

Reporting under the Habitat Regulations (as amended)¹

2019-2024

Conservation status assessment for the species:

S2622 - Pygmy sperm whale

(*Kogia breviceps*)

United Kingdom



¹ Habitat Regulations (as amended):

- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), Regulation 9A
- The Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), Regulation 6A
- Report under The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended), regulation 3ZA
- The Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended), regulation 3ZA

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This report was produced by JNCC in collaboration with the UK Country Nature Conservation Bodies (CNCBs) and country governments.

This document should be cited as:

JNCC, Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Natural England, Natural Resources Wales & NatureScot. (2026). Conservation status assessment for the species: S2622 Pygmy sperm whale (*Kogia breviceps*).

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Important note - Please read

- The information in this document represents the United Kingdom Reporting under the Habitat Regulations (as amended)¹, for the period 2019-2024.
- It is based on supporting information provided by Joint Nature Conservation Committee and UK Country Nature Conservation Bodies (CNCBs), which is documented separately.
- The Habitats Regulations reporting 2019-2024 Approach Document provides details on how this supporting information contributed to the UK Report and the fields that were completed for each parameter.
- Map showing the distribution of the species is included.
- Explanatory notes (where provided) are included at the end. These provide additional audit trail information to that included within the assessments. Further underpinning explanatory notes are available in the related country reports.
- Some of the reporting fields have been left blank because either: (i) there was insufficient information to complete the field; (ii) completion of the field was not obligatory; and/or (iii) the field was not relevant to this species (section 12 National Site Network coverage for Annex II species).

Further details on the approach to the Habitats Regulations Reporting 2019-2024 are available on the [JNCC website](#).

Assessment Summary: Pygmy sperm whale

Distribution Map

Distribution
Pygmy sperm whale



Figure 1: United Kingdom distribution map for S2622 - Pygmy sperm whale (*Kogia breviceps*). The 50km grid square distribution map is based on available species records within the current reporting period.

Table 1: Table summarising the conservation status for S2622 - Pygmy sperm whale (*Kogia breviceps*). Overall conservation status for species is based on assessments of range, population, habitat for the species, and future prospects.

Overall Conservation Status (see section 11)

Unknown (XX)

Breakdown of Overall Conservation Status

Range (see section 5)	Unknown (XX)
Population (see section 6)	Unknown (XX)
Habitat for the species (see section 7)	Unknown (XX)
Future prospects (see section 10)	Unknown (XX)

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National Level

1. General information

1.1 Country	United Kingdom
1.2 Species code	S2622
1.3 Species scientific name	<i>Kogia breviceps</i>
1.4 Alternative species scientific name	
1.5 Common name	Pygmy sperm whale
Annex(es)	IV

2. Maps

2.1 Sensitive species	No
2.2 Year or period	2019-2022
2.3 Distribution map	Yes
2.4 Distribution map; Method used	Complete survey or a statistically robust estimate

2.5 Additional information

The distribution map is based on verified sightings data of Killer whale between 2019 and 2024. The sightings were collated from SCANS IV, Pelagis French surveys, NBN Atlas, European Seabirds at Sea, the Joint Cetacean Data Programme, POSEIDON project, University of Aberdeen, The Crown Estate Marine Data Exchange, Whale and Dolphin Conservation, Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust, ORCA, Sea Watch Foundation, Marine Discovery Penzance, Sussex Dolphin Project, Cornwall Seal Group Research Trust and Cardigan Bay Marine Wildlife Centre.

3. Information related to Annex V Species

3.1 Is the species taken in the wild / exploited?

3.2 What measures have been taken?

a) Regulations regarding access to property

b) Temporary or local prohibition on the taking of specimens in the wild and exploitation

c) Regulation of the periods and/or methods of taking specimens

d) Application of hunting and fishing rules which take account of the conservation of such populations

e) Establishment of a system of licences for taking specimens or of quotas

f) Regulation of the purchase, sale, offering for sale, keeping for sale, or transport for sale of specimens

g) Breeding in captivity of animal species as well as artificial propagation of plant species

Other measures

Other measures description

3.3: Hunting bag or quantity taken in the wild for Mammals and Acipenseridae (Fish)

a) Unit

Table 2: Quantity taken from the wild during the reporting period (see 3.3a for units). For species with defined hunting seasons, Season 1 refers to 2018/2019 (autumn 2018 to spring 2019), and Season 6 to 2023/2024. For species without hunting seasons, data are reported by calendar year: Year 1 is 2019, and Year 6 is 2024.

