**Frequently asked questions**

Questions and replies on nature reporting.

This note provides additional guidance related to selected questions form Member States on the Article 12 and Article 17 reporting process.

Relevance for the Article 12 or Article 17 reporting is marked as follows:

🐦 relevant for Article 12 bird reporting

🐞 relevant for Article 17 species reporting

🌻 relevant for Article 17 habitats reporting

Contents

[Incomplete data 3](#_Toc5626309)

[Only data from a part of habitat area /species population are available (08/2018) 3](#_Toc5626310)

[Population size 3](#_Toc5626311)

[Reporting population size in case it is not possible to distinguish between the two HD species (08/2018) 3](#_Toc5626312)

[Area covered by habitat 4](#_Toc5626313)

[Surface area for caves (08/2018) 4](#_Toc5626314)

[Surface area for cliffs (03/2019) 4](#_Toc5626315)

[Condition of habitat 4](#_Toc5626316)

[Incomplete data on habitat condition area – only minimum estimates available (03/2019) 4](#_Toc5626317)

[Short-term trend of habitat area in good condition for habitats with area in good condition = 0 km2 (04/2019) 5](#_Toc5626318)

[Information related to Annex V (Article 17) / Annex II (Article 12) species 5](#_Toc5626319)

[What should constitute ‘hunting bag’ numbers (02/2018) 5](#_Toc5626320)

[Trends 6](#_Toc5626321)

[Small losses in area covered by habitat (05/2018) 6](#_Toc5626322)

[Only old data on breeding distribution trends are available (03/2019) 6](#_Toc5626323)

[Progress in work related to international Species Action Plans (SAPs), Management Plans (MPs) and Brief Management Statements (BMSs) 7](#_Toc5626324)

[International Action Plans in preparation (05/2018) 7](#_Toc5626325)

[Species with several action/management plans (05/2018) 7](#_Toc5626326)

[Assessing effectiveness of the international species plan where national plan linked to the international is not available (03/2019) 8](#_Toc5626327)

[Main pressures and threats 9](#_Toc5626328)

[Use of pressure/threat categories in the reported list of pressures/threats (04/2019) 9](#_Toc5626329)

[Grazing by non-agricultural herbivores (02/2018) 9](#_Toc5626330)

[Are reported pressures season specific or do they cover whole lifecycle of a species? (02/2018) 10](#_Toc5626331)

[Pressures from outside the Member State for migrating birds? (05/2018) 10](#_Toc5626332)

[Pressures and threats related to climate change (05/2018) 11](#_Toc5626333)

[Pressures and threats related to invasive alien species (05/2018) 12](#_Toc5626334)

[Conservation measures 13](#_Toc5626335)

[Use of measures categories in the reported list of conservation measures (04/2019) 13](#_Toc5626336)

[Reporting for passive conservation measures (which were not intended to mitigate pressure) (02/2018) 14](#_Toc5626337)

[Reporting conservation measures when only some measures needed had been taken (08/2018) 15](#_Toc5626338)

[Reporting conservation measures when only some measures needed had been taken II (03/2019) 16](#_Toc5626339)

[Main purpose of measures taken – selecting main reason where there are several objectives of measures taken (04/2019) 16](#_Toc5626340)

[Conservation measures targeting invasive alien species(05/2018) 16](#_Toc5626341)

[Conservation status and trend in conservation status 17](#_Toc5626342)

[Trend in conservation status for 2 stable and 1 unknown trends (08/2018) 17](#_Toc5626343)

[Reasons for change in conservation status and conservation status trend , if they are assessed as ‘unknown’ for example due to lack of recent data (04/2019) 17](#_Toc5626344)

# Incomplete data

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## Only data from a part of habitat area /species population are available (08/2018)

*For submarine structures made by leaking gases (H1180) and Submerged or partially submerged sea caves (H8330) we are unable to estimate the area of the habitats. Could you advise on how we could answer Section 6.1 area of habitat in good / not good condition?*

*I suggest that we could either report unknown or we could report a minimum area condition based on those areas that we do have data for.*

*This is the case also for some terrestrial habitats*

**Reply (31/08/2018)**

In situations where the information on habitat area (or other equivalent fields) is only available from a partial survey and it is not possible to derive more accurate figures covering entire habitat area/population by modelling or based on expert opinion it is still preferable that the values available are provided in respective minimum fields (unless it is known based on expert opinion that these are severe underestimates of the actual values) and leave the maximum fields empty.

Depending on uncertainty of the estimate the Methods used (field 6.2) should be either ‘c) Based mainly on expert opinion with very limited data’ or ‘d) Insufficient or no data available’.  Any details and explanations that could help to understand the uncertainty of minimum estimates should be provided as Additional information (field 6.8)

# Population size

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## Reporting population size in case it is not possible to distinguish between the two HD species (08/2018)

*In the case of two maerl species (Lithothamnium coralloides and Phymatholithon calcareum) it has become clear that it isn’t possible to distinguish between the species unless genetic techniques are used.*

*We can either submit one report documenting both species or two identical reports. What would be the best approach?*

**Reply (31/08/2018)**

In general, for cases where distinction between two close species is problematic and only field estimates covering both species are available, Member States are encouraged to provide the species specific breakdown (including figures to be reported and all assessments) using the original joint estimates and expert judgement or modelling based on any other relevant environmental information or partial surveys (including e.g. genetic analysis helping to estimate the relative proportion of two species).

Exceptionally, if the reliable breakdown is impossible same values can be provided for both problematic species. This option should preferably be avoided if this will lead to a significant overestimations of e.g. population size or range of one or both species (for example if population size is reported as number of 1x1km grids, and it is known that the most of the grids host only one of two species). If joint values/assessments are provided an appropriate explanation (including the species names of species concerned) should be provided in the field Additional information for each section where the joint value or assessment is provided. Ideally this explanation should contain any information that can clarify the relative proportion of e.g. population size between two species. The Method used should reflect the fact that actual figures reported are an approximation and should be *‘b) based mainly on extrapolation from a limited amount of data*’ or ‘*c) based mainly on expert opinion with very limited data’* respectively.

