

Frequently Asked Questions

Reporting on Art. 12 and Art. 17

This document provides additional guidance related to selected questions received from Member States on the Article 12 and Article 17 reporting process. It will be updated as relevant questions are received during the reporting period.

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



Question relevant for Article 12 bird reporting



Question relevant for Article 17 species reporting



Question relevant for Article 17 habitats reporting

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Pressures



When is a pressure considered ‘Ongoing’ or ‘In the past’? Does this timing depend on the action that caused the pressure or on the effect of the pressure on the species or habitat?

The pressures timing is defined by the effect of the pressure and not by the action itself. Thus, actions occurred in the past but with consequences still affecting a species or habitat during the current reporting period should be considered as ‘ongoing’. A pressure may be characterized as ‘in the past’ if the pressure on the species or habitat stopped occurring during the current reporting period.

Do pressures need to be listed only when the population of a species or the area of a habitat have negative trends?

Pressures may influence a species or habitat, but this may not necessarily be reflected in the species range and/or population trend, or in the habitats area and/or range trend, or in their conservation status trend. Pressures may still occur, even in the case of positive or stable trends, for example, because of the positive and counteracted action of measures, or because of long-term effects. All pressures should be reported, independent of current trend conclusions.

What is the difference between the influence and scope of a pressure?

For habitats, the pressure’s scope is related to the proportion of area affected by the pressure, whereas for species, it’s related to the proportion of population size affected by the pressure. The influence, instead, is related to the decline of the habitat’s area (and/or condition) and the decline of the population size (or of the habitat of the species). Thus, for example, a pressure may be characterised by a major scope (i.e. a whole habitat area is affected) and a low influence (i.e. the pressure affects the decline of that area or the condition of that area little and indirectly). Vice-versa, a pressure may have a low scope (i.e. the pressure affects a minor proportion of a habitats’ area) and a high influence (i.e. the pressure influences the decline of the habitat area and/or its condition highly and directly).

How can ‘Other Invasive Alien species’ be reported?

Where a selected pressure is ‘PI02 Other invasive alien species (other than species of Union concern)’ Member States are invited to provide the names of these species in a separate optional field. In order to keep an aligned nomenclature, countries are invited to select the species from the list kept in EASIN dataset <https://easin.jrc.ec.europa.eu/easin>.



For bird species, are reported pressures season-specific (e.g. passing phase) or do they cover whole lifecycle of a species?

The Art. 12 Explanatory notes specifies that ‘For sedentary Annex I species of Directive 2009/147/EC 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'. However, it should be kept in mind that 'For Annex I and other Special Protection Area (SPA) trigger species of Directive 2009/147/EC with different breeding, wintering and/or passage populations within the Member State, there should be separate reports for Breeding, Winter and a selection of Passage season species, as indicated in the Article 12 checklist'. In the latter case, the Passage-season report should only contain the pressures and threats (and conservation measures) relevant to the passage population, as pressures and threats for any breeding and/or wintering populations will be reported on for another season, as appropriate.

How should pressures from outside the Member State be allocated for migrant species? For example, it is known that many Afro-Palaearctic migrant passerines that breed in the EU are affected by land-use and other issues on their non-breeding grounds in Africa. These factors can determine the trends of the EU breeding populations of these species, although the factors operate on the non-breeding grounds. So, should these be listed as Pressures and/or Threats for the breeding population? Or for the non-breeding population? Or both?

In general, for migratory bird 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/passage populations in the Member State, and/or there is another subspecific population that replaces the breeding one during the winter, there shouldn't be a Winter/Passage report.)

For Art. 12 reports, should pressures PX01 ('Threats and pressures from outside the EU territory') and PX02 ('Threats and pressures from outside the Member State') be used, and how do these differ from field 7.1.e 'Location'?

Pressure/threat codes 'PX01 - Threats and pressures from outside the EU territory' and 'PX02 - Threats and pressures from outside the Member State' are to be used only in Article 17 reports; they are not relevant for the Article 12 reports, as the information on whether a pressure/threat 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 'e) Location' provided for this purpose in Article 12 species-reports.

Measures



What does it mean "Are measures needed" in field "Status of measures"?

