Phoca vitulina

Annex	II, V
Priority	No
Species group	Mammals
Regions	Marine Atlantic, Marine Baltic, Marine Macaronesian

Phoca vitulina

The common seal/harbour seal is present in the eastern Atlantic region with its subspecies *Phoca vitulina vitulina*. It is regularly distributed throughout the entire marine Baltic region and in the marine Atlantic region from the United Kingdom and Ireland to mainland European coasts from Sweden and southwards to France (Brittany) and occasionally as far south as northern Portugal. The Baltic population was close to extinction in the 1970s and widespread declines have occurred in the United Kingdom, Kattegat and Skagerrak, and Wadden Sea populations. The species is vulnerable to fishery bycatch, culling, high pollution loads, disease events, and disturbance to haul out areas.

The overall conservation status in the marine Atlantic region is 'unfavourable-bad' and dictated largely by the status (decreasing trend and population numbers below the reference values) of the United Kingdom population which represents 42% of the marine region's population. This is a deterioration compared to 2007 when status was 'unfavourable-inadequate'. The change is driven by worsening condition in UK and the Netherlands which is not balanced by the improved situation in Sweden.
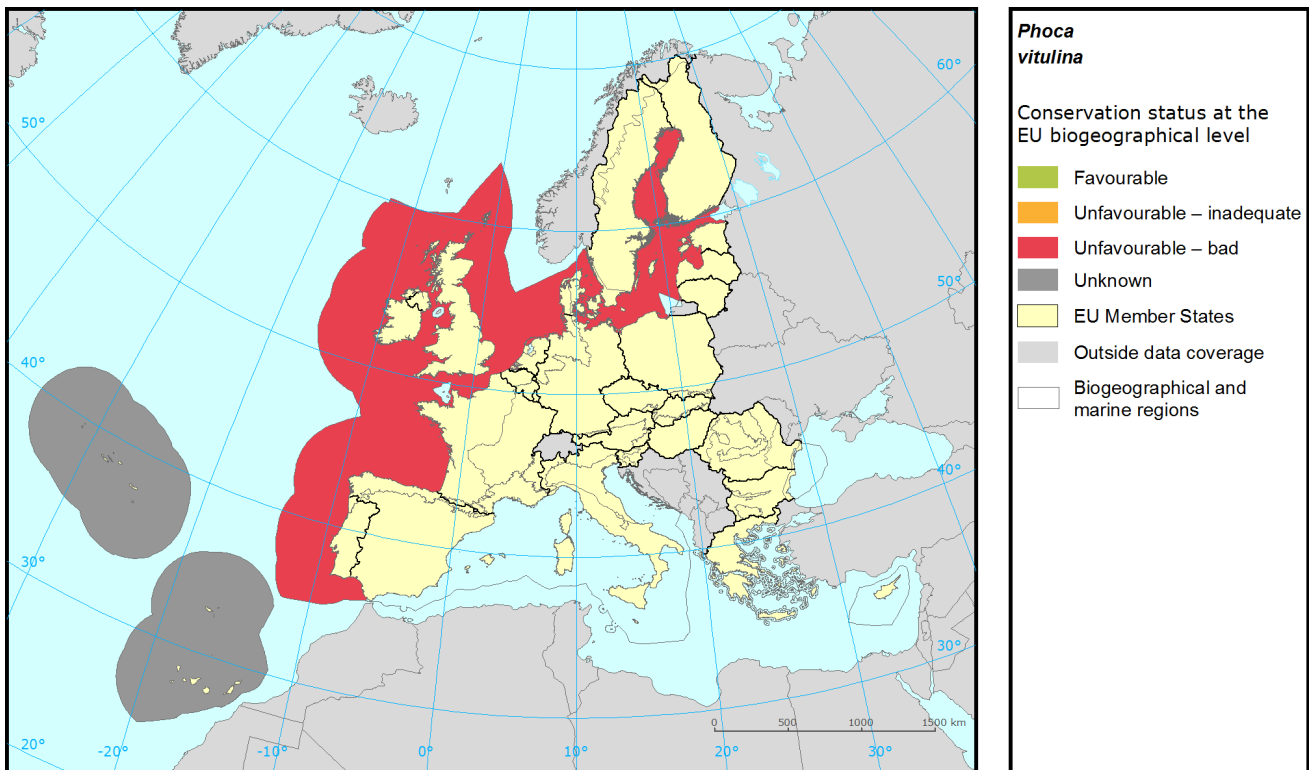
In the Baltic on the other hand, the overall assessment is 'unfavourable-bad' due to the bad status of the Swedish population while status in Denmark is considered favourable. This is the same as in 2007.

