



1. Requirement overview:

Requirements	An improved understanding of the distribution and condition of protected species and habitats in English waters.
Requirement detail	<p>Many individual species and habitats receive statutory protection under a range of legislative provisions. The protection afforded is different depending on the legislation but can for example range from a duty to further the conservation of the living organisms and types of habitat to preventing intentional injury, removal or death of certain species or damage to habitats.</p> <p>The MMO receives advice on protected species and habitats from the statutory nature conservation bodies. Additionally, the environmental assessment process may also provide information on protected species and habitats but there is a lack of a coherent evidence base, in terms of distribution and condition, at a national scale. A common understanding of the distribution and condition of relevant habitats and species would improve the transparency and consistency of marine licensing.</p> <p>The MMO wishes to improve evidence on species and habitats distribution and condition outside of designated sites that may be affected by marine developments. Lists of relevant marine protected species are either included or referred to within MMO web pages on marine species protection.</p>
MMO use	<p>Marine Licensing:</p> <p>Required to improve the transparency and consistency of decision-making such as under Environmental Impact Assessment.</p> <p>Marine Planning:</p> <p>Information on the distribution and protection of important species and habitats will help support the development of marine plan policy or inform others on policy implementation. Data has the potential to support the evaluation of existing marine plans.</p>
External interest	Natural England, Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), Environment Agency.

Delivery target	Ongoing for licensing, Q4 2018 for Marine Planning to inform the 3 rd iteration of marine plans for the next tranche of marine plan development
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2. Aims and objectives

Aim:

To improve understanding of the distribution and condition of species of protected species in English waters, particularly outside of protected areas.

Objectives:

Objectives to deliver this requirement include to

- make existing information on protected species and habitats distribution and condition more accessible
- improve understanding of the distribution of protected species and habitats
- improve understanding of the condition of protected species and habitats
- improve decision-making in relation to protected species and habitats

3. Existing evidence

MMO	<p>As a first step to mapping seabird sensitivity to offshore wind farms, MMO1034 mapped use of sea areas by seabirds and inshore waterbirds in English territorial waters.</p> <p>MMO1022 mapped grey and harbour seal distribution in UK waters based on data at time of publication in 2012. This information is currently being updated.</p> <p>MMO1065 secured data on species/habitats in the south coast inshore and offshore marine plan areas that included those of conservation importance. The data is included in Marine Information System.</p>
Academic	<p>Many academic studies feed information relevant to this requirement into the Marine Life Information Network</p>
Other	<p>The MAGIC website provides geographic information about the natural environment from across government. The information covers rural, urban, coastal and marine environments across Great Britain.</p> <p>Measures of distribution and condition of fish species on the Section 41 lists such as cod and plaice are described through existing fish stock assessment approaches.</p> <p>JNCC have collated already-published information from a variety of sources for all of the UK priority species, to bring these data together into a single report, or 'species account'. All of this information is already available on either</p>

	<p>the JNCC website, the NBN Gateway, or the BARS 1 website.</p> <p>Marine Scotland commissioned the Sea Mammal Research Unit to produce maps of grey and harbour seal distribution in UK waters (seals per 5km x 5km grid cell).</p>
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4. Current activity

MMO currently works with applicants to ensure adequate evidence is provided. Depending on the scale of the development environmental assessment such as Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) and Marine Conservation Zone Assessment can provide information on a site by site basis.

5. Associated evidence requirements

Ref	Title
R007	Seasonal bird density and key foraging areas
R062	Identifying where existing EIAs and HRAs may inform new assessments
R086	The location, condition and features of compensatory sites

More information on these evidence requirements is available [here](#)

6. Potential delivery route

The MMO will look to **partner** with appropriate organisations to widen the potential impact of any work undertaken in this area. The MMO will also explore opportunities to **influence the research of others** to gather evidence that can be applied within a marine management context. **Knowledge exchange** is required throughout the duration of this requirement and not limited to when delivery is complete.

See table 1 for timescales.

7. Contact

For more information or to add further research to the existing evidence list please email evidence@marinemanagement.org.uk

Table 1: Delivery timescales 2017 to 2020

Delivery Route	2017				2018				2019				2020			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Knowledge Exchange																
Partnering																
Influencing the research of others																