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:

S5020 - Blue whale (*Balaenoptera musculus*)

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

Field name	*Brief explanations*	
0.2 Species	**0.2.1 Species code**	**S5020**
	0.2.2 Species scientific name	***Balaenoptera musculus***
	0.2.3 Alternative species scientific name Optional	
	0.2.4 Common name Optional	

1.1 Maps			
1.1.1 Distribution map	**False**	**Sensitive**	**False**

1.1.2 Method used - map	**Absent data**
1.1.3 Year or period	
1.1.4 Additional distribution map Optional	**False** Reid et al. (2003) map the sighting locations of blue whales recorded around the UK between 1979-1997. The records were compiled in the Joint Cetacean Database and published in the Cetacean Atlas. This species is a rare visitor to UK waters, most recently being recorded in deep waters in the Faroe-Shetland Channel and the Rockall Trough (Charif and Clark 2000; Pollock et al., 2000). Acoustic monitoring to the west of the European continental shelf has indicated a peak occurrence during November and December (Charif and Clark 2000).
1.1.5 Range map	**False**

2.1 Biogeographical region & marine regions	**MATL**
2.2 Published sources	**Clapham, P. J., Young, S. B. and Brownell, R. L. 1999. Baleen whales: conservation issues and the status of the most endangered populations. Mammal Review. 29 (1): 35–60.** **Gunnlaugsson, T. and Sigurjónnson, J. 1989. NASS-87: Estimation of whale abundance based on observations made onboard Icelandic and Faroese survey vessels ship-board. Rep. Int. Whal. Commn. 40: 571-580.** **Perry, S. L., Demaster, D. P. and Silber, G. K. 1999. The great whales: history and status of six species listed as Endangered**

	under the U.S. Endangered Species Act of 1973. Marine Fisheries Review 61(1): 1-74. **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.** **Pike, D. G., Víkingsson, G. A., Gunnlaugsson, T. and Øien, N. 2009. A note on the distribution and abundance of blue whales (Balaenoptera musculus) in the Central and Northeast North Atlantic. NAMMCO Scientific Publications Volume 7:19-29** **Reid, J.B., Evans, P.G.H. and Northridge, S.P., 2003. Atlas of cetacean distribution in north-west European waters. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough.** **Sears, R., J. M. Williamson, F. W. Wenzel, M. Berube, D. Gendron and P. Jones 1990. Photographic identification of the blue whale (Balaenoptera musculus) in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, Canada. International Whaling Commission Special Issue Report (SC/A88/ID23).** **Sigurjonsson, J. and Gunnlaugsson, T. 1990. Recent trends in abundance of blue (Balaenoptera musculus) and humpback whales (Megaptera novaeangliae) off west and southwest Iceland, with a note on occurrence of other cetacean species. Rep. Int. Whal. Comm. 40: 537-551.** **Yochem, P. K. and Leatherwood, S. 1985. Blue whale. Pages 193-240 in: S. H. Ridgway and R. Harrison, (eds.) Handbook of Marine Mammals, Vol. 3: The Sirenians and Baleen Whales. Academic Press, New York.**

2.3 Range		
2.3.1 Surface area Range		
2.3.2 Method used Surface area of Range	**Absent data**	
2.3.3 Short-term trend Period	**2002-2012**	
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 mainly due to…	**a) Genuine change?**	**False**
	b) Improved knowledge/more accurate data?	**False**
	c) Use of different method (e.g. "Range tool")?	**False**

2.4 Population		
2.4.1 Population size estimation (using individuals or agreed exceptions where possible)	**a) Unit**	
	b) Minimum	
	c) Maximum	
2.4.2 Population size estimation (using population unit other than individuals) Optional *(if 2.4.1 filled in)*	**a) Unit**	
	b) Minimum	
	c) Maximum	
2.4.3 Additional information on population estimates / conversion Optional	**a) Definition of "locality"**	
	b) Method to convert data	
	c) Problems encountered to provide population size estimation	
2.4.4 Year or period		
2.4.5 Method used Population size	**Absent data**	
2.4.6 Short-term trend Period	**2001-2012**	
2.4.7 Short-term trend Trend direction	**unknown**	
2.4.8 Short-term trend Magnitude Optional	**a) Minimum**	
	b) Maximum	

	c) Confidence interval	
2.4.9 Short-term trend Method used	**Absent data**	
2.4.10 Long-term trend – Period Optional	**1988-2012**	
2.4.11 Long-term trend Trend direction Optional	**unknown**	
2.4.12 Long-term trend Magnitude Optional	**a) Minimum**	
	b) Maximum	
	c) Confidence interval	
2.4.13 Long term trend Method used Optional	**Absent data**	
2.4.14 Favourable reference population	**a) Number of individuals/agreed exceptions/other units**	
	b) Operator	
	c) FRP is unknown (indicated by "true")	**True**
	d) Method used to set FRP	**Currently there are no population size estimates for this species in the North Atlantic, although the population is thought to be small (Clapham et al., 1999; Perry et al., 1999; Reid et al., 2003). 203 individuals have been identified in the western North Atlantic (Sears et al., 1990) and 442 in Icelandic waters (Gumlangsson & Sigurjónsson 1990; Sigurjónsson & Gumlangsson 1990). Pike**

		et al. (2009) assessed abundance of blue whales from surveys in 1987, 1989, 1995 and 2001 that covered lrge areas of the northeast Atlantic. Abundance varied between years, with the lowest occurring in 1987 (222, 95% CI 115-440) and the highest in 1995 (979, 95% CI 137-2,542).
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**

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	**a) Value in km²**	

for the species		
	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	

2.6.1 Method used – Pressures	

2.7 Threats		
a) Threat	**b) Ranking**	**c) Pollution qualifier**
	H = high importance (max 5 entries) M = medium importance L = low importance	

2.7.1 Method used – Threats	

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 *(assessment of conservation status at end of reporting period)*		
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	f) Not evaluated