(a)(b) by [2023 c. 55 Sch. 8 para. 40\(3\)\(a\)](#)