European Environment Agency
European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity

Balaenoptera physalus

Annex	IV
Priority	No
Species group	Mammals
Regions	Marine Atlantic, Marine Macaronesian, Marine Mediterranean

Balaenoptera physalus

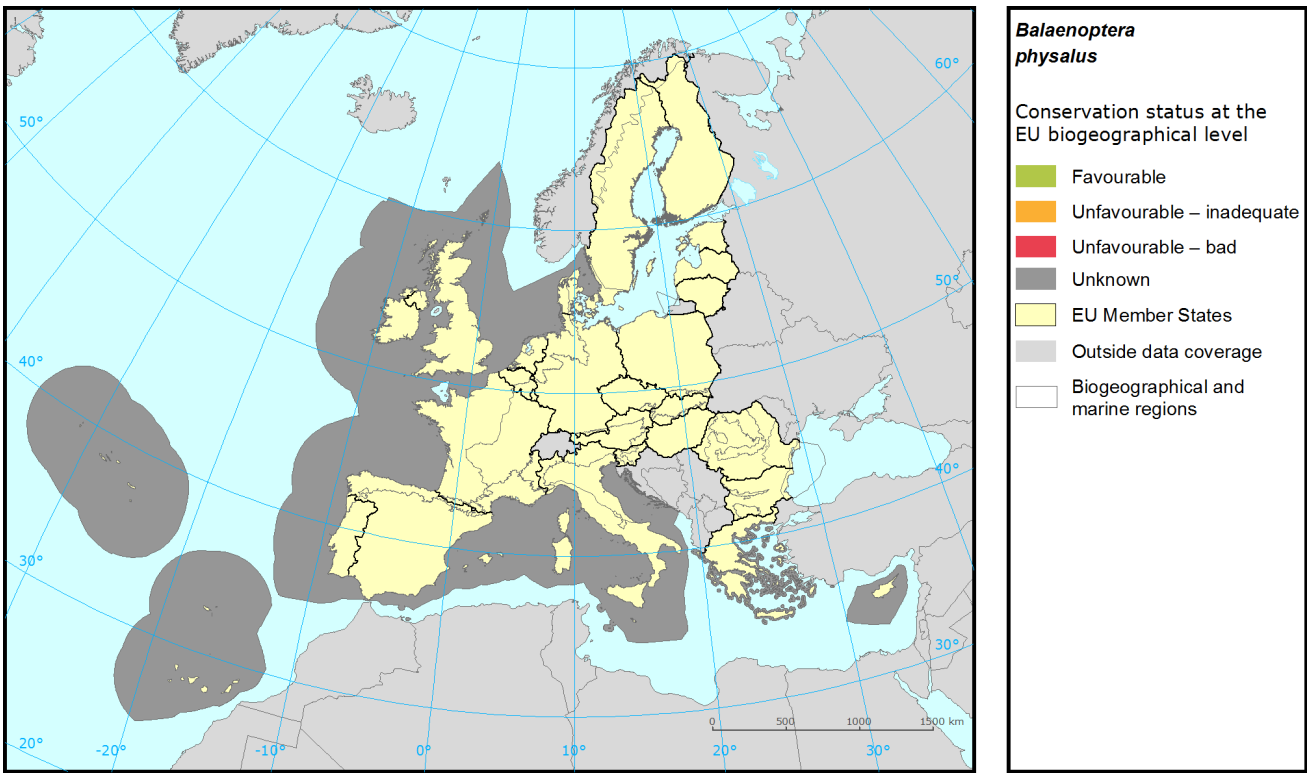
The Fin whale, *Balaenoptera physalus*, is distributed in the marine Atlantic and Macaronesian regions from all of the North sea and northwestern Ireland and southwards until the Canaries islands. The species inhabits pelagic waters 400-2,000 meters deep and has been observed to breed in warmer temperate waters and then migrate to summering temperate or polar colder waters. The species found in the Marine Mediterranean region is a genetically distinct subpopulation that resides in the central and western Mediterranean sea.

The species is present in the Marine Atlantic, Marine Macaronesian-, and the Marine Mediterranean region. Conclusion for all regions is unknown (XX), same as in 2001-2007. More data is needed for the species. Especially since the species is listed as vulnerable (VU) endangered' in the IUCN Red List of threatened species in the Mediterranean. Also, the species is listed as 'endangered' in the IUCN Red List of threatened species because of its population reduction due to historical whaling.

