

**European Community Directive
on the Conservation of Natural Habitats
and of Wild Fauna and Flora
(92/43/EEC)**

Third Report by the United Kingdom under
Article 17

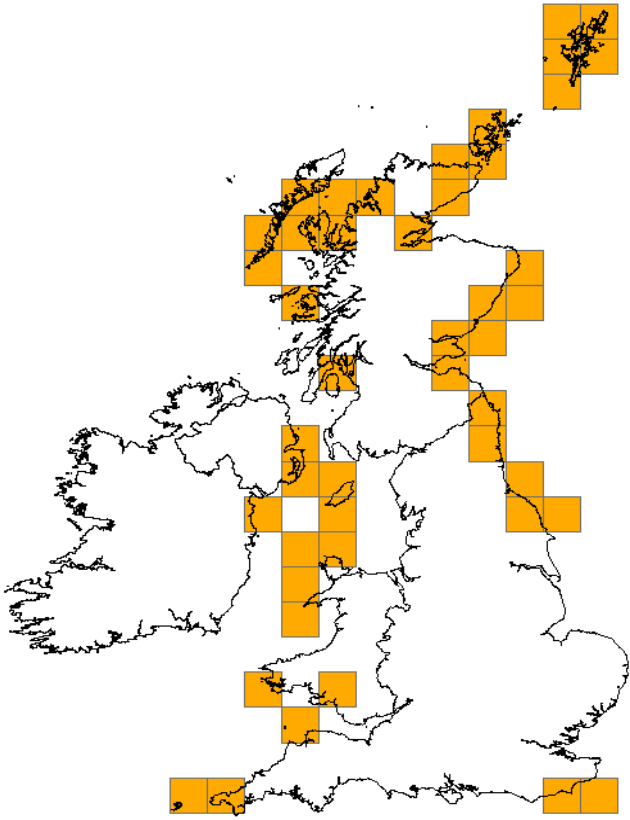
on the implementation of the Directive
from January 2007 to December 2012
Conservation status assessment for

Species:

S1345 - Humpback whale *Megaptera novaeangliae*

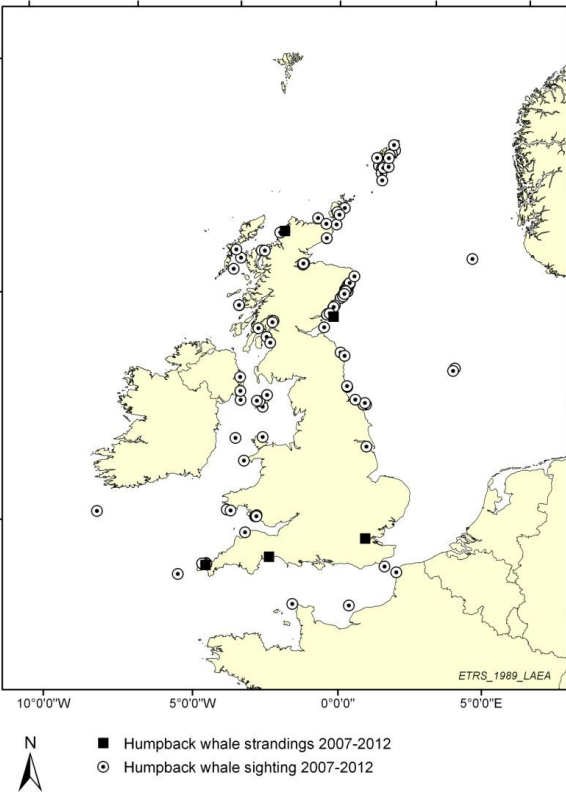
Reporting format on the 'main results of the surveillance under Article 11' for Annex II, IV & V species

<i>Field name</i>	<i>Brief explanations</i>	
0.2 Species	0.2.1 Species code	S1345
	0.2.2 Species scientific name	<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>
	0.2.3 Alternative species scientific name Optional	
	0.2.4 Common name Optional	

1.1 Maps			
1.1.1 Distribution map		Sensitive	False
		<p>Although relatively rare, sightings from the British Isles have increased markedly since the early 1980s. There are records of this species from all UK waters, including the Irish and</p>	