When one or more pressures are identified as affecting the conservation status of a particular species or habitat, measures are necessary to control, decrease and eliminate these pressures. A list of conservation measures that mirrors the list of pressures (i.e. for each pressure there are one or more measures to be taken) is available in the Reference Portal, which may help the MS to tackle the specific pressures listed for a certain species or habitat. However, in some cases, the Member State may recognise that measures

are needed, but the specific measures have not been identified. In this case, in the field “Status of measures” option b) ‘Measures needed but cannot be identified’ should be used.

When should I use ‘Are measures needed? - NO’, in field “Status of measures”?

This option can be used when there are no pressures listed affecting a habitat or species and when no measures will positively impact the conservation status of a particular species or habitat. This may be the case, for example, if no pressures are known and the status of the species or habitat is FV. If the status is not FV, measures may still be needed to improve the status. ‘No measures needed’ doesn’t include potential legal or administrative measures. If no measures are needed, this should be justified using the field “Additional information” (field 8.7 for bird species under Art. 12, field 9.7 for species under Art. 17, and 8.7 for habitats).

In field “List of main conservation measures”, which measures have to be reported: already taken measures or also identified but not yet taken measures?

Both taken as well as identified but not yet taken measures should be reported (i.e. measures may be listed when their status (field “Status of measures”) is ‘Measures identified, but none yet taken’, ‘Part of measures identified have been taken’ and ‘Most/all of measures identified have been taken’.

Is passive management a measure that can be reported?

Passive management *per se* is not a measure, but specific passive measures such as preventing, maintaining, stopping, can be selected from the list of measures to report. E.g. CA01 Prevent conversion of natural and semi-natural habitats, and habitats of species into agricultural land; CA06 Stop mowing, grazing and other equivalent agricultural activities; CB06 Stop Forest management and exploitation practices; CB11 Reduce air pollution from forestry activities.

Can legal or administrative measures be reported?

In the context of nature reporting, measures are *actions to mitigate the impact of past and present pressures* and thus, to maintain or restore species and habitats based on their specific requirements. The instruments (legal, statutory, administrative or contractual) by which the measures are taken are not to be considered when answering in field “Status of measures” nor in field “List of main conservation measures”.

Short-term trend magnitudes and their type of estimate



When should the fields ‘Short-term trend Magnitude - type of estimate’ be completed? Does the type of estimate relate only to the magnitude, or also to the overall assessment of the short-term trend (i.e. the direction)?

This question concerns, for species, fields 5.5/5.6 for range, 6.11/6.12 for population; and for habitats, fields 4.5/4.6 for range and 5.8/5.9 for area.

The type of estimate is expected to be filled in only if the trend direction is increasing, decreasing or uncertain, and not if stable or unknown. However, as the name of the field explicitly says, 'Short-term trend Magnitude - type of estimate' should only make reference to the magnitude of the trend. Note that in the Explanatory notes it has been wrongly specified that 'the type of estimate field encompasses the total assessment i.e. both field 5.7 short-term trend direction and field 5.8 short-term trend magnitude': the type of estimate should only refer to the magnitude.

Future prospects



In the "Explanatory Notes Art 17 Reporting" (pp. 52) is stated that: "*Future prospects indicate the direction of expected change in conservation status in the near future, based on a consideration of the **current status**, reported pressures and threats, and measures being taken for each of the other three parameters (Range, Area, and Structure and functions)*". **Which 'current status' should be considered for the evaluation of the future prospects, the conservation status of the species/habitat being evaluated for the 2019–2024 period, or the conservation status already assessed in the previous period (2013–2018)?**

The consideration of 'current status' for the evaluation of future prospects should be based on that of the 2019-2024 period. Besides considering the current or present conclusions on range, population/area and habitat of the species/structure and functions, according to the explanatory notes, the pressures & threats and measures on these parameters are relevant for estimating their individual "future prospects".

Population Units



Some species don't have a pre-defined population unit in the Checklist. Which population unit should I use?

For invertebrate and non-vascular plant species reported by only one Member State, units are not added in the official Checklist available in the Reference Portal. This means that, during the submission of the report, for those species, the reporter must select a population unit from the corresponding code list.

Does the population size unit 'area covered by population in m²' represent the occurrence or the coverage of a species population?