It is reported but not assessed as a vagrant species in Portugal in the Marine Macaronesian region. The species is listed as 'least concern' in the IUCN Red List of threatened species.

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	U2	FV	U2	U2	-	95	U1	Genuine
MBAL	U2	U1	U1	U1	U2	+	5	U2	
MMAC					XX			XX	

See the endnote for more information[i]

Species: *Phoca vitulina*
Report under the Article 17 of the Habitats Directive

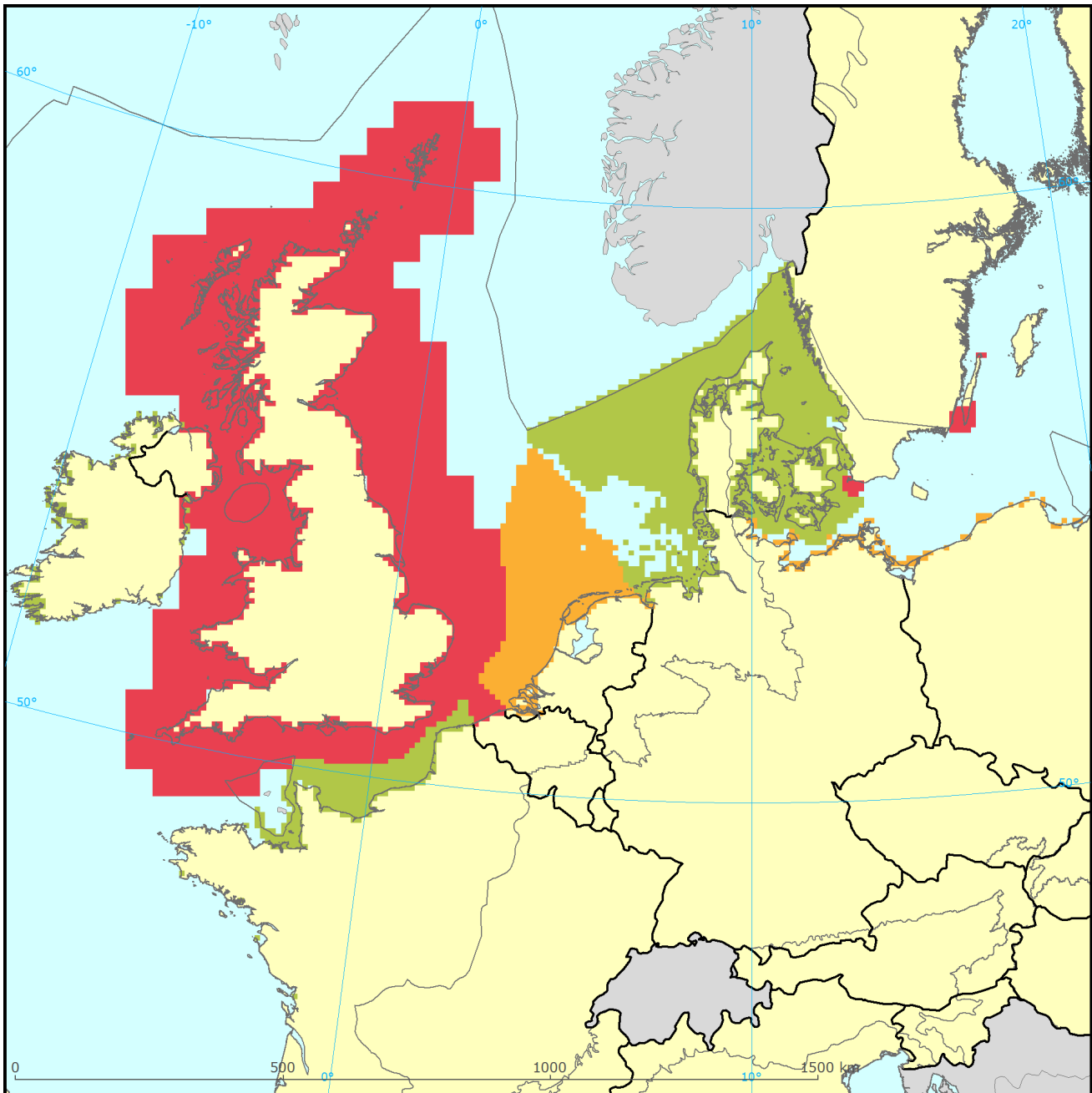## Assessment of conservation status at the Member State level

Phoca vitulina

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.

