For the attention of:

OSPAR BDC Heads of Delegation
ICG-COBAM contact points
JWGBIRD contact points

Cc: OSPAR Heads of Delegation

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OSPAR Data call 2025/2026

Marine Bird Abundance and Breeding Success data to be used in common indicators B1, B3, B5 and candidate indicator B7 for the Intermediate Assessment 2029

Contacts

Content: Abundance of breeding and non-breeding birds (coastal surveys) and breeding success, Matt Parsons (UK) matt.parsons@jncc.gov.uk

Content: Abundance of non-breeding birds (offshore surveys), Volker Dierschke (DE), volker.dierschke@web.de

ICES technical contact: accessions@ices.dk
Please contact Accessions for access to the ICES data submission pages, if you encounter problems submitting your data online, or need any additional codes.

OSPAR data contact: data@ospar.org

Reporting deadline

Please submit completed reporting formats by **17h00 UK, 29 May 2026**; note that this is the deadline date and data are welcomed prior to this date. **Please note**: you do not have to submit all of your data in one go. Please see the relevant data submission granularity information below.

Submission instructions

Contracting Parties are invited to submit data for 1980-2026 (allowing for the submission of data, for non-breeding waterbirds, up to January 2026, if available) directly to ICES.

Data submitted for QSR 2023 do not need to be resubmitted for this call, unless corrections or additional information have become available since. Data that were not previously delivered to ICES, and corrections of older records, should be submitted as described below.

Data are requested for submission via two separate data flows as follows:

1.   Abundance of breeding birds and non-breeding birds (coastal surveys), breeding success, to ICES via:

ICES Biodiversity: https://www.ices.dk/data/data-portals/Pages/Biodiversity.aspx

Reporting Format: OSPAR_Birds_Reporting_Format.xlsm, https://www.ices.dk/data/Documents/biodiversity/Birds_Reporting_Format.zip

Guidance: See Annexes 1-6 of this document. Information is also included in the 'Export_data' tab of the reporting format.

Step 1: Access the latest Reporting Format: https://www.ices.dk/data/Documents/biodiversity/Birds_Reporting_Format.zip For a full list of seabird and water-bird species included in the indicators and in the data submission, see the vocabulary list that accompanies the MS Excel Reporting Sheets.

Step 2: When the data sheets are filled out, the *<Export data to XML>* button on the export_data worksheet should be pressed to produce the xml data file.

Step 3: The xml file should then be uploaded to the ICES website https://biodiversity.ices.dk/manage/index A login is required in order to validate, upload and manage data. If you do not have a login, please contact ICES Accessions.

Note 1. Excel template has macros: the Excel file contains macros that are used to transform the worksheets to the XML data format for uploading. Generally, you should only enable macros from a trusted source. Therefore, please ensure you download the Excel file from ICES directly to be sure of a clean, virus free file, and save it in a trusted location, so the macros can be enabled.

Note 2. Submission granularity: Data submitters are encouraged to deliver their data in as few submission files as possible. But, when needed, partial submissions can be made separately for each tab in the spreadsheet, except for the mandatory 'File_Information'. In addition, submissions can be split by year ranges as well as SurveyID, and B1 data can be delivered separately for breeding and non-breeding birds. Please mark what is being submitted in the filename for easier tracking (e.g., OSPAR-Birds-IE-B1nonbreeding2022-24.xml).

Note 3. Data resubmission key: Resubmission of previously reported data can be made by using the same combination of the key fields in the template (marked as 'key' in the template, and with * in Annexes 1-6 of this document). Resubmissions are not mandatory, but may be preferable if there is a need to correct or update previously submitted data.

B1 – Abundance Data – MANDATORY – Breeding seabird colonies (incl. gulls and terns) and **breeding waterbirds** (incl. waders) nesting close to the coast and using the marine environment (e.g. for food) – **counts of breeding pairs** (preferably or failing that - adults) per species per colony per year (see: **Annex 2**);

B1 – Abundance Data – MANDATORY – **Wintering and passage waterbirds** (incl. waders) – numbers of birds per species per site per year that are counted from land (see: **Annex 2**), preferably from individual colonies or sites rather than over large stretches of coastline.