If none of this is possible the information will be reported as ‘unknown’.

In principle, unless opposite is stated in the guidelines, it is not possible to submit joint report for two or more species.

# Area covered by habitat

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## Surface area for caves (08/2018)

*For sea caves (habitat 8330) there aren’t area values available, so experts have proposed that the number of sea caves in good/not good condition could be reported instead. Could you advise on whether this is an option for us and if this could then be used to inform the conclusion for the structure and functions parameter?*

*The same applies for habitat 8310 Caves not open to the public.*

**Reply (31/08/2018)**

Yes, number of sea caves can be used as a proxy to inform the conclusion on e.g. Structure and functions. However, the number of caves should not be reported in the fields ‘5.2 Surface area’ or ‘6.1 Condition of habitat’ as these two fields relates explicitly to area in km2, so it may be very confusing later when displaying or using your information. In case the Structure and functions assessment is based on number of caves, any details (like number of caves with good or not good conditions) should be provided in the field 6.8 Additional information.

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## Surface area for cliffs (03/2019)

*Was there an exception to using km2 for Area for sea cliffs? We used km in 2013*

**Reply (11/03/2019)**

The guidance for reporting surface area covered by habitat did not change from past period. The surface area should be reported in km2 for all habitats (including cliffs and caves). This applies also to the surface area of habitat in good or not good condition (under Structures and functions).

Regarding the assessment of status (of Area and Specific structure and functions), please see an earlier FAQ for caves. A similar approach (using km as the length measurement for assessments but recording extrapolated area in km2) can be used for cliffs, if the area measure is not available and if using lengths will give more accurate assessments (supposing that for all three values, area covered by habitat, habitat area in good/not good condition and favourable reference area, the extrapolation method and precision will be the same).

# Condition of habitat

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## Incomplete data on habitat condition area – only minimum estimates available (03/2019)

*For submarine structures made by leaking gases (H1180) and Submerged or partially submerged sea caves (H8330) we are unable to estimate the area of these habitats nationally. Could you advise on how we could answer Section 6.1 area of habitat in good / not good condition? We could either report unknown or we could report a minimum area condition based on those areas that we do have data for.*

**Reply (11/03/2019)**

In situations where the information on habitat area (or other equivalent fields) is only available from a partial survey and it is not possible to derive more accurate figures covering the entire habitat area/population by either modelling or based on expert opinion, it is still preferable that the values available are provided in respective minimum fields (unless it is known, based on your expert opinion, that these are severe underestimates of the actual habitat areas)  and leave the maximum fields empty.

Depending on the uncertainty of the estimate the Methods used (field 6.2) should be either ‘c) Based mainly on expert opinion with very limited data’ or ‘d) Insufficient or no data available’.  Any details and explanations that could help to understand the uncertainty of minimum estimates should be provided as Additional information (field 6.8)

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## Short-term trend of habitat area in good condition for habitats with area in good condition = 0 km2 (04/2019)

*When there is 0 km2 in good condition in 6.1 it is difficult to report trend on area in good condition 6.4*

**Reply (02/04/2019)**

For habitats with ‘area in good condition’ equal to 0 km2, but for which the ‘area in good condition’ was higher than 0 km2 around the start of the short-term trend period (i.e. around 2007; but perhaps even earlier if the decline was recorded earlier e.g. from2000) the short-term trend should be reported as ‘decreasing’. The trend period should capture the period from when the decline was recorded.

On the contrary for habitats for which ‘area in good condition’ equal to 0 km2 for the long-term (well before 2007, which is the recommended start of the short-term trend period), trend information is not expected. As this is considered a marginal situation the validation rules in the reporting tool and on CDR are not adapted and validation in the tool / Automatic QA on CDR will trigger ‘mandatory information missing’ error. These error messages can be ignored.

Further details can be provided infield 6.8 Additional information.

# Information related to Annex V (Article 17) / Annex II (Article 12) species

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## What should constitute ‘hunting bag’ numbers (02/2018)

*Should the killing of species, which, strictly speaking, is not done under hunting provisions and thus cannot be referred to as ‘hunting’ (e.g. predator control, culling or taking of species for health, safety or property protection), be included in ‘Hunting bag’ statistics in fields 10.2 of the Art 12 format and 3.3 of the Article 17 format?*

**Reply (15/02/2018)**

**Article 17:** field *‘3.3 Hunting bag or quantity taken in the wild for mammals and Acipenseridae (fish)’* only concerns Annex V species; all individuals that are hunted/fished, culled or taken from the wild should be accounted for regardless of the motivation.

However, individuals taken under Article 16 derogations should not be reported in field 3.3, for which a separate reporting procedure exists.

**Article 12:** For Annex II bird species the ‘hunting bag statistics’ to be reported in field ‘*10.2 Hunting bag’* should inform about the additional direct species mortality due to hunting referred to in the Article 7 of the Directive and is restricted to relevant Annex II species.

Individuals (from any bird species) taken under Article 9 derogations should not be reported in field 10.2, for which a separate reporting procedure exists.

# Trends

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## Small losses in area covered by habitat (05/2018)

*If we decide to consider losses in area as negligible, for example once off losses that occur a couple of sites that is <0.07% per annum, and not use it to contribute towards the trend in Overall status should we:*

1. *Assign the Short-term trend (field 5.6) as “decreasing” but include text in Justification of % thresholds for trends (field 12.1) to state that the loss is considered negligible*
2. *Assign the Short-term trend (field 5.6) as “stable” and be transparent about the negligible loss in Additional information (field 5.15)*

*This may have implications if short term trends are being examined at a biogeographic level where there are not cross checked with field 12.1.*

**Reply (16/05/2018)**

As for Article 12, we suggest that the criteria used to decide whether a trend should be categorised as ‘stable’, ‘increasing’, or ‘decreasing’ varies depending on the type of trend information available.