The existing unit 'Area covered by the population in m²' represents the area occupied by a population (the total area in m²), but does not refer to the number of inhabited 1x1m grid cells. Therefore, this size can be a decimal number (e.g. 0.8 m²). The 'area covered by population in m²' is still a distribution and not a biologically meaningful population unit but it can give a better estimation of the population compared to units already in use for certain species.

What is the difference between the population units "number of individuals" and "Average number of individuals per km²"?

The unit “number of individuals” is a standard unit to be used when reporting on field 6.2 “Population size”. The unit “Average number of individuals per km²” is a relative unit that can be used by Member States when reporting an “Additional population size” (field 6.5). Since it is expected that the number of individuals is counted on sampled (representative) areas, the sampling extension should be considered to calculate the ratio of individuals in the sampled area. Thus, as stated in the Guidelines in p. 47, the sampling area should be mentioned in the “Additional information” field, to have a reference of the sampling efforts (e.g. if individuals were counted in a 1x1 km area or in a 10x10 km area). It should be highlighted that this unit refers to the density in the analysed sampled area (in km²) of the species (as its the case with other density population units), and not in the total area of the biogeographical unit. For this reason, it’s extremely important to refer to the sampling effort and the size of the occupied habitat associated with the measurement in the “Additional information” field. Additionally, if the population size reported in field 6.2 was estimated by converting the information reported in field 6.5, the “Additional information” field should be used to report on the conversion used.

When and how should the population unit “CPUE – Capture per unit effort” be used? The use of this unit was suggested by Bulgaria and is restricted to a specific list of species, for which the only relevant and extended data series available uses this unit, based on national historical datasets. In this case, these data could provide significant information on a HD species population for the purpose of Art. 17 and thus can be reported as additional population unit. If such long-term dataset doesn’t exist, it is not encouraged to use this population unit. The species for which this unit may be used are the following: *Alosa* sp., *Aspius aspius*, *Gymnocephalus baloni*, *Gymnocephalus schraetser*, *Misgurnus fossilis*, *Pelecus cultratus*, *Zingel zingel*, *Romanogobio vladykovi*, *Umbra krameria*. If the unit CPUE is used, a clear definition of the unit effort should be provided in field 6.20, indicating fishing net area (typically 100 m²), exposure time (typically 1h) and distance travelled (typically 100 m).

Species occurrence



Which occurrence should be assigned to species that regularly occurred in the past, but due to human pressures no longer occur in the biogeographical region?

According to the Guidelines, the “OCC” status should be used for species that have a natural irregular occurrence and occur in insignificant numbers. The OCC status, however, should not be used for species that occurred regularly in the past but numbers have drastically declined due to human pressures. In these cases, the guidelines indicate that “species which were regularly occurring in the past but whose numbers have significantly declined, or a reproducing population became extinct due to human pressures”, the “Present” category should be used. In some exceptional cases, however, the PRE status does no longer make sense from a scientific perspective, if a reproducing population is practically impossible to occur again. For example:

The bottlenose dolphin *Tursiops truncatus* used to be a regular reproducing species in the North Sea of the Netherlands until the 1930s. After the construction of the closure dyke Afsluitdijk (1927-1932) the bottlenose dolphin only occurs occasionally, because of declining food resources. As a result, the species cannot reproduce in the IJsselmeer, nor will it in the future, according to scientific literature. Irreversible

changes on a large scale, such as the dyke closure, which took place before the Habitats Directive came into force, need to be considered when determining the status of a species. To determine the occurrence of a species it's not only a question of documenting a historical status, but also of determining the achievability of a favourable conservation status. Therefore, if a reproducing (partial) population within the Dutch waters must be regarded as practically impossible due to the embankment of the Zuiderzee, the determination of PRE status makes little sense (provided the waters do not play a significant role in any other life stage of the species). The definition of PRE status "This category applies to species which occur regularly in the region" is neither currently fulfilled, nor can it be fulfilled again in the future. In the case of the bottlenose dolphin *Tursiops truncatus* the status 'occasional' (OCC) fits best, as the "number of records is insignificant".

How "irregular" should a species be in order to be classified as OCC? Is there a minimum or maximum number of individuals necessary for classifying species in one or another occurrence category?

