

Report under The Conservation of Habitats and
Species Regulations 2017 (as amended),
Regulation 9A

2019-2024

Conservation status assessment for the species:

S1034 - Medicinal leech

(Hirudo medicinalis)

England



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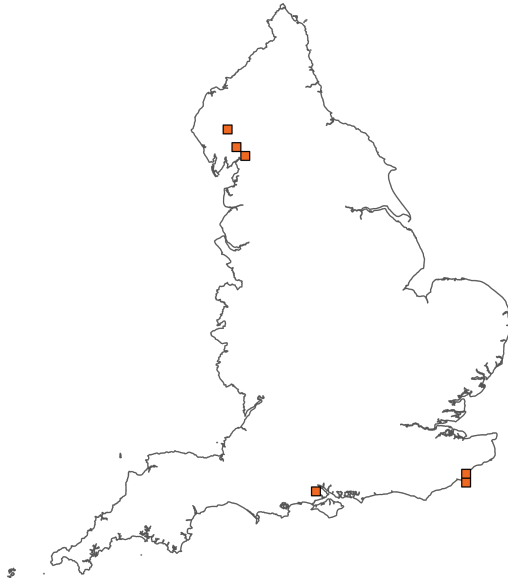
Important note - Please read

- The information in this document represents the England Report under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), Regulation 9A, for the period 2019-2024.
- It is based on supporting information provided by Natural England, which is documented separately.
- The Habitats Regulations reporting 2019-2024 Approach Document provides details on how this supporting information contributed to the UK Report and the fields that were completed for each parameter.
- Maps showing the distribution and range of the species are included.
- Explanatory notes (where provided) are included at the end. These provide additional audit trail information to that included within the assessments. Further underpinning explanatory notes are available in the related country reports.
- Some of the reporting fields have been left blank because either: (i) there was insufficient information to complete the field; (ii) completion of the field was not obligatory; and/or (iii) the field was not relevant to this species (section 12 National Site Network coverage for Annex II species).

Further details on the approach to the Habitats Regulations Reporting 2019-2024 are available on the [JNCC website](#).

Assessment Summary: Medicinal leech

Distribution Map



Range Map

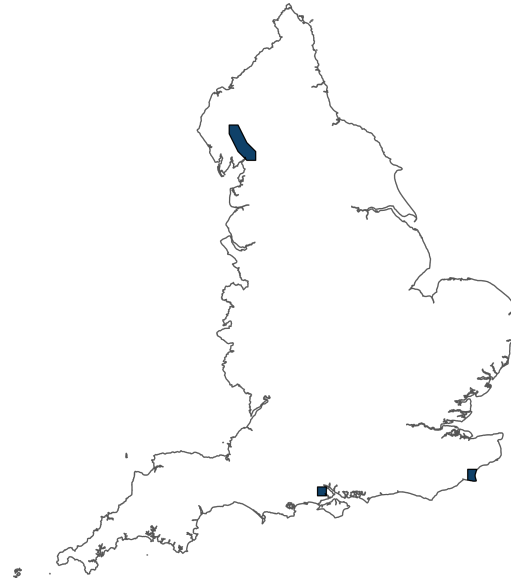


Figure 1: England distribution and range map for S1034 - Medicinal leech (*Hirudo medicinalis*). Coastline boundary derived from the Oil and Gas Authority's OGA and Lloyd's Register SNS Regional Geological Maps (Open Source). Open Government Licence v3 (OGL). Contains data © 2017 Oil and Gas Authority. The 10km grid square distribution map is based on available species records within the current reporting period.

Table 1: Table summarising the conservation status for S1034 - Medicinal leech (*Hirudo medicinalis*). Overall conservation status for species is based on assessments of range, population, habitat for the species, and future prospects.

Overall Conservation Status (see section 11)

Unknown (XX)

Breakdown of Overall Conservation Status

Range (see section 5)

Unknown (XX)

Population (see section 6)

Unknown (XX)

Habitat for the species (see section 7)

Unknown (XX)

Future prospects (see section 10)

Unknown (XX)

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National Level

1. General information

1.1 Country	England
1.2 Species code	S1034
1.3 Species scientific name	<i>Hirudo medicinalis</i>
1.4 Alternative species scientific name	
1.5 Common name	Medicinal leech
Annex(es)	V

2. Maps

2.1 Sensitive species	No
2.2 Year or period	1994-2024
2.3 Distribution map	Yes
2.4 Distribution map; Method used	Based mainly on expert opinion with very limited data

2.5 Additional information

Ongoing Freshwater Habitats Trust project in 2023-25 is updating mapped distribution, but data currently unavailable.