If trend data are robust and they allow statistically significant modelling, but very small trend (e.g. if the confidence limits do not overlap zero and are narrow enough to allow for a high degree of confidence) even small trends should be reported as directional trends (‘decreasing’ or ‘increasing’). In your concrete example the fact that the status assessment deviates from the matrix rules (status cannot be favourable if trend is decreasing) due to negligible trend magnitude should be explained as you suggested in the field ‘*12.1 Justification of % thresholds for trends*’.

On the other hand, if the data quality is not good enough and it is not possible to model a statistically significant directional trend (confidence limits do overlap zero), the trend should be considered and reported as stable. Any further details can be provided in the corresponding field ‘*Additional information’*.

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## Only old data on breeding distribution trends are available (03/2019)

*The latest Breeding Bird Atlas was published 2011 (data collected 2006-2010). In the previous Art 12 reporting (2013) this atlas data was used for the breeding distribution trend estimates. Since then, no new atlas or other similar data on breeding distributions has been produced. Therefore, breeding distribution trends to be reported (2019) will be based on identical dataset with 2013 report.*

*Do we need to report the breeding distribution trends for each species via the reporting tool or can we make a collective statement which indicates that the breeding distribution trends and the years are the same already reported in 2013?*

**Reply (11/03/2019)**

Yes, Member States are expected to report the 'old' breeding distribution trends (with the long-term trend period still relating to the end years of the latest Breeding Bird Atlas ( i.e. 1980–2010)). Only data provided in the Member State’s official delivery will be used in further analysis so there is a need to repeat the delivery of information.

The entries for the short-term breeding distribution trends will presumably be largely 'unknown'/'absent data'. However we encourage you, whenever possible, to report the distribution short term trend using other information or expert opinion. For example, where more recent, species-specific studies provide insights into recent trends or, in the case of very rare/localised breeders, knowledge of former/existing breeding locations may allow a simple comparison (e.g. breeding was known at three sites in 2007 and was still occurring at same three sites in/around 2018, so the short-term distribution trend is essentially stable) the trend direction can be assessed using this information with expert opinion.

# Progress in work related to international Species Action Plans (SAPs), Management Plans (MPs) and Brief Management Statements (BMSs)

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## International Action Plans in preparation (05/2018)

*On the Reporting Portal, in the last updated version of the "List of species with international or multilateral plans" (and in the Guidelines), some plans are specified as "in preparation". Does the section 6 of the report format ("Progress in work related to international SAPs, MPs and BMSs") need to be completed for these plans? There might not be much information available concerning plans that have not been implemented yet...*

**Reply (16/05/2018)**

The 'List of species with international or multilateral plans' includes several species with the most recent action plan 'in preparation'. This concerns two sets of action plans[[1]](#footnote-1); the plans developed under the EuroSAP project and CMS's multi-species vulture action plan. The final versions of most of the plans under EuroSAP project will be published in May (the Tracking Tool of the project indicates that they will all be available on "31 May 2018"). The CMS's multi-species vulture action plan was approved at the CMS COP12, see Resolution 12.10 from 22/11/2017 (<http://www.cms.int/en/document/conservation-african-eurasian-vultures-0>)

The CMS's multi-species vulture action plan covers the final year of the reporting period 2013- 2018. Although it is possible that Member States will not have had time to adopt national plans linked to this international plan (field 6.2), it is likely that they are taking measures that relate to the actions recommended in the plan (question 6.3) and if not this can be explained in the field 6.3. The reporting for the section 6 is expected for species covered by the multi-species vulture action plan.

The action plans developed under EuroSAP project will cover only a small part of the reporting period 2013- 2018 (from June 2018) so it is unlikely that the specific national action plan or specific measures related to actions in the plans will have been taken. The EuroSAP plans were included in the table for information and reporting for section 6 of the report format is not expected (not mandatory) for the species concerned. If relevant, Member States could provide the information in the field 6.3 and/or 6.4 on the optional basis.

The table "List of species with international or multilateral plans" in the reference portal will be updated accordingly.

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## Species with several action/management plans (05/2018)

*For the species concerned by several plans (for example, Limosa limosa, with a BMS and a SAP), does section 6 need to be completed for each plan (twice in this case)? Or do the informations have to be reported together in one section 6 (then for example, the response to "6.1 Type of international plan" would have to be both BMS and SAP) ?*

**Reply (16/05/2018)**

The reporting format does not foresee multiple entries for the section 6, which should only be filled once for each species, even if these are concerned by multiple action/management plans (this is the case of 3 vulture species for which there is a recent CMS’s multispecies actions plan and the previous European action plan; *Limosa limosa* with EU management plan and AEWA species action plan and several species under EuroSAP project).  (Reporting for section 6 is not mandatory in relation to action plans developed under EuroSAP project. However, Member States can provide information for the field 6.3 and the assessment under field 6.4 in case the plan updates previous action/management plan.)

* For species with several plans the field '6*.2 Has a national plan linked to the international SAP/MP/BMS been adopted?*’ should be ticked ‘*yes*’ if there is currently a valid national action plan(s) related to either of international plans. The link(s) should be provided in the field 6.6.
* ‘*6.3 If ‘NO’, describe any measures and initiatives taken related to the international SAP/MP/BMS*’ should describe measures taken in relation to plan(s) for which there is no corresponding national action plan.  This can also include measures related to international action plans under EuroSAP project.
* The assessment of effectiveness of the action/management plans in fields ‘6*.4 Assessment of the effectiveness of SAPs…*’ and ‘*6.5 Assessment of the effectiveness of MPs…*’ relates to the status of the species in relation to objectives of the plans. In the case of several plans for one species, the objectives outlined in the plans often complement each other therefore a single assessment is normally possible. For the specific case of *Limosa limosa,* which has both MP and SAP, both fields should be filled in.