The occurrence of a species should not be determined by a specific number of individuals, as the population size is dependent on the species and its biology. Occasional (OCC) species are defined by their irregular appearance and thus, the number of observations is only one of the elements used to define the occurrence of the species, and whether it is possible to report information for the species. As a general guidance, an occasional species can be considered when there are no more than 6 observations in a range of 12 years (i.e. in half of the time of a short-term trend), potentially having several observations during the years with observations. However, as mentioned before, individual numbers depend on the ecology of the species and thus, other aspects may also be considered. The following decision tree may be used to determine the occurrence:

1. The species was observed after 1994
 - a. Yes, the species was observed a regular guest or reproducing -> report as PRE
 - b. Yes, the species was observed but as an irregular guest or exceptionally reproducing. -> report as OCC.
 - c. Yes, the species was observed but is now extinct -> report as EXa
 - d. Yes, the species was observed but with increasing numbers and without a stable population within the biogeographical region-> report as ARR
 - e. No -> go to 2.
2. The species was observed between 1950 and 1994
 - a. Yes, the species was observed reproducing or as a regular guest -> report as Exp
 - b. No -> NO report

Success stories



Should stories be reported per species or per species-biogeographical region combination?

For each story (i.e. for each entry), only one species-biogeographical (or habitat-biogeographical) combination should be included. If the Member State wishes to report the success of a species or a habitat across more than one biogeographical region, different entries should be used. A similar approach applies for birds: each bird species-season combination should be reported independently.

Transboundary reports



When should transboundary reports considered?

According to the Guidelines, if a joint regional assessment of the conservation status was made, the results of this assessment can be provided instead of the Member State level assessment. This should be noted under field 13.2 'Transboundary assessment'. Joint assessments between two or more Member States should be done primarily in cases where there is a certain level of cooperation and common understanding of the management needs and approaches for that species (e.g. large carnivore populations). There may also be cases where it is biologically relevant to consider populations in other neighbouring non-EU countries. This should be clearly described under field 13.2 'Transboundary assessment'.

For some marine species, population estimates have been made by sea area and not by Member State; for example, the SCANS surveys of small cetaceans in the European Atlantic and North Sea. In such cases, it may be appropriate for all Member States involved to produce a regional assessment of status for range and population (but each Member State should report the respective proportion of the population size and range area, as stated above). In addition, a coordinated assessment of pressures and threats, conservation measures and future prospects, should be undertaken if appropriate. As combined assessments may be based on diverse data sources, it is important that field 13.2 'Transboundary assessment' includes information on how the assessment was carried out.

A joint assessment does not change the obligation of a Member State to report on the conservation status assessment of a species present in its territory. In case of a joint assessment, then the same status assessment should be reported from all the countries involved in the joint assessment and relevant information should be provided in the field 13.2.

Passage bird species reports



For migrant species that occur in greater numbers nationally during spring (rather than autumn) passage, should the focus of an Art. 12 Passage-season report still be on the autumn passage population, as implied on page 17 of the Art. 12 *Guidelines on concepts and definitions*?

In general, Member States are encouraged to bear in mind the main motive for, or 'additionality' of, reporting on passage populations (as outlined in the "Passage species" section on pages 16–17 of the Art. 12 *Guidelines on concepts and definitions*) when preparing their Passage-season species-reports. For a 'hunnable' taxon listed (only) in Annex II Part A or "indicated" for the Member State in question in the Annex II Part B table in the Directive, the post-nuptial/autumn passage population is indeed of most interest. However, for a taxon (also) listed in Annex I of the Directive, and/or triggering SPA classifications nationally on passage, the primary interest is likely to be the pressures & threats and conservation measures (if any) affecting the larger of the spring or autumn passage populations (where these differ

nationally), and how well the latter is 'served' by the national SPA network. As no attempt is made to aggregate population-size data from Passage-season reports at the EU level, it is not a problem if some Member States focus on their spring-passage population and others on their autumn-passage population when reporting.

Information related to Annex V (Art. 17) and Annex II (Art. 12) species



What should constitute “hunting bag” numbers? 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? (Part B, field 3.4 of Art. 17 reporting; Part B, field 11.2 of Art. 12 reporting)

Article 17: field ‘3.4 *Hunting bag or quantity taken in the wild regardless of conservation status 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 this field, for which a separate reporting procedure exists.

Article 12: For Annex II bird species the numbers to be reported in field ‘11.2 *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 11.2, for which a separate reporting procedure exists.