

#	Species	Taxonomic Name	Status	Habitats	Notes
1	North Atlantic Right Whale	<i>Eubalaena glacialis</i>	V	S/SC/P	1
2	Bowhead Whale	<i>Balaena mysticetus</i>	V	S	2
3	Minke Whale	<i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i>	M	C/S/OB	
4	Sei Whale	<i>Balaenoptera borealis</i>	M	S/SC/P	
5	Blue Whale	<i>Balaenoptera musculus</i>	M	SC/P	
6	Fin Whale	<i>Balaenoptera physalus</i>	M	C/S/SC/P	
7	Humpback Whale	<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>	M	C/S/SC/P	
8	Sperm Whale	<i>Physeter macrocephalus</i>	M	SC/A	
9	Pygmy Sperm Whale	<i>Kogia breviceps</i>	?	SC/A	
10	Dwarf Sperm Whale	<i>Kogia sima</i>	?	SC/A	3
11	Beluga Whale	<i>Delphinapterus leucas</i>	V	S	
12	Narwhal	<i>Monodon monoceros</i>	V	C/S	6
13	Harbour Porpoise	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>	R	C/S/OB	
14	White-beaked Dolphin	<i>Lagenorhynchus albirostris</i>	R	S	
15	Atlantic White-sided Dolphin	<i>Lagenorhynchus acutus</i>	R	OB/P	
16	Risso's Dolphin	<i>Grampus griseus</i>	R	C/S/SC	
17	Bottlenose Dolphin	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>	R	C/S/OB/P	4
18	Striped Dolphin	<i>Stenella coeruleoalba</i>	R	P	
19	Common Dolphin	<i>Delphis delphis</i>	R	C/S/OB/P	
20	False Killer Whale	<i>Pseudorca crassidens</i>	V	P	
21	Killer Whale	<i>Orcinus orca</i>	R/M	C/S/SC/P	5
22	Long-finned Pilot Whale	<i>Globicephala melas</i>	R	SC/OB/P	
23	Sowerby's Beaked Whale	<i>Mesoplodon bidens</i>	R	SC/A	
24	Gervais' Beaked Whale	<i>Mesoplodon europaeus</i>	V	SC/A	
25	True's Beaked Whale	<i>Mesoplodon mirus</i>	?	SC/A	
26	Cuvier's Beaked Whale	<i>Ziphius cavirostris</i>	R	SC/A	
27	Northern Bottlenose Whale	<i>Hyperoodon ampullatus</i>	R	SC/A	

NB: A record of a probable Blainville's Beaked whale was reported from the Rockall Plateau, outside Ireland's EEZ but within the declared area in 2016 (Richardson et al., 2018). No photo of the animal was obtained.

Status Type

- R Resident and breeding in Irish waters
- V Vagrant
- M Migratory - forages in Irish waters

H Historically occurred in Irish waters

Habitat Type

A Abyssal waters
C Coastal
S Shelf Waters (<200m)
OB Offshore Banks
P Pelagic
SC Slopes & Canyons

Notes

1. North Atlantic Right Whales occurred in Irish waters up to the beginning of the 20th Century when Norwegian owned whaling stations in Co. Mayo killed 18 animals, probably representing the last individuals of the species in Irish waters. Occasional sightings in waters to the far west of Ireland are thought to have been of animals originating from the Western Atlantic population. In July 2024 a single individual of this species was sighted, photographed and videoed in Donegal Bay (IWDG, 2026).
2. A single sighting was recorded and photographed at the mouth of Carlingford Lough, Co. Louth/Down in May of 2016 (IWDG 2024, DeBoer et al, 2017)
3. Identified and confirmed by genetic sequencing of an animal live stranded and subsequently died at Glengarriff, Co. Cork on 1 May 2022. (IWDG, 2026)
4. Evidence exists for 3 populations in Irish waters.
 - a. Resident in Shannon Estuary - c 140 animals
 - b. Coastal - c400 animals
 - c. Offshore - unknown but large population numbering thousands of animals that may range from Scotland to the Azores.
5. A resident group known as the 'West Coast Community' ranges around the Irish coast, Scottish West Coast, Irish Sea and Southwest of England, foraging on seals. The Pod is highly inbred and suffers high organochlorine pollutant levels and has not produced a calf in the 30 years it has been studied. Killer whales from waters to the north of Ireland follow the mackerel fishing fleet into Irish waters to the NW of Donegal each year, feeding on fish. Groups of animals have also been noted along the shelf edge.
6. Young female identified and confirmed by genetic sequencing of an animal stranded at Sweet Nellies Beach, Greencastle, Co. Donegal on 15 Nov 2025. (IWDG, 2026)

References

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