	Season/ year 1	Season/ year 2	Season/ year 3	Season/ year 4	Season/ year 5	Season/ year 6
b) Minimum	-	-	-	-	-	-
c) Maximum	-	-	-	-	-	-
d) Unknown	-	-	-	-	-	-

3.4: Hunting bag or quantity taken in the wild; Method used

3.5: Additional information

No additional information

Biogeographical Level

4. Biogeographical and marine regions

4.1 Biogeographical or marine region where the species occurs MATL

4.2 Sources of information

See section 14 References

5. Range

5.1 Surface area (km²)

5.2 Short-term trend; Period

5.3 Short-term trend; Direction Unknown

5.4 Short-term trend; Magnitude

a) Estimated minimum

b) Estimated maximum

c) Pre-defined range

d) Unknown

e) Type of estimate

f) Rate of decrease

5.5 Short-term trend; Method used Insufficient or no data available

5.6 Long-term trend; Period

5.7 Long-term trend; Direction Unknown

5.8 Long-term trend; Magnitude

a) Minimum

b) Maximum

c) Rate of decrease

5.9 Long-term trend; Method used Insufficient or no data available

5.10 Favourable Reference Range (FRR)

a) Area (km²)

b) Pre-defined increment

c) Unknown Yes

d) Method used

e) Quality of information

5.11 Change and reason for change in surface area of range

a) Change No

b) Genuine change

c) Improved knowledge or more accurate data

d) Different method

e) No information

f) Other reason

g) Main reason

5.12 Additional information

No additional information

6. Population

6.1 Year or period

6.2 Population size (in reporting unit)

a) Unit number of individuals

b) Minimum

c) Maximum	
d) Best single value	
6.3 Type of estimate	
6.4 Quality of extrapolation to reporting unit	
6.5 Additional population size (using population unit other than reporting unit)	
a) Unit	
b) Minimum	
c) Maximum	
d) Best single value	
e) Type of estimate	
6.6 Population size; Method used	Insufficient or no data available
6.7 Short-term trend; Period	
6.8 Short-term trend; Direction	Unknown
6.9 Short-term trend; Magnitude	
a) Estimated minimum	
b) Estimated maximum	
c) Pre-defined range	
d) Unknown	
e) Type of estimate	
f) Rate of decrease	
6.10 Short-term trend; Method used	Insufficient or no data available
6.11 Long-term trend; Period	
6.12 Long-term trend; Direction	Unknown

**6.13 Long-term trend;
Magnitude**

a) Minimum

b) Maximum

c) Confidence interval

d) Rate of decrease

6.14 Long-term trend; Method used Insufficient or no data available

6.15 Favourable Reference Population (FRP)

ai) Population size

a ii) Unit

b) Pre-defined increment

c) Unknown Yes

d) Method used

e) Quality of information

6.16 Change and reason for change in population size

a) Change No

b) Genuine change

**c) Improved knowledge or
more accurate data**

d) Different method

e) No information

f) Other reason

g) Main reason

6.17 Additional information

No additional information

6.18 Age structure, mortality and reproduction deviation Unknown

7. Habitat for the species

7.1 Sufficiency of area and quality of occupied habitat (for long-term survival)

a) Is area of occupied habitat sufficient? Unknown

b) Is quality of occupied habitat sufficient? Unknown

c) If No or Unknown, is there a sufficiently large area of unoccupied habitat of suitable quality? Unknown

7.2 Sufficiency of area and quality of occupied habitat; Method used

a) Sufficiency of area of occupied habitat; Method used Insufficient or no data available

b) Sufficiency of quality of occupied habitat; Method used Insufficient or no data available

7.3 Short-term trend; Period

7.4 Short-term trend; Direction Unknown

7.5 Short-term trend; Method used Insufficient or no data available

7.6 Long-term trend; Period

7.7 Long-term trend; Direction Unknown

7.8 Long-term trend; Method used Insufficient or no data available

7.9 Additional information

No additional information

8. Main pressures

8.1 Characterisation of pressures

Table 3: Pressures affecting the species, including timing and importance/impact ranking. Pressures are defined as factors acting currently and/or during the reporting period (2019–2024). Rankings are: High (direct/immediate influence and/or large spatial extent) and Medium (moderate direct/immediate influence, mainly indirect and/or regional extent).

Pressure	Timing	Ranking
PX03: Unknown pressures or threats		

8.2 Sources of information

See section 14 References

8.3 Additional information

No additional information

9. Conservation measures

9.1: Status of measures

a) Are measures needed? No

b) Indicate the status of measures

9.2 Main purpose of the measures taken

9.3 Location of the measures taken

9.4 Response to measures

9.5 List of main conservation measures

Table 4: Key conservation measures addressing current pressures and/or anticipated threats during the next two reporting periods (2025–2036). Measures are ranked by importance/impact: High (direct/immediate influence and/or large spatial extent) and Medium (moderate direct/immediate influence, mainly indirect and/or regional extent).