Species: *Phoca vitulina*
Report under the Article 17 of the Habitats Directive

MS	Region	Conservation status of parameters				Current CS	Trend in CS	% in region	Previous CS	Reason for change
		Range	Population	Habitat	Future prospects					
BE	MATL	U1	U2	U1	U1	U2	+	0.5	U1	Better data
DE	MATL	FV	FV	FV	FV	FV		2.7	FV	
DK	MATL	FV	FV	FV	FV	FV		13.4	FV	
FR	MATL	FV	FV	XX	FV	FV		4.5	FV	
IE	MATL	FV	FV	FV	FV	FV		1.3	FV	
NL	MATL	FV	FV	FV	U1	U1	+	9.9	FV	Genuine
PT	MATL								XX	
SE	MATL	FV	FV	FV	FV	FV		2.2	U2-	Genuine
UK	MATL	FV	U2	FV	U2	U2	-	65.5	U1	Genuine
DE	MBAL	FV	XX	U1	U1	U1	+	15.3	U2	Better data
DK	MBAL	FV	FV	FV	FV	FV		74.5	FV	
PL	MBAL	XX	XX	U1	U1	U1	x		U2	Changed method
SE	MBAL	U2	U2	U2	U1	U2	+	10.2	U2-	Genuine
PT	MMAC								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
C01	Mining and quarrying	14
C03	Production of renewable energy (abiotic)	14
D03	Shipping lanes and ports	14
E02	Industrial or commercial areas	14
F01	Marine and freshwater aquaculture	14
G01	Outdoor sports, leisure and recreational activities	14
K03	Interspecific faunal relations	14

Ten most frequently reported 'highly important' threats

Code	Activity	Frequency
C01	Mining and quarrying	9
C03	Production of renewable energy (abiotic)	9
D03	Shipping lanes and ports	9
E02	Industrial or commercial areas	9
F01	Marine and freshwater aquaculture	9
F02	Fishing and harvesting aquatic resources	9
G01	Outdoor sports, leisure and recreational activities	9
H03	Pollution to marine waters	9
J03	Other changes to ecosystems	9
K03	Interspecific faunal relations	9

Proportion of population covered by the Natura 2000 network

For species listed in the Annex II of the Directive Member States were asked to report the population size within the Natura 2000 network. The percentage of species population covered by the network was estimated by comparing the population size within the network and the total population size in the biogeographical/marine region.

Percentage of coverage by Natura 2000 sites in biogeographical/marine region

	MATL	MBAL
BE	55	
DE	97	x
DK	x	x
FR	100	
IE	80	
NL	64	
SE	65	74
UK	24	

See the endnotes for more information[ii]

Most frequently reported conservation measures

For species listed in the Annex II of the Directive Member States were asked to report up to 20 conservation measures being implemented for this species using an agreed list which can be found on the Article 17 Reference Portal. Member States were further requested to highlight up to five most important ('highly important') measures; the table below only shows measures classed as 'high', for many species there were less than ten measures reported as highly important.

Ten most frequently reported 'highly important' conservation measures

Code	Measure	Frequency
6.1	Establish protected areas/sites	15
9.2	Regulating/Managing exploitation of natural resources on sea	15
4.1	Restoring/improving water quality	10
5.0	Other marine-related measures	10
5.1	Restoring marine habitats	10
6.0	Other spatial measures	10
6.3	Legal protection of habitats and species	10
7.3	Regulation/ Management of fishery in marine and brackish systems	10
7.0	Other species management measures	5
7.1	Regulation/ Management of hunting and taking	5

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=Phoca+vitulina

[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.

[ii]**Percentage of coverage by Natura 2000 sites in biogeographical/marine region:** In some cases the population size within the Natura 2000 network has been estimated using a different methodology to the estimate of overall population size and this can lead to percentage covers greater than 100%. In such case the value has been given as 100% and highlighted with an asterisk (*). The value 'x' indicates that the Member State has not reported the species population and/or the coverage by Natura 2000. No information is available for Greece. The values are only provided for regions, in which the occurrence of the species has been reported by the Member States.