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## Assessing effectiveness of the international species plan where national plan linked to the international is not available (03/2019)

*How we should handle the following question: For most species it will be indicated in our national report under Annex B 6.2, that a species action plan has not been adopted nationally. In such cases it is impossible to assess the effectiveness of the internation plan. An assessment of population size, trends and/or range could only reflect other factors driving population trends but not the effectiveness of the internation SAP (or MP respectively) if no national plan has been established.*

**Reply (11/03/2019)**

As suggested in the Explanatory notes and guidelines information for fields '6.4 Assessment of the effectiveness of SAPs for globally threatened species...)' and ‘6.5 Assessment of the effectiveness of MPs for huntable species in non-Secure status ...), this should be reported for all species listed in Table 2 of the guidelines (the table was later updated and latest version is provided on Art 12 reference portal (<http://biodiversity.eionet.europa.eu/activities/Reporting/Article_12/Reports_2019/Files_2019/list_type_plans_v3%20final.docx> )).

The ‘cause and effect’ link between a national species plan implementation and improvement of a species status cannot be easily established. Even for species with a corresponding national plan which had been to a large extent implemented and where there was sufficient time for populations to respond to measures, the cause and effect relation, can rarely be proved. Furthermore, there are many species for which the national action plan hasn't been fully implemented or the implementation is too recent to trigger any positive response.

Field ‘6.2 Has a national plan linked to the international SAP/MP/BMS been adopted’ highlights cases where the corresponding national plan has been adopted (this can be a very recent plan, some species have very recent international plans). Independently from information reported in this field, fields 6.4 and 6.5 inform on the improvement of the status of a species (looking at high level objectives from international species plans); they highlight cases where an improvement has been observed in comparison to the baseline status in the international plan.

# Main pressures and threats

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## Use of pressure/threat categories in the reported list of pressures/threats (04/2019)

*Can pressure categories* (e.g. A Agriculture) *be used to provide information on Pressures and threats?*

**Reply (02/04/2019)**

The Explanatory notes and guidelines requests that pressures/threats codes at the second level of the hierarchical list are used to provide information in ‘Characterisation of pressures/threats: a) Pressure/threat’ (8.1a or 7.1a)

In the [List of pressures and threats](http://biodiversity.eionet.europa.eu/activities/Reporting/Article_17/Reports_2019/Files_2019/Pressures_Threats_Final_20180507.xls)available on the reference portals the pressures are classified into several measure categories (e.g. A Agriculture). Using pressure categories (e.g. A Agriculture) in 8.1a or 7.1a ‘Characterisation of pressures/threats: a) Pressure/threat’ is not permitted, only pressures/threats with 3 digit codes at level two of the hierarchical list (e.g. ‘A01’) can be used.

The pressure categories are not included in the ‘threats’ data dictionary (<http://dd.eionet.europa.eu/vocabulary/art17_2018/threats/view> ) and the CDR validation will trigger blockers if these are used in the reported data (it won’t be possible to submit the national report via CDR).

Unfortunately, the reporting tool does not prevent the entry of pressure categories for 8.1a or 7.1a ‘Characterisation of pressures/threats: a) Pressure/threat’. Special caution though should be paid by data coordinators to ensure that these pressure categories are not used in the national dataset. Reporters are advised to use ‘Run QA’ function of the tool, which highlights the invalid use of pressure categories

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## Grazing by non-agricultural herbivores (02/2018)

*We would like to query how recording the impact of grazing non-agricultural herbivores such as deer, hares and rabbits should be categorised (2 possibilities below). We would have used K04.05 Damage by herbivore species (including game species) in the last round.*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ***L06*** | ***L*** | *Interspecific faunal and floral relations (competition, predation, parasitism, pathogens,)* |
| ***I04*** | ***I*** | *Problematic native plants & animals* |

**Reply (15/02/2018)**

Reporting for pressures and threats in this reporting round focuses on activities. So, if a pressure (e.g. damage by herbivores) can be linked to one or more activities, these should be reported rather than non-specific pressures such as *'L06 Interspecific relations (competition, predation, parasitism, pathogens)'* or *'I04 Problematic native species'*. In the example above, if the damage by herbivores is mainly due to problems associated with management of game species (e.g. very high populations of game species due to feeding and other measures to favour game species) *'G08 Management of fishing stocks and game'* should be used.

If the damage caused by herbivores cannot be associated with any specific activity/activities on the pressure list, *'I04 Problematic native species'* should be used if the game species population is out of balance due to a series of past and present human activities, such as game management together with diverse pressures from forestry and agriculture. However, *'L06 Interspecific relations (competition, predation, parasitism, pathogens,)'* is to be used for damage caused by herbivores but where there is no association with or impact as a result of human activities.

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## Are reported pressures season specific or do they cover whole lifecycle of a species? (02/2018)

*How to report pressures and threats if reporting for e.g. passage season. Should the pressures reported cover the whole lifecycle or just the passing phase?*

**Reply (15/02/2018)**

The Explanatory note and guidelines already specifies that ‘*For sedentary Annex I species only one report , based on breeding season data, is requested (breeding report), but pressures and threats and conservation measures (reported under Sections 7 and 8) should cover the whole year, not only pressures or measures specific to the breeding season.’*

For Annex I and other SPA trigger species with different breeding populations wintering and/or passage populations within the Member State, separate reports for breeding, wintering and/or passage season are expected according to the guidelines. In this case, the breeding report will only contain the pressures and threats and the conservation measures relevant for the breeding population, as pressures and threats and conservation measures for wintering or passing populations will be reported for another season.