Main threats and pressures listed for the species; shipping, death or injury by collision, noise, Military use and civil unrest, professional fishing, drift-net fishing, water pollution, wildlife watching, non-synthetic compound contamination, synthetic compound contamination, reduction or loss of specific habitat features, exploration and extraction of oil or gas.

Concerning the report from the United Kingdom, Whale and Dophin Conservation questions the validity of habitat being equivalent to the estimated range because of the acknowledged uncertainty in the Joint Cetacean Protocol to provide adequate predictions around scarce data, due to the patchy nature of fin whale distribution.

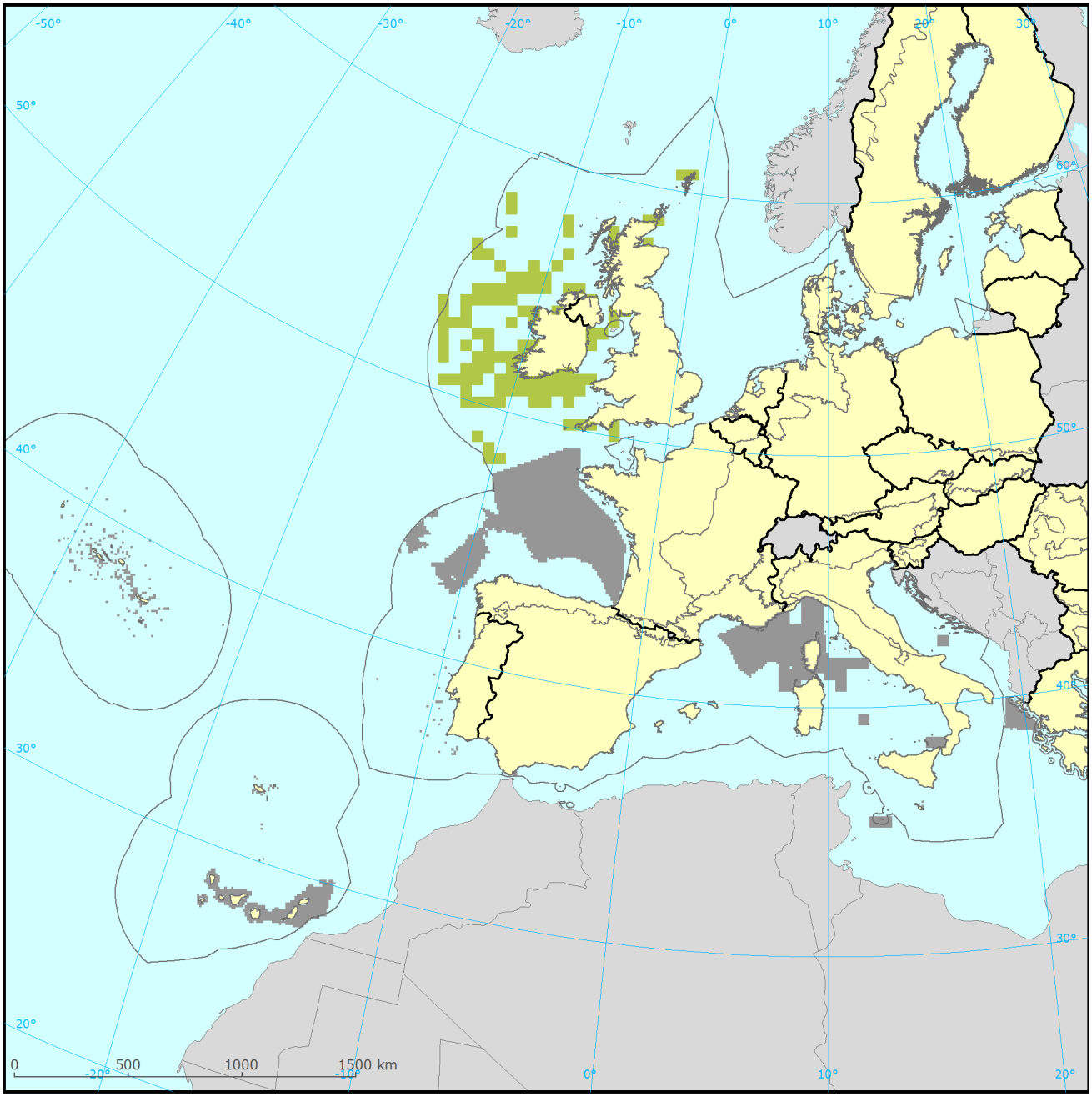
Assessment of conservation status at the European biogeographical level