3. Information related to Annex V Species

3.1 Is the species taken in the wild / exploited? No

3.2 What measures have been taken?

a) Regulations regarding access to property

b) Temporary or local prohibition on the taking of specimens in the wild and exploitation

c) Regulation of the periods and/or methods of taking specimens

d) Application of hunting and fishing rules which take account of the conservation of such populations

e) Establishment of a system of licences for taking specimens or of quotas

f) Regulation of the purchase, sale, offering for sale, keeping for sale, or transport for sale of specimens

g) Breeding in captivity of animal species as well as artificial propagation of plant species

Other measures

Other measures description

3.3: Hunting bag or quantity taken in the wild for Mammals and Acipenseridae (Fish)

a) Unit

Table 2: Quantity taken from the wild during the reporting period (see 3.3a for units). For species with defined hunting seasons, Season 1 refers to 2018/2019 (autumn 2018 to spring 2019), and Season 6 to 2023/2024. For species without hunting seasons, data are reported by calendar year: Year 1 is 2019, and Year 6 is 2024.

	Season/ year 1	Season/ year 2	Season/ year 3	Season/ year 4	Season/ year 5	Season/ year 6
b) Minimum	-	-	-	-	-	-
c) Maximum	-	-	-	-	-	-
d) Unknown	-	-	-	-	-	-

3.4: Hunting bag or quantity taken in the wild; Method used

3.5: Additional information

Medicinal Leech is listed on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) and protected under Section 9 with respect to 9.1 - Killing, injuring, or taking; 9.2 -

Possessing, alive or dead; and 9.5 - Selling. Therefore it is generally not exploited, although this may occur illegally (for which there are no data).

Biogeographical Level

4. Biogeographical and marine regions

4.1 Biogeographical or marine region where the species occurs ATL

4.2 Sources of information

See section 14 References

5. Range

5.1 Surface area (km²) 816

5.2 Short-term trend; Period 2013-2024

5.3 Short-term trend; Direction Decreasing

5.4 Short-term trend;
Magnitude

a) Estimated minimum

b) Estimated maximum

c) Pre-defined range

d) Unknown

e) Type of estimate

f) Rate of decrease Decreasing >1% (more than one percent) per year on average

5.5 Short-term trend; Method used Based mainly on extrapolation from a limited amount of data

5.6 Long-term trend; Period

5.7 Long-term trend; Direction

5.8 Long-term trend;
Magnitude

a) Minimum

b) Maximum

c) Rate of decrease

5.9 Long-term trend; Method used

5.10 Favourable Reference Range (FRR)

a) Area (km²)

b) Pre-defined increment Current range is less than 2% smaller than the FRR

c) Unknown No

d) Method used Reference-based approach

e) Quality of information moderate

5.11 Change and reason for change in surface area of range

a) Change Yes

b) Genuine change No

c) Improved knowledge or more accurate data

d) Different method

e) No information Yes

f) Other reason

g) Main reason Unknown

5.12 Additional information

English range for the period 2013-24 is extrapolated from 6 mapped hectad (10x10 km²) records (NBN data from 2010-24). The range is likely to be an underestimate as inadequate systematic surveys have been made 2019-24. Therefore the decrease of more than 1% in range is unlikely to be genuine, but more accurate information is unavailable. Hectads are reported from all 3 remaining population centres: Cumbria, New Forest and Kent, so range is maintained in this sense.

