



MarLIN

Marine Information Network

Information on the species and habitats around the coasts and sea of the British Isles

Northern right whale (*Eubalaena glacialis*)

MarLIN – Marine Life Information Network
Marine Evidence-based Sensitivity Assessment (MarESA) Review

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A report from:

The Marine Life Information Network, Marine Biological Association of the United Kingdom.

Please note. This MarESA report is a dated version of the online review. Please refer to the website for the most up-to-date version [<https://www.marlin.ac.uk/species/detail/107>]. All terms and the MarESA methodology are outlined on the website (<https://www.marlin.ac.uk>)

This review can be cited as:

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See online review for
distribution map

Distribution data supplied by the Ocean
Biogeographic Information System (OBIS). To
interrogate UK data visit the NBN Atlas.

Researched by Morvan Barnes

Refereed by Admin

Authority (Müller, 1776)

**Other common
names** -

Synonyms *Balaena glacialis*
(Desmoulins, 1822)

Summary

🔍 Description

Eubalaena glacialis is a baleen whale and can be recognised as such by the plates of baleen (rather than teeth) suspended from the upper jaw and the two blowholes on the upper body. It has an arched upper jaw and a smooth lower jaw without pleats. The northern right whale is robust bodied and can reach up to 17 m in length. With no similar species in British and Irish waters, the northern right whale is easily recognisable at close range. It has distinct roughened areas of skin, known as callosities, on its large head. Callosities are present above the eye, on the upper jaw, and a line of small callosities is present on each side of the lower jaw leading to a large callosity at the front of the jaw.

📍 Recorded distribution in Britain and Ireland

Recorded off the west coasts of the Outer Hebrides and off the south-west coast of the Isle of Man.

📍 Global distribution

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 **Habitat**

The northern right whale is an open ocean whale, not often seen near the coast in north-west Europe. It can be found at the surface or diving down to a few hundred metres.

 **Depth range**

-

 **Identifying features**

- Up to 17 m in length.
- Uniform blue-black over entire body except a white genital region.
- No creases on chin or throat.
- No dorsal fin or hump.
- Arched upper jaw and mouthline.
- Distinct callosities on its head.

 **Additional information**

Northern right whales are usually found alone or in pairs, although in feeding areas up to a dozen have been seen together. It occasionally breeches, and when diving, it will often show the tail flukes. Slapping of the flippers and tail flukes has been observed. Dives may last up to 40 minutes long (Kinze, 2002).

 **Listed by** **Further information sources**

Search on:



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Reid, J.B., Evans, P.G.H., Northridge, S.P. (ed.), 2003. *Atlas of Cetacean Distribution in North-west European Waters*. Peterborough: Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

Datasets

NBN (National Biodiversity Network) Atlas. Available from: <https://www.nbnatlas.org>.

OBIS (Ocean Biogeographic Information System), 2019. Global map of species distribution using gridded data. Available from: Ocean Biogeographic Information System. www.iobis.org. Accessed: 2019-03-12