Harp seal (Pagophilus groenlandicus)

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/125]. All terms and the MarESA methodology are outlined on the website (https://www.marlin.ac.uk)

This review can be cited as:

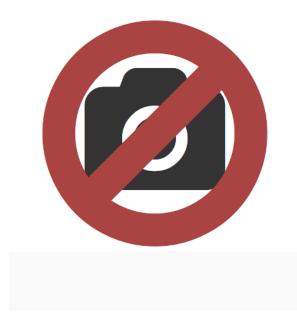
Barnes, M.K.S. 2008. *Pagophilus groenlandicus* Harp seal. In Tyler-Walters H. and Hiscock K. (eds) *Marine Life Information Network: Biology and Sensitivity Key Information Reviews*, [on-line]. Plymouth: Marine Biological Association of the United Kingdom. DOI https://dx.doi.org/10.17031/marlinsp.125.1



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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	(Erxleben, 1777)		
Other common names	-	Synonyms	Phoca groenlandica

Summary

Description

The harp seal *Phoca groenlandica* 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 harp seal is a moderately plump seal, with a small, slightly pointed head and a moderately thick neck. It can reach 1.9 m in length. It has a short muzzle and moderately large eyes. It is most easily recognised by the its colour pattern. It has a silvery white body, with a black head and a broad swath of black on either side meeting at the shoulders. Some harp seals may occasionally be more of a sooty grey or with scattered black blotches.

9 Recorded distribution in Britain and Ireland

Usually found much further north than the British Isles, the harp seal has been recorded in the Firth of Clyde, Scotland and in the Shetlands.

Global distribution

-

∠ Habitat

The harp seal inhabits cold waters close to the shore.

Depth range

Q Identifying features

- Bulky body up to 1.9 m in length.
- Small tapering muzzle with beaded whiskers.
- Short, thick neck.
- No external ear.
- Small pectoral and hind flippers.
- Silvery white body with black head and a large black swath on each side meeting over the shoulders.

Additional information

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