6. Population

6.1 Year or period 2019-2024

6.2 Population size (in reporting unit)

a) Unit number of map 1x1 km grid cells

b) Minimum 6

c) Maximum

d) Best single value

6.3 Type of estimate Minimum

6.4 Quality of extrapolation to reporting unit low

6.5 Additional population size (using population unit other than reporting unit)

a) Unit number of map 10x10 km grid cells

b) Minimum

c) Maximum

d) Best single value 6

e) Type of estimate Best estimate

6.6 Population size; Method used Insufficient or no data available

6.7 Short-term trend; Period

6.8 Short-term trend; Direction Unknown

6.9 Short-term trend; Magnitude

a) Estimated minimum

b) Estimated maximum

c) Pre-defined range

d) Unknown

e) Type of estimate

f) Rate of decrease

6.10 Short-term trend; Method used Insufficient or no data available

6.11 Long-term trend; Period

6.12 Long-term trend; Direction

6.13 Long-term trend; Magnitude

a) Minimum

b) Maximum

c) Confidence interval

d) Rate of decrease

6.14 Long-term trend; Method used

6.15 Favourable Reference Population (FRP)

ai) Population size

aii) Unit

b) Pre-defined increment Current population is less than 5% smaller than the FRP

c) Unknown No

d) Method used Reference-based approach

e) Quality of information low

6.16 Change and reason for change in population size

a) Change Yes

b) Genuine change No

c) Improved knowledge or more accurate data

d) Different method

e) No information Yes

f) Other reason

g) Main reason Unknown

6.17 Additional information

There is insufficient evidence for the Medicinal Leech population short-term trend or current population. The minimum population of 6 1x1km cells is extrapolated from the 6 hectads (assuming at least one monad per hectad) judged to be occupied in 2019-24. This estimate is of low confidence, for there may be many occupied monads per hectad (e.g. Cumbria with 4 hectads in 2013-18 previously contained 32 monads). There has been no systematic recording across the entire English range. The NBN Atlas holds 3 English records for the period 2013-24, with just one record since 2019. There are no NBN records for the population at Dungeness (National grid reference hectads TR01, TR02). An ongoing Freshwater Habitats Trust project in 2020-26 is updating the mapped distribution, but data are currently unavailable.

6.18 Age structure, mortality and reproduction deviation Unknown

7. Habitat for the species

7.1 Sufficiency of area and quality of occupied habitat (for long-term survival)

a) Is area of occupied habitat sufficient? Unknown

b) Is quality of occupied habitat sufficient? Unknown

c) If No or Unknown, is there a sufficiently large area of unoccupied habitat of suitable quality? Unknown

7.2 Sufficiency of area and quality of occupied habitat; Method used

a) Sufficiency of area of occupied habitat; Method used Based mainly on expert opinion with very limited data

b) Sufficiency of quality of occupied habitat; Method used Based mainly on expert opinion with very limited data

7.3 Short-term trend; Period	2013-2024
7.4 Short-term trend; Direction	Uncertain
7.5 Short-term trend; Method used	Based mainly on expert opinion with very limited data
7.6 Long-term trend; Period	
7.7 Long-term trend; Direction	
7.8 Long-term trend; Method used	

7.9 Additional information

In the absence of updated information, it is uncertain what the area and quality of specific, occupied upland tarns in Cumbria is. Habitat in the New Forest and at Dungeness is on protected sites and is assumed to be relatively stable. Data from the 2020-26 Freshwater Habitats Trust project are currently unavailable.

8. Main pressures

8.1 Characterisation of pressures

Table 3: Pressures affecting the species, including timing and importance/impact ranking. Pressures are defined as factors acting currently and/or during the reporting period (2019–2024). Rankings are: High (direct/immediate influence and/or large spatial extent) and Medium (moderate direct/immediate influence, mainly indirect and/or regional extent).

Pressure	Timing	Ranking
PA15: Use of other pest control methods in agriculture (excluding tillage)	Ongoing and likely to be in the future	Medium (M)
PA17: Agricultural activities generating pollution to surface or ground waters (including marine)	Ongoing and likely to be in the future	Medium (M)
PG18: Physical alterations of water bodies for aquaculture (including channels, weirs and dams)	Ongoing and likely to be in the future	Medium (M)
PI02: Other invasive alien species (other than species of Union concern)	Ongoing and likely to be in the future	Medium (M)
PJ03: Changes in precipitation regimes due to climate change	Ongoing and likely to be in the future	Medium (M)

8.2 Sources of information

See section 14 References

8.3 Additional information

No additional information

9. Conservation measures

9.1: Status of measures

a) Are measures needed? Yes

b) Indicate the status of measures Measures identified and taken

9.2 Main purpose of the measures taken Maintain the current range, population and/or habitat for the species

9.3 Location of the measures taken Both inside and outside National Site Network

9.4 Response to measures Medium-term results (within the next two reporting periods, 2025–2036)

9.5 List of main conservation measures

Table 4: Key conservation measures addressing current pressures and/or anticipated threats during the next two reporting periods (2025–2036). Measures are ranked by importance/impact: High (direct/immediate influence and/or large spatial extent) and Medium (moderate direct/immediate influence, mainly indirect and/or regional extent).

