



# MarLIN

## Marine Information Network

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

### Ringed seal (*Pusa hispida*)

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

Morvan Barnes

2008-06-02

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/124>]. All terms and the MarESA methodology are outlined on the website (<https://www.marlin.ac.uk>)

This review can be cited as:

Barnes, M.K.S. 2008. *Pusa hispida* Ringed seal. In Tyler-Walters H. and Hiscock K. (eds) *Marine Life Information Network: Biology and Sensitivity Key Information Reviews*, [on-line]. Plymouth: Marine Biological Association of the United Kingdom. DOI <https://dx.doi.org/10.17031/marlin.sp.124.1>



The information (TEXT ONLY) provided by the Marine Life Information Network (MarLIN) is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial-Share Alike 2.0 UK: England & Wales License. Note that images and other media featured on this page are each governed by their own terms and conditions and they may or may not be available for reuse. Permissions beyond the scope of this license are available [here](#). Based on a work at [www.marlin.ac.uk](http://www.marlin.ac.uk)

(page left blank)



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** Schreber, 1775

**Other common  
names** -

**Synonyms** *Phoca hispida*

## Summary

### Description

The ringed seal *Phoca hispida* is member of the 'true seal' family. Like all true seals, it has a tapering and pointed muzzle, small, clawed pectoral flippers, and small hind flippers that cannot rotate under the body. Like similar species, it has beaded whiskers on the muzzle. The ringed seal is quite a plump seal, with a small head and a short, thick neck. It can reach 1.6 m in length. It has a short muzzle and large conspicuous eyes. It is most easily recognised by the light rings it has all over its upper body. The background colour is variable but normally medium to dark grey above and light grey below.

### Recorded distribution in Britain and Ireland

Occasionally seen in the North Sea as far south as the eastern English Channel and in the Firth of Clyde, Scotland. Usually found north of the British Isles.

### Global distribution

-

 **Habitat**

The ringed seal usually inhabits cold oceanic waters.

 **Depth range**

-

 **Identifying features**

- Bulky body up to 1.6 m in length.
- Small tapering muzzle with beaded whiskers.
- Short, thick neck.
- No external ear.
- Small pectoral and hind flippers.
- Light rings over upper side of the body.

 **Additional information**

No text entered

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

Search on:



## Bibliography

- BMLSS (British Marine Life Study Society), 2008. Sea Mammals: Seals Page. [www.glaucus.org.uk/seals1.htm](http://www.glaucus.org.uk/seals1.htm), 2008-03-13
- Corbet, G.B. & Southern, H.N., 1977. *The handbook of British Mammals*. 2nd edition. Blackwell Scientific Publications, Oxford & London.
- Evans, P.G.H. & Raga, J. A. (ed.), 2001. *Marine mammals: biology and conservation* New York: Kluwer Academic / Plenum Publishers
- Hewer, H.R. 1974. *British Seals*. London : Collins
- Howson, C.M. & Picton, B.E., 1997. *The species directory of the marine fauna and flora of the British Isles and surrounding seas*. Belfast: Ulster Museum. [Ulster Museum publication, no. 276.]
- Kinze, C. C., 2002. *Photographic Guide to the Marine Mammals of the North Atlantic*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Nowak, R.M., 2003. *Walker's Marine Mammals of the World*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
- Shetland Sea Mammal Group 2008. *Vagrant Seals in Shetland*. [www.nature-shetland.co.uk/seamammal/rareseals.htm](http://www.nature-shetland.co.uk/seamammal/rareseals.htm), 2008-03-13

## Datasets

- Bristol Regional Environmental Records Centre, 2017. BRERC species records recorded over 15 years ago. Occurrence dataset: <https://doi.org/10.15468/h1ln5p> accessed via GBIF.org on 2018-09-25.
- 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](http://www.iobis.org). Accessed: 2019-03-12