Data on seabirds or waterbirds offshore at-sea, collected by transect surveys from boats or from planes is requested for IA 2029 but must be submitted to the European Seabirds-at-Sea Database (https://www.ices.dk/data/data-portals/Pages/European-Seabirds-at-sea.aspx) and NOT via the B1 abundance data table. Except, we do require data collected by aerial surveys (complete counts) in the Wadden Sea for Eider (January) and Shelduck (July/August - moulting).

Data on non-breeding waterbirds will be requested for one of two time periods, depending on availability:

a.   max count in January; OR

b. mean count during July to June (currently used by TMAP in the Wadden Sea).

July-June means will be used to provide an indicator in the Southern North Sea subdivision of OSPAR Region II, but may not be used elsewhere. Maximum January counts are more widely used (e.g. by International Waterbird Census) and will be used to construct indicators for each OSPAR Region.

B1 – **Abundance Data** – **NOT REQUIRED** – **Baselines.** Few countries were able to supply baselines for previous assessments; therefore, during IA 2029 (as for QSR 2023) a default baseline will be used, set at a mean abundance recorded during the first few years of the time series in each region, and the option of entering baseline data has been removed from the reporting format for IA 2029.

Area Population Estimate - MANDATORY (previously called "Regional weightings") – all species. Values that were submitted for QSR 2023 do not need to be resubmitted as part of this data call. Any changes to existing values, can be made using the respective tab in the data submission template, and uploaded to the ICES website https://biodiversity.ices.dk/manage/index as for other tabs of the spreadsheet. Enter the **best estimate of the size of the population of each species** ideally, for example, from the most recent complete breeding census and/or wintering estimate in:

a. the whole of the relevant OSPAR Region for each country and

b. in each subdivision of OSPAR Regions I and II in each country, where applicable (see: **Figure 1**).

These data will be used to weight the annual estimates of abundance from the sample of sites monitored in each country. Separate entries can be made for breeding season and for wintering season total counts for a given species/region. The estimates are required because the proportion of a regional or subdivisional population that is monitored varies between species and between countries. In a given year, the trend models will be used to estimate numbers at colonies or sites that were not surveyed in that year and add them to the observed counts from those colonies that were surveyed. Without the weighting, there would be a bias, because those countries where a smaller proportion of the population is monitored would be underrepresented in the resultant regional or subdivisional trends. Area Population Estimates are not required where the data submitted under B1 (abundance data) contain all the colonies or sites in that area (but see the exception under "important note" below.

Important note: where submitted, B1 abundance data comprise of a mean count during July to June (currently used by TMAP in the Wadden Sea) an estimate of the **January** total population should be entered in the Area Population Estimate field. This is because seasonal mean counts will be different to (and for wintering species mostly lower than) the January totals for the same species and area. So when January counts and seasonal means are combined in the analysis for a given region (as will be the case in OSPAR Region II), the latter would have less weight in the analysis, hence the need for adjustment.

B3 – **Breeding Success Data** – **MANDATORY** – Counts of young fledged (preferably or failing that, counts of young hatched), per species per colony per year (see: **Annex 3**).

2. **Abundance of non-breeding birds (offshore surveys), to ICES via:**
   ICES European Seabirds at Sea (ESAS): https://www.ices.dk/data/data-portals/Pages/European-Seabirds-at-sea.aspx

   Reporting format: https://datsu.ices.dk/web/selRep.aspx?Dataset=148. Prepare data according to the ESAS data model (see: https://esas-docs.ices.dk/tables/ and https://esas-docs.ices.dk/format/) and follow the instructions provided.

Submission and resubmission granularity: Data already delivered to the ESAS database do not have to be resubmitted, unless any corrections or updates are needed. To correct an entry, data for an entire CampaignID have to be resubmitted. All data with same CampaignIDs from the same DataRightsHolder that

are already in the ESAS database will be overwritten (resubmission). All new CampaignIDs from the same submitter and all respective records will be considered as new submissions.

