

Practical application of Marine Life Information Network (www.marlin.ac.uk) resources for environmental protection and management

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WHAT IS *MarLIN*?

The Marine Life Information Network (*MarLIN*) is an initiative of the Marine Biological Association supported by the main agencies involved in environmental protection and management in the UK and with links to the Republic of Ireland. *MarLIN* was established in 1998 and is publishing information on the Internet to support marine environmental management, protection and education.

HOW DOES THE *MarLIN* PROGRAMME SUPPORT ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT?

The Biology and Sensitivity Key Information (BASKI) sub-programme researches species and biotope information to assist in answering “will it matter if?” questions and in interpreting results of monitoring. Sensitivity to 24 factors is assessed and recovery prospects of species and biotopes following change are identified. Information reviews are subject to peer review.

The Data Access sub-programme identifies and obtains seabed survey data to add to the national resource via the UK National Biodiversity Network. Interpreted survey data provides information to indicate the frequency of occurrence and distribution of species and biotopes and to give a context to localised data.

Research has been prioritised so that nationally rare and scarce species, UK Biodiversity Action Plan species, and biotopes that characterise Annex I Habitats in the EU Habitats Directive have been researched first in the BASKI sub-programme.

Key information on over 400 species and 100 biotopes is available on-line. Users can identify survey points from maps and obtain full detailed survey data on-line.

MAPPING SENSITIVITY

MarLIN is now able to link survey data to sensitivity assessment so that the presence of species and biotopes that are of ‘high’, ‘moderate’ or ‘low’ sensitivity to selected factors can be mapped in a much more scientifically-based and sound way than has previously been possible. Sensitivity mapping is currently being developed with colleagues in Britain and Ireland.