

## Introduction

When the implementation of the Habitats and Wild Birds Directives in England was reviewed we undertook to share our information on the risks posed to protected sites from activities we regulate. The Habitats Directive Risks tool does this.

However, there may be circumstances that make it impossible to use the tool. To this end we have also produced a series of generic hazards tables. This quick guide will show you how to use those tables.

## What's protected?

This tool considers habitats and species protected by the Habitats Regulations that cover both the Habitats Directive and the Wild Birds Directive. More details can be found in the 'What's protected' guidelines that form part of the tools documentation.

For ease of use we have grouped, and numbered, habitats and species based on their sensitivity to similar hazards.

## What is the difference between the tables?

Each permit type is covered by one of ten hazard matrices. Identify which matrix is relevant to your permit type by checking the lists below each matrix.

The ten hazard matrices are:

- EP Non-waste installations
- EP Waste facilities and installations
- Fish habitat works
- Fish introduction
- Fishing
- Flood defence
- Navigation
- Recreation and estates
- Water quality
- Water resources

## What do the hazards matrices show?

The hazards matrices help us to determine the potential effects on a protected site of any of the activities that we regulate.

Columns in the matrix represent habitat or species groups. These are grouped to show whether they relate to special areas of conservation (SACs), special protection areas (SPAs) or Ramsar sites. See 'What's protected' guidelines for more details.

Rows in the matrix represent typical hazards that may be associated with the selected activity. These hazards may affect the protected habitats or species of a site but from this information it is not possible to determine the significance of the effect.

Shaded squares in the matrix indicate that one or more of the habitats or species in a group may be affected by that hazard. Un-shaded squares indicate that, if a habitat or species in that group is present on a site, it is not sensitive to the hazard.

Note: This matrix may not be comprehensive but is based on the judgement of staff in the Environment Agency, Natural England and Countryside Council for Wales. There may be other hazards and sensitivities, which will vary according to circumstances.

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## Who has developed the hazard matrices?

We have developed our process for implementing the Habitats Regulations over many years. The hazards matrices have long been part of that process and this tool uses those matrices without altering them.

The information we are providing has been reviewed with Natural England and Countryside Council for Wales and each version of the guidance containing the matrices has been agreed and signed off by them.

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## How do you use the tables?

To use the relevant hazard matrix follow these steps:

- Find out which site you need to consider by visiting the conservation bodies' websites. Use their interactive web mapping to find site details. Alternatively ring and ask them.
- You will then be able to identify which habitats and species are found on the site or sites. Remember that many permits can affect more than one site.
- Check the 'What's protected' guidelines to find out which habitat or species groups are relevant to the site or sites.
- Use the hazards matrix to identify which hazards you will need to consider when applying for your permit.

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## Where can I get more information?

For more information on the Habitats Directive try one, or more, of the following:

<http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-4>

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/>

<http://www.ccw.gov.uk/>

<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/business/regulation/31913.aspx>