Conservation measure	Ranking
MA10: Reduce/eliminate point or diffuse source pollution to surface or ground waters (including marine) from agricultural activities	Medium (M)
MA14: Other measures related to agricultural practices	Medium (M)
MG02: Management of hunting, recreational fishing, and the recreational or commercial harvesting or collection of plants and fungi (incl. restoration of habitats)	Medium (M)
MI03: Management, control or eradication of other invasive alien species	Medium (M)

9.6 Additional information

Results of Freshwater Habitats Trust project 2020-26 should update information for this species. Draft regional IUCN Red List assessment for GB (Natural England unpublished, 2023) assesses Medicinal Leech as Endangered on account of extremely fragmented populations, long term decline in range, and loss of sub-populations.

10. Future prospects

10.1a Future trends of parameters

ai) Range	Unknown
bi) Population	Unknown
ci) Habitat for the species	Unknown

10.1b Future prospects of parameters

aii) Range	Unknown
bii) Population	Unknown
cii) Habitat for the species	Unknown

10.2 Additional information

No additional information

11. Conclusions

11.1 Range	Unknown (XX)
11.2 Population	Unknown (XX)
11.3 Habitat for the species	Unknown (XX)
11.4 Future prospects	Unknown (XX)
11.5 Overall assessment of Conservation Status	Unknown (XX)
11.6 Overall trend in Conservation Status	Unknown

11.7 Change and reason for change in conservation status

This field is not reported as the period 2019-2024 marks the first instance in which conservation status has been assessed at the national level, meaning no comparisons to previous reports can be drawn.

11.7 Change and reason for change in conservation status trend

This field is not reported as the period 2019-2024 marks the first instance in which conservation status has been assessed at the national level, meaning no comparisons to previous reports can be drawn.

11.8 Additional information

JNCC (2019) reporting for 2013-18 concluded Favourable status for Medicinal Leech. It may have maintained a stable status, but there is insufficient evidence to support an assessment with any confidence.

Hirundo medicinalis conservation status was assessed as overall - Unknown (due to all parameters Unknown; Tab. 1A), with overall conservation trend - Unknown (as trend for all parameters Unknown; Tab. 1B).

Range - Unknown (Tab. 1A, 2A) as current period (2019-24) indicates range more than 2% less than favourable range and short-term trend decreasing by more than 1% per year; but neither of these are considered genuine changes, rather due to inadequate surveys (Tab. 1A, 2B).

Population - Unknown (Tab. 1A, 2B) as 6 monads extrapolated as minimum estimate from hectads for 2013-24; but again due to inadequate survey not considered a genuine change (16 monads in 2013-18).

Habitat (Tab. 1A) - status Unknown as insufficient data on area or quality of habitat sufficient for population persistence (Tab. C1) and short-term trend unknown (Tab. C3).

Future Prospects conclusion (Tab. D2) - Unknown, as Future Prospects of Range, Population and Habitat all Unknown (Tab. D1) because balance of pressures and conservation measures are too uncertain.

12. UK National Site Network (pSCIs, SCIs, SACs) coverage for Annex II species

12.1 Population size inside the pSCIs, SCIs and SACs network

a) Unit

b) Minimum

c) Maximum

d) Best single value

12.2 Type of estimate

12.3 Population size inside the network; Method used

12.4 Short-term trend of population size within the network; Direction

12.5 Short-term trend of population size within the network; Method used

12.6 Short-term trend of habitat for the species inside the pSCIs, SCIs and SACs network; Direction

12.7 Short-term trend of habitat for the species inside the pSCIs, SCIs and SACs network; Method used

12.8 Additional information

No additional information

13. Complementary information

13.1 Justification of percentage thresholds for trends

No justification information

13.2 Trans-boundary assessment

No trans-boundary assessment information

13.2 Other relevant information

No other relevant information

14. References

Biogeographical and marine regions

4.2 Sources of information

JNCC (2019) European Community Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (92/43/EEC) Fourth Report by the United Kingdom under Article 17 on the implementation of the Directive from January 2013 to December 2018 Conservation status assessment for the species: S1034 - Medicinal leech (*Hirudo medicinalis*).

Main pressures

8.2 Sources of information

No sources of information

15. Explanatory Notes

Field label

Note

No explanatory notes