

Seal epidemic 2002: Information on Dead Seals in the North Sea, Wadden Sea and the Kattegat/Skagerrak Area in 2002

Status Report No. 45 (07.04.2003):

At the time of the compilation of the last seal report on 06.12.2002 the pdv epidemic amongst seals in northwestern Europe was more or less over, only in the United Kingdom and the **Republic of Ireland**, seals were still dying. In the present and definitively last seal report, you will find the final overview of documented dead common and grey seals in the area, which was affected by the pdv epizootic over the entire time of the pdv epidemic between May 2002 and February 2003.

In the period from December 2002 until the end of February 2003 more than 440 dead seals were reported around the **United Kingdom**, bringing the total in that area to 3,990 since the beginning of the outbreak. Detailed information on a regional breakdown of dead seal numbers and positive pdv cases in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are included in the report compiled by the Sea Mammal Research Unit, St. Andrews, UK on 29.02.03 ([see Annex](#)).

In December 2002, only three dead seals were reported around the coasts of the **Republic of Ireland**, bringing the total to 161 since the beginning of the pdv confirmation in mid September 2002 in this area. (Information according to the Irish Seal Sanctuary)

It can be stated that the pdv epidemic amongst seals, which started in May 2002, is over in all affected areas since the beginning of 2003. In total about 22,500 dead seals, mainly common seals, were registered in the Danish-Swedish-Norwegian Kattegat/Skagerrak area, the Limfjord, the Baltic Sea, the Wadden Sea and the North Sea.

Table: Phocine distemper epidemic amongst seals 2002

Overview of registered dead common seals in the Wadden Sea, the North Sea, the Kattegat-Skagerrak and Baltic Sea area

	First date of occurrence of unusual mortality	Seal Report No. 45 (April 2003)		Minimum population size of common seal (number/year of counting)
		Number of dead seals (until date)		
		Common seal and grey seal	Grey seal	
WADDEN SEA				
Netherlands: Wadden Sea and Noord- + Zuid-Holland, Zeeland	16 June 2002	2,244 (22.11.02) epizootic over	2	3,600 (2001)* NL- Wadden Sea
Lower Saxony	17 July 2002	3,851 (18.11.02) epizootic over	19	6,220 (2001)*
Hamburg	21 August 2002	261 (29.10.02) epizootic over	-	(488 (2001)*, included in numbers of Lower Saxony)
Schleswig-Holstein	26 August 2002	3,338 (14.11.02) epizootic over	-	7,190 (2001)*
Denmark	30 August 2002	962 (05.12.02) epizootic over	1	2,380 (2001)*
Wadden Sea total		about 10,656	22	20,000 (2001)* (25,000 estimation)
Helgoland	11 August 2002	270 (30.10.02) epizootic	-	etwa 400*

		over		
Kattegat/Skagerrak				
Danish Kattegat	04 May 2002	2,049 (05.12.02) epizootic over	-	3,250 (2000)***
Swedish Kattegat / Skagerrak	30 May 2002	4,000 about epizootic over	?	about 15,000**
Norwegian Skagerrak	22 June 2002	878 epizootic over	?	1,200 (1996-98)****
Kattegat/Skagerrak total		about 6,927		about 19,000**
DK- Limfjord	16 September 2002	365 (05.12.02) epizootic over	-	1,631/886** (1999/2000)
BALTIC SEA				
Danish Baltic Sea Falster, Møn, South-Lolland, incl. Oresund	about 13 September 2002	95 (05.12.02) epizootic over	-	270 (2000)***
German Baltic Sea coast Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania	30 August 2002	11 no more dead seal after 07.10.02	-	no colonies
BELGIUM / FRANCE	31.07.02 (France) 18.08.02 (Belgium)	22 no more dead seals after 08.11.02	-	no colonies
UNITED KINGDOM England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland	14 August 2002	3,990 no more reports after 28.02.03, epizootic over	at least 737	34,100****
REPUBLIC OF IRELAND	21 September 2002	161 no more reports after 03.12.03	at least 43	
All Areas TOTAL		about 22,500		

References:

- * Trilateral Seal Expert Group (TSEG) 2001. Common Seals in the Wadden Sea in 2001. Wadden Sea Newsletter 2001-3:20.
 ** Tjärnö Marine Biological Laboratory, Sweden.
 *** Laursen, K. (Red.) 2001. Overvågning af fugle, sæler og planter 1999-2000, med resultater fra feltstationerne. Danmarks Miljøundersøgelser. Faglig rapport fra DMU, No. 350: 103 pp.
 **** website: SMRU-UK: <http://www.smru.st-and.ac.uk>

Compiled by

Bettina Reineking
 Common Wadden Sea Secretariat
 Virchowstr. 1
 D 26382 Wilhelmshaven
reineking@waddensea-secretariat.org

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