



# MarLIN

## Marine Information Network

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

## Walrus (*Odobenus rosmarus*)

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/128>]. 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. *Odobenus rosmarus* Walrus. 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.128.1>



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.

<b>Researched by</b>	Morvan Barnes	<b>Refereed by</b>	Admin
<b>Authority</b>	(Linnaeus, 1758)		
<b>Other common names</b>	-	<b>Synonyms</b>	-

## Summary

### Description

The warus *Odobenus rosmarus* is the only member of its family and is very easily identified. Like seals, walruses have both pectoral flippers and tail flippers as well as a muzzle with long whiskers. The walrus differs by having a broad muzzle with the whiskers on the front end, and by having two large tusks up to 1 m in length. The walrus is a large and bulky species reaching up to 3.6 m in length. Its skin is notably thick, rough and creased. It has small 'bloodshot' eyes. The tail end is enclosed in a web of skin. Most walruses are grey to cinnamon-brown in colour, becoming paler with age. The skin becomes flushed with blood when warm and they acquire a rosy red colouration.

### Recorded distribution in Britain and Ireland

Usually found in Arctic waters but individuals have been found in the North Sea, the west coast of Ireland and one record exists for the Firth of Clyde, Scotland.

### Global distribution

-

 **Habitat**

The walrus is found in shallow water and coastal habitats, on sandy beaches and rocky shores.

 **Depth range**

-

 **Identifying features**

- Large, bulky body up to 3.6 m in length.
- Broad muzzle with long whiskers at the front.
- Two large tusks up to 1 m in length.
- Thick and creased skin.

 **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
- Outer Hebrides Biological Recording, 2018. Vertebrates (except birds, INNS and restricted records), Outer Hebrides. Occurrence dataset: <https://doi.org/10.15468/dax3tf> accessed via GBIF.org on 2018-10-01.
- West Wales Biodiversity Information Centre, 2018. Mammal Records (West Wales). Occurrence dataset: <https://doi.org/10.15468/vitiic> accessed via GBIF.org on 2018-10-02.