	<p>Celtic Seas, west Scotland, Northern Isles, North Sea and the Channel (Reid et al., 2003; Sabin et al., 2004). Sightings occur both on (Evans et al., 2003) and off the continental shelf (Pollock et al. 2000).</p> <p>In shelf waters, humpback whales occur mainly from May-September, but some sightings extend through November-March (Evans et al., 2003; Evans, 2008; Reid et al., 2003). During this period, <i>M. novaeangliae</i> is regularly recorded by acoustic monitoring from the Sound Surveillance System (SOSUS) mostly from north of Scotland to west of Ireland, and less frequently to the southwest of the British Isles (Clark and Charif 2000).</p> <p>There are five records of this species between 2005-2011 in the Joint Cetacean Protocol (JCP, 2012) all on the continental shelf in the Irish Sea, off southeast Orkney and the North Sea. Other opportunistic sightings have regularly been reported off the north coast of Scotland, in the North Sea (e.g. off the Aberdeenshire and Yorkshire coastlines), the English Channel, and off southwest Scotland (Sea Watch Foundation, 2012).</p> <p>The number of strandings has also been increasing around the UK coastline. No strandings were reported during 1991-2000 but 9 occurred between 2000-2006 (Jepson, 2005; CSIP database, 2012). During the 2007-2012 reporting period, 6 strandings occurred (3 in England, 2 in Scotland and 1 in Wales) (Deaville and Jepson, 2011; CSIP database, 2012). Four of these were during the winter months of 2007, and the other two occurred in September 2009 and August 2010. No strandings were recorded in 2011 or 2012 (January-October) (Deaville 2011; Deaville 2012).</p>
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1.1.2 Method used - map	<p>Estimate based on expert opinion with no or minimal sampling</p> <p>The map shows the presence of humpback whales in 50x50km grid squares for the reporting period 2007-2012. The data are derived from a number of sources, including opportunistic (Sea Watch Foundation) and effort-related sightings (Joint Cetacean Protocol) and strandings (Cetacean Strandings Investigation Programme) for this reporting period.</p>
1.1.3 Year or period	<p>2006-2012</p>

<p>1.1.4 Additional distribution map</p> <p>Optional</p>	<p>Additional Map 1</p>  <p>Additional Map 1 shows the distribution of sightings and strandings recorded around the UK during the reporting period. Sightings have been particularly common off northeast Scotland and the Northern Isles, although this may reflect greater observer coverage in these areas.</p> <p>Reid et al (2003) map the number of individuals sighted per unit time of observation resolved into ¼ International Council for the Exploration of the Seas (ICES) rectangles (15' latitude x 30' longitude) (Page 15, http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/PDF/CetaceansAtlas_web.pdf). The background shading shows the amount of survey effort carried out since the mid 1970s.</p>
<p>1.1.5 Range map</p>	<p>False</p> <p>The distribution/range map has only been reported for Gibraltar – ie within the Marine Mediterranean biogeographic region of UK waters. This species is an occasional species in UK waters, and as such its distribution/range in the Marine Atlantic biogeographic region is unknown and therefore has not been reported</p>

<p>2.1 Biogeographical region & marine regions</p>	<p>MATL</p>
<p>2.2 Published sources</p>	<p>Clark, C.W. And Charif, R.A. 2000. Acoustic monitoring of large whales off north and west Britain and Ireland: a two year study, October 1996-September 1998. JNCC Report No. 313.</p> <p>CSIP, 2012. Website: http://ukstrandings.org/</p> <p>Deaville, R. And Jepson, P. D. (Eds). 2011. Final Report for the period 1st January 2005 – 31st December 2010. Cetacean</p>

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Pollock, C.M., Mavor, R., Weir, C.R., Reid, A., White, R.W., Tasker, M.L., Webb, A. and Reid, J.B. 2000. The Distribution of Seabirds and Marine Mammals in the Atlantic Frontier, North

and West of Scotland. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Aberdeen. 92pp

Punt, A., Friday, N. A. and Smith, T. D. 2006. Reconciling data on the trends and abundance of North Atlantic humpback whales within a population modelling framework. *J. Cetacean Res. Man.* 8(2):145–159, 2006 145

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Ritter, F. 2009. Collisions of sailing vessels with cetaceans worldwide: first insights into a seemingly growing problem. Paper SC/61/BC1 presented to the IWC Scientific Committee, June 2009, Madeira, Portugal.