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## Pressures from outside the Member State for migrating birds? (05/2018)

*Number of issues relating to the allocation of Pressures and Threats for migrant species, away from the Member State:*

1. *We know that many Afro-Palearctic migrant passerines that breed in UK are affecting by land-use and other issues on their non-breeding grounds in Africa. These factors determine the trends of the UK breeding populations of these species.*
2. *Although the factors operate on the non-breeding grounds they determine the size and trends of the breeding population. So should we list these are Pressures and/or Threats for the breeding population? Or for the non-breeding population? Or both?*
3. *Do we also report Pressures and/or Threats for migrant species in the non-breeding season (away from UK) where it is less clear that the birds concerned are actually part of the UK population? Examples include factors affecting seabirds in the Baltic where it is uncertain that the birds concerned actually are UK breeding birds. We presume not, but would welcome confirmation.*
4. *With factors operating away from the Member State, do we report these as Xe, Xo and/or a locational code (1-4) against a specific P&T? A factor could be both location code 2 (outside the EU) or code Xe (pressures and threats from outside the EU).*
5. *What is the difference between codes Xe (P&T from outside the EU territory) and Xo (P&T from outside the Member State)? Some (but not all) Xo will also be Xe. Thus factors operating in Africa will be both Xe and Xo. Should we report both these?*

**Reply (16/05/2018)**

**Questions 1 & 2:** In general, for migratory species the pressures (in any season) that are affecting the population (breeding, wintering or passage) being reported on should be included in the report in question. Therefore, pressures that are acting in the non-breeding seasons (e.g. on passage in other EU Member States and/or on wintering grounds outside the EU) but are affecting the breeding population being reported on, should be reported in the breeding-season report of the species in question. (Note also that unless the species is a partial migrant, having both sedentary and wintering/passing populations in UK, and/or there is another subspecific population that replaces the breeding one during the winter, there shouldn't be a wintering/passage report.)

**Question 3:**If there is significant doubt that pressures operating outside the MS (although known to act on a species globally) are actually affecting birds from a UK-breeding population (e.g. there is a significant doubt that the UK-breeding birds does winter in / migrate through the Baltic) they should not be reported for this species.

**Questions 4 & 5**: Pressures ‘*Xe - Threats and pressures from outside the EU territory’* and ‘ *Xo - Threats and pressures from outside the Member State*’ are to be used only in the Article 17 reports; they are not relevant for the Article 12 reports as the information on whether a pressure is acting within or outside the Member State (or within or outside the EU) should be provided for each reported pressure/threat in the specific field ‘c) Location’ (for pressures) and ‘e) Location’ (for threats).

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## Pressures and threats related to climate change (05/2018)

1. *The Climatic Atlas of European Breeding Birds models future breeding distributions for Europe’s avifauna and for many species predicts major changes at national level. For UK, we are likely to lose many of our northern/montane breeding birds through northwards shift of distributions. We wish to include this information as Threat for many relevant species (and as a Pressure for some) but are unclear which code to apply.*

*N08 says “Change of species distribution (natural newcomers) due to climate change”. This seems inappropriate, as we presume “natural newcomers” means the code is capturing information about the arrival of new species that may likely compete with the species in question. So we presume this does not cover shifting distribution of the existing species.*

*We are currently using N01 “Temperature changes due to climate change” to capture changing actual/potential distributions, as the least worst alternative since none of the other N codes seem to cover the scenario. But actually N01 does not really seem appropriate either. From the point of view of consistency, we would welcome advice on how to code this please.*

1. *On a related issue, we have a number of species where there we have ongoing change of migration phenology and/or distribution (short-stopping). Again it’s unclear how to code this. This is probably the theoretical situation above actually currently occurring (e.g. as a Pressure rather than as a Threat). How also to code this*

**Reply (16/05/2018)**

**Question 1:** In general, pressure reporting focuses on activities. Climate change is a special case as it is rather an impact of other activities. The pressures listed in this category correspond to environmental stresses (pressures strictly speaking) to which species and habitats are/can be exposed. As for other pressure categories when reporting pressures related to the climate change the most specific ‘cause’ should be selected from the list. So, if the changes in the species distribution are mainly due to temperature changes, then the code ‘*N01 Temperature changes (e.g. rise of temperature & extremes) due to climate change*’ should be selected. If the changes of species distribution are due to a complex of events (changes in temperature plus changes in precipitation), then code ‘*N05 Change of habitat location, size, and / or quality due to climate change*’ should be used (i.e. where ‘habitat’ is not restricted to habitat type but should be understood more broadly as abiotic and biotic conditions).

For information, the list of pressures related to climate change are:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *N01* | *Temperature changes (e.g. rise of temperature & extremes) due to climate change* |
| *N02* | *Droughts and decreases in precipitation due to climate change* |
| *N03* | *Increases or changes in precipitation due to climate change* |
| *N04* | *Sea-level and wave exposure changes due to climate change* |
| *N05* | *Change of habitat location, size, and / or quality due to climate change* |
| *N06* | *Desynchronisation of biological / ecological processes due to climate change* |
| *N07* | *Decline or extinction of related species (e.g. food source / prey, predator / parasite, symbiot, etc.) due to climate change* |
| *N08* | *Change of species distribution (natural newcomers) due to climate change* |
| *N09* | *Other climate related changes in abiotic conditions* |

**Question 2:** Using the same logics as above, if changes in species migration phenology and distribution are due to ‘temperature changes’ like warmer autumns, milder winters, it is suggested to use ‘*N01 Temperature changes (e.g. rise of temperature & extremes) due to climate change*’.

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## Pressures and threats related to invasive alien species (05/2018)

*Please can I ask what the conclusion was at the Expert Group on Reporting meeting on 9th March on the reporting of IAS pressures/threats, given that there were late changes in the pressure/threat list. I recall this is something raised by Axel (DE) at the meeting after the changes were presented.*

*The UK 'data capture spreadsheets' that we created in December '17/January '18 used the following codes (which are the codes which the habitat/species specialists will be currently using across England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and offshore marine for the 2019 reporting):*

