

7th Quinquennial Review (QQR) of Schedules 5 and 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) – A summary by ARG UK

What is the 7th Quinquennial Review?

Every five years, the statutory nature conservation bodies for the United Kingdom (Natural England, Natural Resources Wales and NatureScot) review Schedules 5 and 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981. This is coordinated by the UK Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC). This review provides recommendations to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and to Ministers for the Environment in the Scottish Government and Welsh Government for changes to these schedules.

What is changing - the new Eligibility Criteria

Under the new criteria, the country-based nature conservation bodies will only pursue scheduling of a species when an animal or plant **is in danger of extinction** in Great Britain.

The new eligibility criteria are defined as

1. An objective measure of endangerment should be used as the basis for selecting species eligible for listing on Schedules 5 or 8;
2. Species that are IUCN nationally/regionally Critically Endangered or Endangered in Great Britain, or are shown to satisfy the criteria for Critically Endangered or Endangered, are eligible for listing on Schedules 5 or 8;
3. A species' structure or place of shelter is a recognisable shelter or place that provides elements of habitat essential for its survival by virtue of being used regularly or permanently for protection, reproduction, growth, resting, hibernating, raising young etc.

Why this is important!

Schedules 5 and 8 of the WCA focus on species endangerment, and selection will preferentially consider GB Red Listed species, i.e. those facing imminent threat of extinction (IUCN 2012) in GB.

This means that species where there is no evidence of decline, or have not been assessed against the IUCN national or regional Red List Criteria are **not considered**.

At the current time all of our widespread species are covered by Schedules 5 and 8 (c) Sale activities S.9 (5)'. This includes: common frog (*Rana temporaria*), common toad (*Bufo bufo*), Palmate Newt (*Lissotriton helveticus*), smooth newt (*Lissotriton vulgaris*); widespread reptiles are additionally covered by 'Killing & injuring S.9 (1)', slow-worm (*Anguis fragilis*), grass snake (*Natrix Helvetica*), adder (*Vipera berus*), and viviparous lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*).

Under the new criteria they will be removed unless there is clear objective evidence of declines!!

All of our '**Critically Endangered**' species will be automatically recommended for scheduling without needing to meet the Decision Criteria. European Protected Species (EPS) are automatically proposed

for listing on the schedules in England and Wales, and will continue to be protected under the Habitats Regulations in Scotland.

This includes: smooth snake (*Coronella austriaca*), sand lizard (*Lacerta agilis*), natterjack toad (*Epidalea calamita*), Northern Clade pool frog (*Pelophylax lessonae*), and great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) – (Note this species is already subject to the new District Level Licensing programme that can issue a license for ‘killing’ and ‘removal’ of habitat subject to compensatory habitat creation).

What can we do?

As a part of the review stakeholders are given an opportunity to comment or suggest changes. These can be made via an ‘Information Pack’ – where you can access specific surveys for ‘addition’, ‘removal’, or ‘change in status’ of specific species. This must be evidence based – so if for example you wanted to add ‘adder’ you would need to cite published evidence of significant adder declines. Or you can email your country representative directly.

<https://jncc.gov.uk/media/5397/qqr-7-information-pack-version-2-2-20210514.pdf>

Evidence that a species meets the Decision Criteria should be submitted through the online survey which runs from 8 April to 7 July 2021 <https://www.iucnredlist.org/resources/regionalguidelines>

QQR Timetable

The target date for delivery of the QQR 7 is December 2021.

Important dates and the phases of the review are:

- Stakeholders & the country conservation agencies submit proposals using the online survey: 8 Apr – 7 Jul 2021
- Review of new proposals by the QQR Inter-agency Group: Jul - Oct 2021
- Consultation on draft recommendations: Oct – Nov 2021
- Approval sought from the Joint Committee and submission of final recommendations to Governments: Nov - Dec 2021

Collaboration with the country nature conservation bodies and other stakeholders during the data gathering phase is strongly encouraged. Please contact the country nature conservation bodies if you would like to invite their specialists into discussions or need more information.

Contact details are:

- Ant Maddock, JNCC qqr@jncc.gov.uk
- Andy Brown, Natural England andy.brown@naturalengland.org.uk
- Liz Halliwell, Natural Resources Wales liz.halliwell@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk
- Sally Blyth, NatureScot sally.blyth@nature.scot

Reference: IUCN (2012). Guidelines for application of IUCN Red List Criteria at Regional and National Levels: Version 4.0. IUCN SSC. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland and Cambridge, UK.