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2.3 Range	
2.3.1 Surface area Range	
2.3.2 Method used	Absent data

Surface area of Range		
2.3.3 Short-term trend Period	2001-2012	
2.3.4 Short term trend Trend direction	unknown	
2.3.5 Short-term trend Magnitude Optional	a) Minimum	
	b) Maximum	
2.3.6 Long-term trend Period Optional	1988-2012	
2.3.7 Long-term trend Trend direction Optional	unknown	
2.3.8 Long-term trend Magnitude Optional	a) Minimum	
	b) Maximum	
2.3.9 Favourable reference range	a) Value in km²	
	b) Operator for FRR	
	c) FRR is unknown (indicated by "true")	True
	d) Method used to set FRR	
2.3.10 Reason for change Is the difference between the reported value in 2.3.1 and the previous reporting round	a) Genuine change?	False

mainly due to...	b) Improved knowledge/more accurate data?	False
	c) Use of different method (e.g. "Range tool")?	False

2.4 Population		
2.4.1 Population size estimation (using individuals or agreed exceptions where possible)	a) Unit	
	b) Minimum	
2.4.2 Population size estimation (using population unit other than individuals) Optional (<i>if 2.4.1 filled in</i>)	a) Unit	
	b) Minimum	
2.4.3 Additional information on population estimates / conversion Optional	a) Definition of "locality"	
	b) Method to convert data	
2.4.4 Year or period	c) Problems encountered to provide population size estimation	
2.4.5 Method used Population size	Absent data	
2.4.6 Short-term trend Period	2001-2012	
	Populations in the North Atlantic (and elsewhere) were severely depleted by whaling, with the largest numbers taken during the 19th century. There are now signs that the North Atlantic population is recovering (Punt et al. 2006). Numbers of sightings in UK inshore	

	waters have been increasing since the 1990s. Also, whilst only two strandings were recorded in the 1980s and none in the 1990s, a total of 14 stranded humpback whales were recorded around the UK between 2001-2010 (Deaville and Jepson, 2011).	
2.4.7 Short-term trend	unknown	
Trend direction		
2.4.8 Short-term trend		
Magnitude	a) Minimum	
Optional		
	b) Maximum	
	c) Confidence interval	
2.4.9 Short-term trend	Absent data	
Method used		
2.4.10 Long-term trend –	1988-2012	
Period		
Optional		
2.4.11 Long-term trend	unknown	
Trend direction		
Optional		
2.4.12 Long-term trend		
Magnitude	a) Minimum	
Optional		
	b) Maximum	
	c) Confidence interval	
2.4.13 Long term trend	Absent data	
Method used		
Optional		
2.4.14 Favourable	a) Number of individuals/agreed exceptions/other units	
reference population		

	b) Operator	
	c) FRP is unknown (indicated by "true")	True
	d) Method used to set FRP	Abundance estimates are available for components ('stocks') of the North Atlantic humpback whale population when on their breeding and feeding grounds. The West Indies group of breeding aggregations was approximately 10,700 individuals in 1992-93 (SE 0.5%) (Stevick et al. 2003). For the northeast Atlantic, the best estimate of abundance of the Cape Verde Islands breeding aggregation is 99 individuals based on mark-recapture data from 2003 and 2004 (Punt et al. 2006). Most of the West Indies breeding population feed at high latitudes of the North Atlantic, particularly around Iceland, and their estimated annual rate of increase of 3.1% (Stevick et al. 2003) therefore applies to the growth of the wider northeast Atlantic population. The largest feeding aggregation occurs off Iceland; abundance in waters around Iceland and the Faroe Islands surveyed during summer 2007, resulted in an estimate of approximately 16,600 humpback whales (Pike et al. 2010). Records of humpback whales in UK waters are too few to allow estimation of abundance but the limited data available suggest use of these waters throughout the year, probably during migration and for feeding.
2.4.15 Reason for change Is the difference between the value reported at 2.4.1 or 2.4.2 and the previous reporting round mainly due to:	a) Genuine change?	False
	b) Improved knowledge/more accurate data?	False
	c) Use of different method (e.g. "Range tool")?	False

