

# *Cystophora cristata* (ERXLEBEN, 1777)



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The hooded seal is a pelagic species. Because it does not haul out regularly on the coasts, there is no dot map. This atlas does not cover the seas.

## Distribution

**World:** Four separate breeding populations in the North Atlantic, generally divided into two groups: the Greenland Sea stock and the North-west Atlantic stock. The Greenland Sea stock breeds on the 'West Ice' between Jan Mayen and Greenland. The other three breeding sites (North-west Atlantic stock) are in North-American waters: Davis Strait between Greenland and Canada, north of Newfoundland (the 'Front') and the Gulf of St Lawrence.

**Europe:** The big breeding population of the West Ice, west of Jan Mayen (Greenland Sea stock) can be considered to be European.

After weaning most adult hooded seals migrate to two moulting sites. The North-west Atlantic stock to Denmark Strait between Iceland and Greenland, whereas the Greenland Sea stock moves to an area off north-eastern Greenland at 73–78°N. After moulting, the hooded seals disperse widely in the waters between Iceland, the Faeroes, Svalbard and Greenland.

Stragglers periodically show up on the Norwegian coasts. One single record of reproduction on the Norwegian coast: on the island Otterøya in 1980. Vagrants occur on the Atlantic coasts, down to Portugal; these are usually young animals dispersing.

## Hooded seal

AL	-	LT	Pūsliasnukis ruonis
BG	Качулат тюлен	LU	-
CZ	Čercol hřebenatý	LV	Pūšļdeguna ronis
DE	Klappmütze	MK	Меуресра фока
DK	Klappmyds	MT	-
EE	Põishüljes	NL	Klappmuts
ES	Foca de casco	NO	Klappmyss
FI	Kuplahylje	PL	Kapturnik
FO	Klappus	PT	Foca-de-crista
FR	Phoque à capuchon	RO	Foca-cu-creastă
GR	Θαλάσσιος ελέφαν	RU	Хохлач
HR	Tuljan mjehuraš	SE	Blässäl
HU	Hólyagos fóka	SI	Kapričasti tjučenj
IR	-	SK	Tuleň mechúrnatý
IS	Blöðruselur	TR	-
IT	Cistofora cristata	YU	-

## Geographic variation

None.

## Habitat

In the breeding season and during moult hooded seals inhabit the thick drifting ice over deep water of the North Atlantic. Outside these periods also in waters with little or no ice. Adult hooded seals feed on deep water fish such as Greenland halibut *Reinhardtius hippoglossoides*, redfish *Sebastes marinus*, polar cod *Boreogadus saida* and squid *Gonatus fabricii*.

## Population status

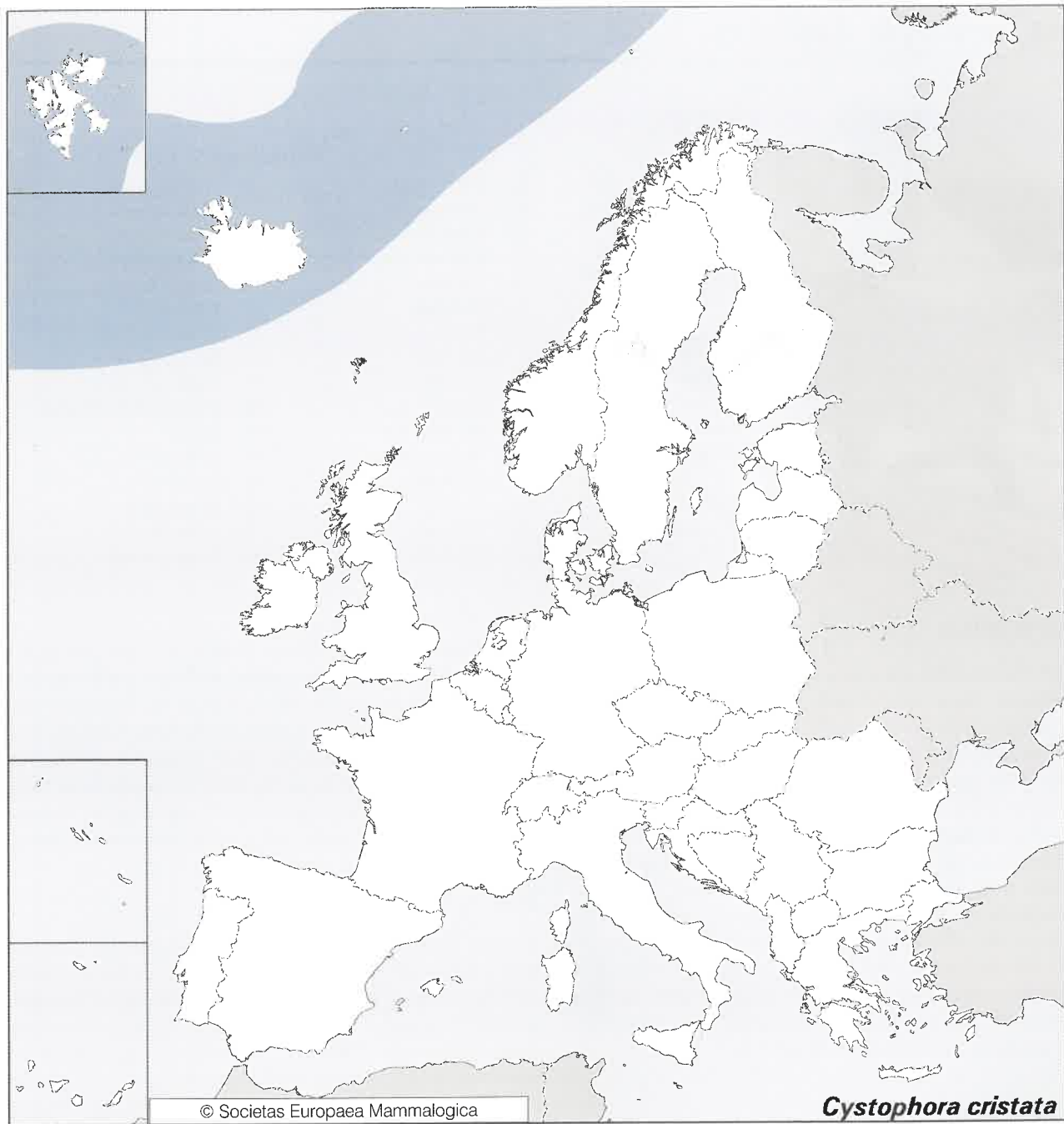
The estimate for the total hooded seal population is 500000–600000 individuals. This is based on the following pup counts in the different breeding sites: Davis Strait 19000; the Front 82 182; Gulf of St Lawrence >2000; West Ice: 200000.

The populations have declined in size because of heavy hunting pressure. Although catches have been relatively low in the last years, no real recovery seems to have taken place in any of the herds.

## International legal and conservation status

Bern Convention, Appendix II.

EU-Directive 83/129/EEC: import ban on blueback seal skins (young hooded seals).



EU Habitats & Species Directive, Annex V.

### Other information

Hooded seals have been heavily hunted in the past, mainly in the 'West Ice' and the Gulf of St Lawrence. Up to 100000 individuals used to be killed each year. Hunting quotas have been established since 1974. Reported catches are low now due to market collapse, which resulted from the European Union import prohibition of blueback seal skins.

### Literature

Kapel (1992c)

Reijnders *et al.* (1997)

E. H. Ries, P. Beuving, S. S. M. J. Brasseur &  
P. J. H. Reijnders