Region	Conservation status (CS) of parameters				Current CS	Trend in CS	% in region	Previous CS	Reason for change
	Range	Population	Habitat	Future prospects					
MATL	FV	XX	XX	XX	XX	x	70	XX	
MMAC	FV	XX	XX	XX	XX	x	9	XX	
MMED					XX	x	20	XX	

See the endnote for more information[i]

Assessment of conservation status at the Member State level



Balaenoptera physalus

Distribution and conservation status at the Member State level

- Favourable
- Unfavourable – inadequate
- Unfavourable – bad
- Unknown
- EU Member States
- Outside data coverage
- Biogeographical and marine regions

The map shows both Conservation Status and distribution using a 10 km x 10 km grid. Conservation status is assessed at biogeographical level. Therefore the representation in each grid cell is only illustrative.

MS	Region	Conservation status of parameters				Current CS	Trend in CS	% in region	Previous CS	Reason for change
		Range	Population	Habitat	Future prospects					
ES	MATL	FV	XX	XX	XX	XX		12.8	XX	
FR	MATL	FV	XX	XX	XX	XX		36.1	XX	
IE	MATL	FV	FV	FV	FV	FV		41.5	FV	
NL	MATL									
PT	MATL	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX		0.5	XX	
UK	MATL	FV	FV	FV	FV	FV		9.1	FV	
ES	MMAC	FV	XX	XX	XX	XX		70.5	XX	
PT	MMAC	FV	XX	XX	XX	XX		29.5	XX	
ES	MMED	FV	XX	XX	XX	XX			XX	
FR	MMED	FV	XX	XX	XX	XX		55.0	U2	Better data
GR	MMED	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX		9.2	XX	
IT	MMED	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX		35.7	XX	
MT	MMED	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX		0.1	XX	
UK	MMED	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX				

Knowing that not all changes in conservation status between the reporting periods were genuine, Member States were asked to give the reasons for changes in conservation status. Bulgaria and Romania only joined the EU in 2007 and Greece did not report for 2007-12 so no reason is given for change for these countries. Greek data shown above is from 2001-06.

Main pressures and threats reported by Member States

Member States were asked to report the 20 most important threats and pressures using an agreed hierarchical list which can be found on the Article 17 Reference Portal. Pressures are activities which are currently having an impact on the species and threats are activities expected to have an impact in the near future. Pressures and threats were ranked in three classes ‘high, medium and low importance’; the tables below only show threats and pressures classed as ‘high’, for some species there were less than ten threats or pressures reported as highly important.

Ten most frequently reported 'highly important' pressures

Code	Activity	Frequency
D03	Shipping lanes and ports	67
G05	Other human intrusions and disturbances	33

Ten most frequently reported 'highly important' threats

Code	Activity	Frequency
D03	Shipping lanes and ports	38
G05	Other human intrusions and disturbances	25
H03	Pollution to marine waters	13
H06	Excess energy (noise, light, heating, electromagnetic)	13
J03	Other changes to ecosystems	13

This information is derived from the Member State national reports submitted to the European Commission under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive in 2013 and covering the period 2007-2012. More detailed information, including the MS reports, is available at: http://bd.eionet.europa.eu/article17/reports2012/species/summary/?group=Mammals&period=3&subject=Balaenoptera+physalus

[i]**Assessment of conservation status at the European biogeographical level:** Current Conservation Status (Current CS) shows the status for the reporting period 2007-2012, Previous Conservation Status (Previous CS) for the reporting period 2000-2006. Reason for change in conservation status between the reporting periods indicates whether the changes in the status were genuine or not genuine. Previous Conservation Status was not assessed for Steppic, Black Sea and Marine Black Sea regions. For these regions the Previous status is therefore considered as 'unknown'. The percentage of the species population occurring within the biogeographical/marine region (% in region) is calculated based on the area of GIS distribution.