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2.5 Habitat for the species	
2.5.1 Area estimation	
2.5.2 Year or period	
2.5.3 Method used Habitat for the species	Absent data
2.5.4 Quality of the habitat	a) Habitat quality Unknown
	b) Assessment method
2.5.5 Short-term trend Period	2001-2012
2.5.6 Short-term trend Trend direction	unknown
2.5.7 Long-term trend Period Optional	1988-2012
2.5.8 Long-term trend Trend direction Optional	unknown
2.5.9 Area of suitable habitat for the species	a) Value in km ²
	b) Absence of data indicated as '0'
2.5.10 Reason for change Is the difference between the value reported at 2.5.1 and the previous reporting round mainly due to	a) Genuine change? False
	b) Improved knowledge/more accurate data? False
	c) Use of different method (e.g. "Range tool")? False

2.6 Main pressures		
a) Pressure	b) Ranking	c) Pollution qualifier
	H = high importance (max 5 entries) M = medium importance L = low importance	
XE: Threats and pressures from outside the EU territory	M	
D03: shipping lanes, ports, marine constructions	L	
F02: Fishing and harvesting aquatic resources	L	

Pressure ranking for *Megaptera novaeangliae* is mainly based on expert opinion and data from post mortem of stranded animals, which indicate sources of mortality for this species. Between 2000-2010, 3 post mortem examinations were undertaken on humpback whales. All three animals died due to starvation (Deville and Jepson, 2011). The increase in the number of strandings in the last decade mirrors IUCN's decision in 2008 to downgrade this species from Endangered to Least Concern, following the recovery of some populations after cessation of commercial whaling in 1986 (Deville and Jepson, 2011; IUCN Red List, 2012). Humpback whales were one of the predominant species taken between the 1860s and the early decades of the 1900s. Large catches (nearly 5000 individuals taken off Norway and Iceland between 1885 and 1910) in northern Europe almost completely exterminated humpbacks from the eastern North Atlantic (Stevick et al., 2003).

Humpback whales are one of the commonest cetacean species affected by boat collisions. Between 1966-2008, it was the most frequently recorded species in collisions and near miss events with sailing vessels worldwide (Ritter, 2009). It is also one of the two most common species in the US Large Whale Ship Strike Database (Jensen and Silber, 2004). Due to the low numbers in the UK (and wider EU) this pressure is considered of low ranking and is represented under the code D03-shipping lanes, ports, marine constructions. Outside the EU, particularly on the eastern coast of the US, ship strike is of greater concern. Entanglement with pots and gillnets is also a common source of mortality in humpback whales in the western North Atlantic (Johnson et al. 2005). There is no evidence of entanglement of humpback whales stranded in the UK.

2.6.1 Method used – Pressures	mainly based on expert judgement and other data
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2.7 Threats		
a) Threat	b) Ranking	c) Pollution qualifier
	H = high importance (max 5 entries) M = medium importance L = low importance	
XE: Threats and pressures from outside the EU territory	M	
D03: shipping lanes, ports, marine constructions	L	
F02: Fishing and harvesting aquatic resources	L	

2.7.1 Method used – Threats	expert opinion

2.8 Complementary information	
2.8.1 Justification of % thresholds for trends	
2.8.2 Other relevant information	
2.8.3 Trans-boundary assessment	

2.9 Conclusions (<i>assessment of conservation status at end of reporting period</i>)		
2.9.1 Range	a) Conclusion	Unknown
	b) Qualifier	
2.9.2 Population	a) Conclusion	Unknown
	b) Qualifier	
2.9.3 Habitat for the species	a) Conclusion	Unknown
	b) Qualifier	
2.9.4 Future prospects	a) Conclusion	Unknown
	b) Qualifier	
2.9.5 Overall assessment of Conservation Status	Unknown	
2.9.6 Overall trend in Conservation Status		

3 Natura 2000 coverage & conservation measures - Annex II species (only applies to species listed under Annex II of the Directive)	
3.1 Population	
3.1.1 Population size Estimation of population size included in the SAC network	a) Unit
	b) Minimum
	c) Maximum
3.1.2 Method used	
3.1.3 Trend of population size within the network (short-term trend)	
Optional	

3.2 Conservation measures														
Conservation measures taken (i.e. already being implemented) within the reporting period and provided information about their importance, location and evaluation.														
3.2.1 Measure	3.2.2 Type					3.2.3 Ranking H = high importance M = medium importance L = low importance	3.2.4 Location where the measure is PRIMARILY applied			3.2.5 Broad evaluation of the measure				
	a) Legal/statutory	b) Administrative	c) Contractual	d) Recurrent	e) One-off		a) Inside	b) Outside	c) Both inside & outside	a) Maintain	b) Enhance	c) Long term	d) No effect	e) Unknown