***I01*** *Invasive alien species of Union concern*

***I02*** *Other invasive alien species (other than species of Union concern)*

***I03*** *Other alien species (not invasive)*

***I04*** *Problematic native plants & animals*

*The revised pressure/threat lists are:*

***I01*** *Invasive alien species of Union concern*

***I02*** *Other invasive alien species (other than species of Union concern)*

***I03*** *Plant and animal pathogens and pests*

***I04*** *Problematic native species*

*There was short debate at the EGR meeting about what Member States should do (as a result of these changes), although no conclusion was made as far as I recall and I thought ETC/BD were asked to clarify what should be done. The main problem is the change to pressure I03 (and the corresponding new conservation measure CI04). CI04 is now 'Controlling and eradicating plant and animal pathogens and pests' whereas the UK is currently recording CI04 as its former descriptor 'CI04: Management, control or eradication of other alien species'.*

*Prior to the updated EU list, invasive pathogens may well have been coded to L06 (Interspecific relations (competition, predation, parasitism, pathogens)).*

*Please could you clarify:*

* *What is the list you would like MS to use?*
* *Explain briefly what changes were made and why - the rationale and the implications of the merger of previous P/T codes?*
* *How we might accommodate these changes in UK reporting (and for other MS which had already started their assessments) and account for this. It would not be popular to have to ask UK specialists to redo their assessments of P/T and CMs, so we are looking for a solution.*

**Reply (16/05/2018)**

**Question 1:** The Member States are expected to use the pressure list and list of conservation measures which are currently on the reference portal[[2]](#footnote-2). Both lists were last updated on 16/05 as a reaction to the helpdesk query above. The pressure code *'I03 Plant and animal pathogens and pests*' was recoded to ‘*I05 Plant and animal diseases pathogens and pest*'’. The previous pressure code ‘*I03 Other alien species (not invasive)*’ has been restored; ideally this pressure should not be used, but any information collected using this code should be re-assessed as indicated below (Question 3).

This change follows the previous modification of the pressure codes I02 and I03. In the list version 15/02 pressures and measures addressing problems with ‘alien and problematic species' were harmonised with terms used under EU Regulation on Invasive Alien Species. Specifically, the previous pressures 'I02 Other invasive alien species (other than species of Union concern)' and 'I03 Other alien species (not invasive)' were merged into one pressure ‘I02 Other invasive alien species (other then species of Union concern)' and a new pressure 'I03 Plant and animal pathogens and pests' (currently I05) was added.

**Question 2:** The main reason for merging I02 and I03 was to have a common interpretation of the term 'invasive alien species' between Habitats and Birds Directives and IAS regulation. Within the implementation of the IAS regulation the term 'invasive alien species' is used in a broad sense meaning that any alien species that is causing problems should be treated as an ‘invasive alien’. In practice, any alien species which is reported as a pressure or threat (i.e. having either high or moderate ranking), regardless of the severity of its impact, geographical scope or its population dynamics, is problematic and should therefore be treated as an ‘invasive alien’. Bearing in mind, the abovementioned original pressures, 'I02 Other invasive alien species (other than species of Union concern)' and 'I03 Other alien species (not invasive)', relate to the same situation. Furthermore, the old pressures 'I02 Other invasive alien species (other than species of Union concern)' and 'I03 Other alien species (not invasive)' were difficult to use in a coherent way. There is no common understanding of the difference between 'invasive' and 'non-invasive' alien species and there might be important differences among Member States in classifying the species as ‘invasive’.

The pressure code 'I03 Plant and animal pathogens and pests' (currently I05) was added as the IAS regulation does not deal with these organisms. This will allow the Commission to harmonise data flows related to IAS and Nature directives.

**Question 3:** A practical recommendation to Member States who have already started to use the previous lists would be to continue using the old lists for their national data gathering and to modify the reported pressure information on an *ad-hoc* basis, merging the old I02 and I03 codes under the new I02 code and completing information on plant and animal diseases, pathogens and pests (new I05) only for those species for which this is among the most important pressures. Some information on 'pressures and threats' will be lost (the split of pathogens will be done only on an *ad-hoc* basis; theoretically if reporters used both the old I02 and the old I03 among the ten most important pressures which were subsequently merged into a single pressure (ne I02), there will finally be 9 pressures in the report format and possibly the tenth could have been reported but this was not possible due to the 'maximum of 10' restriction), but this is preferred to using the original list from December 2017/January 2018. The same guidance applies to conservation measures.

**Note on use of L06 :** Normally, the invasive pathogens should not be coded under the 'L06 Interspecific relations (competition, predation, parasitism, pathogens,)' as this code and any other code under the category 'L' should be used for processes which were not triggered by or were not incidental to human activities.

# Conservation measures

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## Use of measures categories in the reported list of conservation measures (04/2019)

*The latest version of the reporting tool points out as an error and —most importantly— as a blocker the use of conservation measures at level one (two digit codes). We know that using the code at the second level is mandatory for pressures and threats, but nothing is said for conservation measures either in the ‘explanatory notes and guidelines’ or in the Excell file listing the measures.*

*Our report includes some conservation measures reported at the first level and now we are not in a position of changing the level of these measures. Thus,  we are worried about the possibility that our report is rejected because of that.*

**Reply (02/04/2019)**

The Explanatory notes and guidelines requests the official list of the conservation measures be used to report under fields 8.5 or 9.5 ‘List of main conservation measures’. In the [List of conservation measures](http://biodiversity.eionet.europa.eu/activities/Reporting/Article_17/Reports_2019/Files_2019/Conservation_measures_Final_20180507.xls) available on the reference portals the conservation measures are classified into several measure categories (e.g. ‘CA Measures related to agriculture’).

Using **measure categories** with 2 digit codes (e.g. CA Measures related to agriculture) in 8.5 or 9.5 ‘List of main conservation measures’ is not permitted, only measures with 4 digit codes (e.g. ‘CA01’) can be used. The 2-digit measure categories are not included in the ‘measures’ data dictionary (<http://dd.eionet.europa.eu/vocabulary/art17_2018/measures/view>) and the CDR validation will trigger blockers if these are used in the reported data (it won’t be possible to submit the national report via CDR).

The codelist of conservation measures mirrors the codelist of pressures and threats, and the conservation measures are principally understood as an action to mitigate the impact of past and present pressures. Only conservation measures (4 digit codes) can be fully used in later analyses, particularly to analyse the relationship between the reported pressures and measure taken.