Conservation measure	Ranking
No conservation measures	

9.6 Additional information

10. Future prospects

10.1a Future trends of parameters

ai) Range	Unknown
bi) Population	Unknown
ci) Habitat for the species	Unknown

10.1b Future prospects of parameters

aii) Range	Unknown
bii) Population	Unknown
cii) Habitat for the species	Unknown

10.2 Additional information

No additional information

11. Conclusions

11.1 Range	Unknown (XX)
11.2 Population	Unknown (XX)
11.3 Habitat for the species	Unknown (XX)
11.4 Future prospects	Unknown (XX)

11.5 Overall assessment of Conservation Status	Unknown (XX)
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11.6 Overall trend in Conservation Status	Unknown
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11.7 Change and reason for change in conservation status

a) Change	No
b) Genuine change	

c) Improved knowledge or more accurate data

d) Different method

e) No information

f) Other reason

g) Main reason

11.7 Change and reason for change in conservation status trend

a) Change No

b) Genuine change

c) Improved knowledge or more accurate data

d) Different method

e) No information

f) Other reason

g) Main reason

11.8 Additional information

Conclusion on Range reached because: (i) the short-term trend direction in Range surface area is unknown and (ii) the current Range surface area is unknown.

Conclusion on Population reached because: (i) the best estimate for population size is unknown; and (ii) the short-term trend direction in Population size is unknown.

Conclusion on Habitat for the species reached because: (i) it is unknown whether the area of habitat is sufficiently large; (ii) it is unknown if habitat quality is sufficient for the long-term survival of the species; and (iii) the short-term trend in area and quality of habitat is unknown.

Conclusion on Future prospects reached because: (i) the Future prospects for Range are unknown; (ii) the Future prospects for Population are unknown; and (iii) the Future prospects for Habitat for the species are unknown.

Overall assessment of Conservation Status is Unknown because two or more of the conclusions are Unknown.

Overall trend in Conservation Status is based on the combination of the shortterm trends for Range - unknown, Population - unknown, and Habitat for the species - unknown.

12. UK National Site Network (pSCIs, SCIs, SACs) coverage for Annex II species

12.1 Population size inside the pSCIs, SCIs and SACs network

a) Unit

b) Minimum

c) Maximum

d) Best single value

12.2 Type of estimate

12.3 Population size inside the network; Method used

12.4 Short-term trend of population size within the network; Direction

12.5 Short-term trend of population size within the network; Method used

12.6 Short-term trend of habitat for the species inside the pSCIs, SCIs and SACs network; Direction

12.7 Short-term trend of habitat for the species inside the pSCIs, SCIs and SACs network; Method used

12.8 Additional information

No additional information

13. Complementary information

13.1 Justification of percentage thresholds for trends

No justification information

13.2 Trans-boundary assessment

No trans-boundary assessment information

13.2 Other relevant information

No other relevant information

14. References

Biogeographical and marine regions

4.2 Sources of information

Brentano, R. and Petry, M.V., 2020. Marine debris ingestion and human impacts on the Pygmy sperm whale (*Kogia breviceps*) in southern Brazil. *Marine Pollution Bulletin*, 150, p.110595.

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Murphy, E.L., Gerber, L.R., Rochman, C.M. and Polidoro, B., 2024. A macroplastic vulnerability index for marine mammals, seabirds, and sea turtles in Hawai 'i. *Science of the Total Environment*, 908, p.168247.

Page, A., Hay, C., Marks, W., Bennett, B., Gribble, M.O., Durden, W.N., Stolen, M., Jablonski, T., Gordon, N., Kolkmeier, T. and Jiang, M., 2024. Trace element bioaccumulation, tissue distribution, and elimination in odontocetes stranded in Florida and Georgia, USA over a 15-year period (2007–2021). *Heliyon*, 10(3).

Page-Karjian, A., Lo, C.F., Ritchie, B., Harms, C.A., Rotstein, D.S., Han, S., Hassan, S.M., Lehner, A.F., Buchweitz, J.P., Thayer, V.G. and Sullivan, J.M., 2020. Anthropogenic contaminants and histopathological findings in stranded cetaceans in the southeastern United States, 2012–2018. *Frontiers in Marine Science*, 7, p.533999.

Main pressures

8.2 Sources of information

No sources of information

15. Explanatory Notes

Field label	Note
8.1: Characterisation of pressures	PX03 Unknown pressures or threats. Pygmy sperm whales are considered a vagrant species in UK waters and thus, the main threats and pressures are outside of the Member State. However, as a deep diving, semi-cryptic species current evidence on the threats and pressures faced by this species is very limited and it is difficult to differentiate between dwarf sperm whales and pygmy sperm whales in the field. There is growing evidence that chemical pollution may pose a threat with high concentrations of organopollutants and heavy metals found in samples from stranded pygmy sperm whales (de Oliveira-Ferreira et al., 2024; Page et al., 2024; Page-Karjian et al., 2020) but it is uncertain what the impact to the population is. Entanglement risk with macroplastic pollution has also been highlighted as moderate/high risk however, it is noted that data is currently deficient for this species and thus, more work is needed to better understand the level of potential risk to populations (Murphy et al., 2024). Similarly, ingestion of marine debris has been highlighted in stranded animals but it is not clear the extent of the pressure and the impacts on population (Brentano & Petry, 2020).