



# MarLIN

## Marine Information Network

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

## Bearded seal (*Erignathus barbatus*)

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

Morvan Barnes

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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/127>]. 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.

|                           |                  |                    |       |
|---------------------------|------------------|--------------------|-------|
| <b>Researched by</b>      | Morvan Barnes    | <b>Refereed by</b> | Admin |
| <b>Authority</b>          | (Erxleben, 1777) |                    |       |
| <b>Other common names</b> | -                | <b>Synonyms</b>    | -     |

## Summary

### Description

The bearded seal *Erignathus barbatus* is member of the 'true seal' family. Like all true seals, it has a tapering and pointed muzzle, small, clawed pectoral flippers, and relatively small hind flippers that cannot rotate under the body. It has smooth, long whiskers on the muzzle. The bearded seal is a large seal, with a very small head and a short, thick neck. It can reach 1.9 m in length. It has a short muzzle and moderately large eyes. The back is a uniform dark colour and the underside is paler.

### Recorded distribution in Britain and Ireland

A vagrant in northern British waters, usually found much further north.

### Global distribution

-

### Habitat

The bearded seal is a cold water species usually inhabiting coastal waters.

## ↓ Depth range

-

## Q Identifying features

- Long body up to 1.9 m in length.
- Small tapering muzzle with smooth, long, white whiskers.
- Short, thick neck.
- No external ear.
- Very small pectoral and moderately long hind flippers.
- Fingers on flippers are all the same length.
- Variable dark colouration on the back without spots or blotches.

## 🏛️ Additional information

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## Datasets

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