Unfortunately, the reporting tool does not prevent the entry of 2-digit measure categories for fields 8.5 or 9.5 ‘List of main conservation measures’. Special caution though should be paid by data coordinators to ensure that these measure categories are not used in the national dataset. Reporters are advised to use the Run QA function of the tool, which will highlight the invalid use of measure categories.

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## Reporting for passive conservation measures (which were not intended to mitigate pressure) (02/2018)

*There is ambiguity in interpreting what is meant by “conservation measures” within the Article 17 guidance. In section 4 of the Article 17 guidance, it says “‘Conservation measures and management plans’ are considered to be operational instruments that outline practical measures to achieve the conservation objectives for the sites in the network.” In section 9 it says “The list of conservation measures mirrors the list of pressures and threats, and the conservation measures are principally understood as an action to mitigate the impact of past and present pressures.”*

*However, some of the conservation measures in the new Article 17 list are passive and their occurrence may be a happy accident rather than an instruction to mitigate against pressures, e.g. “CA03 Maintain existing extensive agricultural practices and agricultural landscape features”*

*My query is whether we report on passive measures even though there was no instruction for their delivery (but recognising the fact that they are important for the maintenance of a habitat at FCS).*

**Reply (15/02/2018)**

The conservation measures should be understood in the context of Article 1 of the Habitats Directive definition of ‘conservation’, which is defined as ‘a series of measures required to maintain or restore the natural habitats and the populations of species of wild fauna and flora at a favourable status’. In practice, the measures are actions taken to maintain or to restore the favourable conservation status (often this means mitigating the impact of past and present pressures or possible future threats). Together with measures of active conservation and/or restoration, the list of conservation measures contains passive measures such as ‘*CA03 Maintain existing extensive agricultural practices and agricultural landscape features*’.

1.) In many circumstances the measures to be reported under section ‘Conservation measures’ (8 for habitats and 9 for species) are taken to address the conservation of a targeted habitat or species and they are applied as a response to a particular conservation problem resulting from past and present pressures or preventing future threats.

2.) In other situations, broader sectoral measures are being established where the objective is to improve environmental conditions more broadly, and these measures are also profitable for targeted habitats or species. For example certain measures under rural development plans aiming at preserving the traditional landscapes help also to mitigate the land abandonment and further deterioration of status of some grasslands; or broader measures combating pollution help to improve the habitat of some freshwater species. Sometimes measure(s) applied for other habitats or species are profitable for the habitats and species targeted by the directives. These types of measures are also to be reported under section Conservation measures (e.g. measures like ‘*CF05 Reduce/eliminate diffuse pollution to surface or ground waters from industrial, commercial, residential and recreational areas and activities*’ are rarely applied only to improve the status of particular targeted habitats and species, but more globally to improve the quality of marine environment).

3.) Sometimes, the practical actions are the result of other processes not actively targeting the maintenance or restoration of habitats/habitats for species or the improvement of environmental conditions more broadly, but still have a positive impact on maintaining or restoring the conservation status. For example, traditional extensive commercial farming can result in the maintenance of agricultural habitats, as a side effect. These types of actions should not be reported as Conservation measures.

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## Reporting conservation measures when only some measures needed had been taken (08/2018)

*Do we understand correctly that you should only report measures that have been taken already? So: if 9.1a or 9.1c is answered with “yes” (9.1b is answered “no”) you leave all the rest of chapter 9 empty, you also do not report in 9.5 the “measures identified but not yet taken” from 9.1a?*

*2. And what if some measures are taken and some are not? Say, of the 5 measures identified, 2 are taken already and the other 3 not, do you answer 9.1c with “yes”(most measures are not taken yet) and leave out the rest, you do not mention the 2 measures taken?*

*AND*

*I would like to ask for the right way how to report about "Conservation Measures" (Annex B.9 and Annex D.8). Do you expect also a list of measures (B.9.5, D.8.5) if the "Status of Measures" (B.9.1, D.8.1) is "a" (measures identified, but none yet taken)? How will the QA/QC react, when in combination with status "a" no measure is listed?*

*In case there is no need to list measures in combination with status "a", can a measure list be reported optionally?*

**Reply (31/08/2018)**

As noted in the reporting guidelines the assessment under the field  ‘*9.1 (8.1) Status of measures’* is a global assessment at the biogeogrpahical level reflecting whether a majority of important measures are identified and if so , whether they have been taken or not. In some circumstances the global assessment is ‘*a) measures identified but none yet taken’* or ‘*c) measures needed but cannot be identified*’) as it reflects the broad situation at the biogeogrpahical level, but some conservation measures have already been taken. In this case more already identified measures are needed or it is sure that more measures are needed but they haven’t been identified yet.

In general, the section 9 (8) starting form field 9.2 (8.2) should be filled in for measures taken. For fields ‘*9.2(8.2) Main purpose of the measures taken’*, ‘9*.3 (8.3) Location of the measures taken’* and indirectly also for ‘*9.4 (8.4) Response to the measures*‘ it is stated in the guidelines that these fields should be filled in if ‘*9.1b (8.1b) Measures identified and taken’* is ‘*Yes’*).

For ‘*9.5 (8.5) List of main conservation* measures’ the reporters are encouraged to list all measures taken, even if the overall assessment under field 9.1 (8.1) is ‘*a) measures identified but none yet taken’* or ‘*c) measures needed but cannot be identified*’) for situations outlined above. Only measures which were already put in place should be listed and not those that are planned.

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## Reporting conservation measures when only some measures needed had been taken II (03/2019)

*We have a question regarding conservation measures (section 9 for species and section 8 for habitats). In the reporting format there is a question; "Are measures needed? YES/NO". This question we can answer. However, in the guidelines it is written that we should only indicate "b) measures identified and taken" if "the majority of the most important measures have already been or are being implemented". If we have started to implement measures, but not managed to implement the majority we can only choose option a) measures identified but none yet taken? Most often we have started to implement measures and it therefore does not feel right to choose option a) that state that "none" is taken. How do we answer when some measures are taken but not the majority?*

**Reply (11/03/2019)**

The main purpose of reporting on conservation measures is to obtain information allowing for a ‘broad-brush’ overview of the conservation measures (in particular whether measures have been taken overall and what is their impact on the conservation status of habitats / species). Therefore the number of categories available to provide a reply to each of the question under the fields ‘*8.1 Status of measures*’, ‘*8.2 Main purpose of the measures taken’* and ‘*8.4 Response to the measures’* is very restricted and reporters are requested to choose the reply that reflects globally the situation in the given biogeographical region.

If globally only some measures have been/are being taken, but majority haven’t been implemented yet the expected answer is ‘*a) measures identified but none yet taken’*. It is important to follow this guidance. For species and habitats for which the answer is ‘*a) measures identified and taken*’ we will study in more detail whether these measures are ‘efficient’ i.e. looking at answer for ‘*8.4 Response to the measures’*, trends of parameters and trend in conservation status. If using response ‘*b) measures identified and taken’* for situations where only very littles are actually taken (so in fact you cannot expect yet an impact on CS), this can lead to a wrong conclusion that the conservation measures are inefficient.

However, we encourage you (even though the global answer is ‘*a) measures identified but none yet taken*’) to list the (10 most important) conservation measures taken or started under ‘*8.5 List of main conservation measures’*. You have the possibility to provide a short explanation specific to each habitat/species under the field ‘*8.6 Additional information’*.

(For species the fields codes are 9.1-9.6)

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## Main purpose of measures taken – selecting main reason where there are several objectives of measures taken (04/2019)

*8: Conservation measures: we cannot report that there are several priority objectives to the measures taken (8.2 "Main purpose of measures taken"), whereas for habitat 6510 for example, the implemented measures target several issues: safeguarding the existing status, restoring (structure and functions ) of degraded sites and re-creating habitat where it is possible*

**Reply (02/04/2019)**

The field "*8.2 Main purpose of measures taken*" should be reported keeping in mind the importance of the measures taken in terms of implementation ‘effort’. Although the difference may be subtle and the choice depends partly on criteria to select the main reason (total area covered by measures, frequency of repetition, resources engaged, etc.), it is advised to select the main reason where the effort was most significant during the current reporting period. More details can be provided in the "*Additional information*".

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## Conservation measures targeting invasive alien species(05/2018)

See guidance for ‘Pressures and threats related to invasive alien species’

# Conservation status and trend in conservation status

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## Trend in conservation status for 2 stable and 1 unknown trends (08/2018)

*In relation to Tables 8 & 13 in the Guidelines am I correct in assuming that 2 stable trends and 1 unknown trend should = an overall stable trend.*

**Reply (31/08/2018)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Short-term trend of parameters (Range, Area of habitat, Structure and functions** | | | | **Overall trend in CS** |
| **Number increasing** | **Number stable** | **Number decreasing** | **Number unknown** |
| 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | Improving  *(Only increasing and stable trends)* |
| 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | Stable  *(Only stable trends or stable and increasing dominates (there is at least one increasing and only one unknown or decreasing))*  \* *Trend magnitude should also be considered. The overall trend in CS is stable only in case of moderate declines (< 1 % per year).* |
| **0** | **2** | **0** | **1** |
| 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 1 | 1 | 1\* | 0 |
| 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Short-term trend of parameters (Range, Area of habitat, Structure and functions** | | | | **Overall trend in CS** |
| **Number increasing** | **Number stable** | **Number decreasing** | **Number unknown** |
| 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | Deteriorating  *(Decreasing trends dominate)*  *\* Trend magnitude should also be considered. The overall trend in CS is declining only in case of important declines (> 1 % per year).* |
| 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 |
| 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 1 | 1 | 1\* | 0 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | Unknown  *(Unknown trends dominate)* |
| 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |

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## Reasons for change in conservation status and conservation status trend , if they are assessed as ‘unknown’ for example due to lack of recent data (04/2019)

*Field 11.7 (species) and 10.7 (habitats): "Change and reasons for change in conservation status and conservation status trend": For example for a species no surveys were done in the current period therefore all trends and also overall trend in conservation status are ‘unknown’. For 2007-2012 the overall trend in conservation status was assessed as ‘stable’. So there is a "change", but we cannot choose the options to justify the change! It is not a genuine change, not a change of method, not better knowledge, and not "change without a known cause." How the reason for change should be reported in this situation*

**Reply (02/04/2019)**

If the change in conservation status or in the overall trend in conservation status is towards ‘*unknown*’, we advise to report:

a) ‘*genuine change*’ if something has really happened (for example, a recent fire or other event has potentially affected site (s) of a habitat or species, but there has not been enough time to check the actual condition of these sites so the status/trend are ‘unknown’)

b) ‘*different method’* if the change is a result of a change in ‘methods’ (e.g. expert opinion was widely used for the assessment for a habitat or species in the previous period, but a different expert is now responsible for the assessment)

c) If the change is due to missing data for the current period the ‘*reasons for change’* in conservation status and / or conservation status trend should be left empty.

In all cases, changes to ‘*unknown’* will be treated separately in later analyses.

1. The table "List of species with international or multilateral plans" includes also the SAP for Eastern Imperial Eagle (Aquila heliaca). The elaboration of the actions plan(s) is listed among actions of the LIFE project PannonEagle - Conservation of the eastern imperial eagle by decreasing human-caused mortality in the Pannonian Region (<http://imperialeagle.eu/en>) but no plan has been done yet. This line will be removed from the table. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <http://biodiversity.eionet.europa.eu/activities/Reporting/Article_17/Reports_2019/Files_2019/Pressures_Threats_Final_20180507.xls> and <http://biodiversity.eionet.europa.eu/activities/Reporting/Article_17/Reports_2019/Files_2019/Conservation_measures_Final_20180507.xls> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)