Data submission: https://esas.ices.dk/manage/ScreenFile

ICES technical contact: accessions@ices.dk
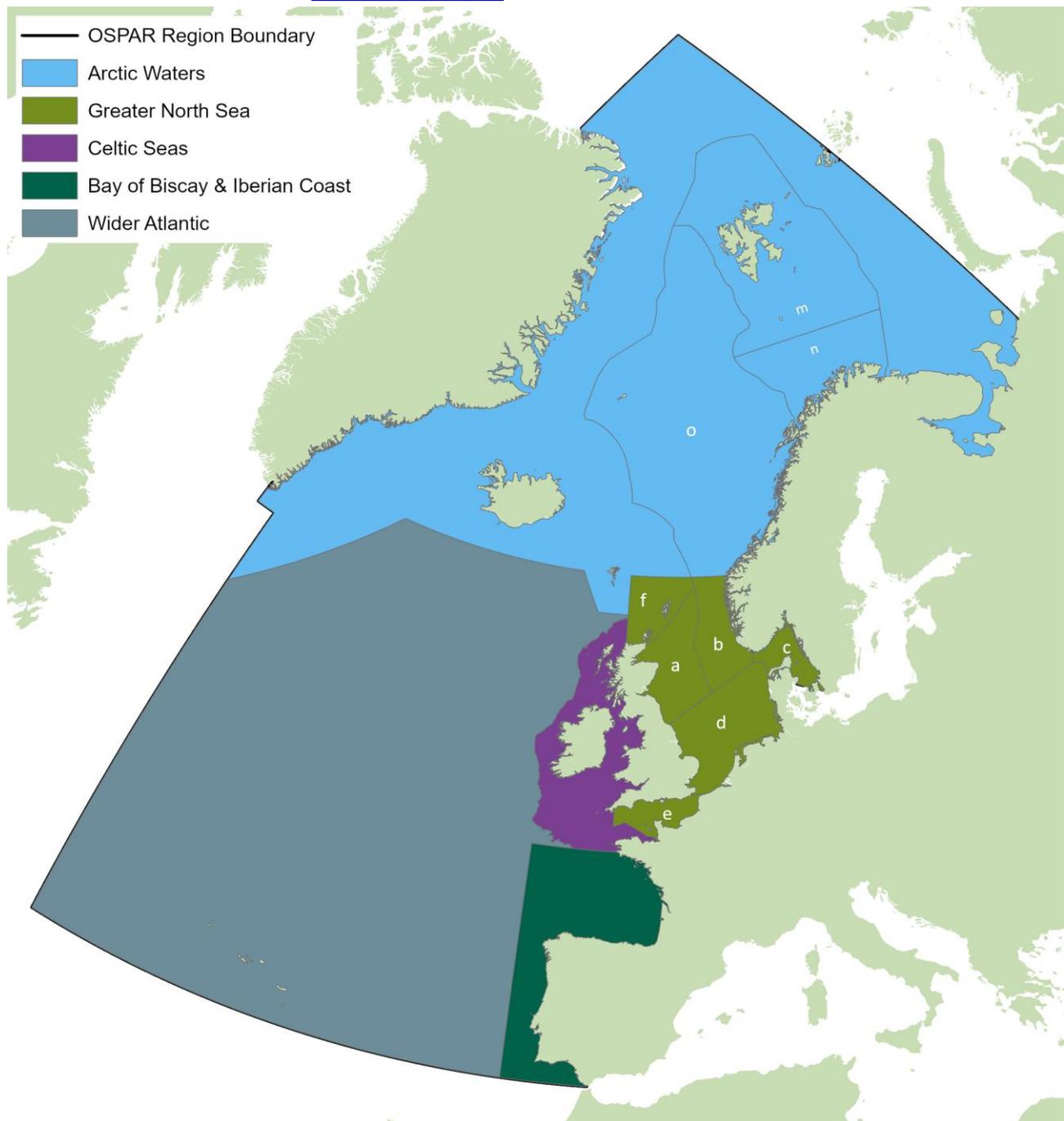
Figure 1: Marine bird assessment units.
Sub-divisions:
a) Northeast coast of Britain, b) West coast of Norway, c) Skagerrak and Kattegat, d) Southern North Sea, e) English Channel, f) North coast of Scotland and the Northern Isles, m) Northern Barents Sea, n) Southern Barents Sea, o) Norwegian Sea.
Available from: https://odims.ospar.org/en/submissions/ospar_marine_birds_au_2022_06/

During data submission, data will be checked for correct use of vocabulary codes and data types. This quality control will ensure that the data standards have been met, a report of control issues will be generated and

made available to the submitter online. Data that do not comply with the format will not be accepted by the uploading utility.

Use of the reported data

Contracting Party reported data will enable assessment of three OSPAR Biodiversity Indicators, and one candidate indicator, as part of the OSPAR Intermediate Assessment 2029 (IA 2029):

B1 – Marine bird abundance

B3 – Marine bird breeding success

B5 – Marine bird bycatch

And one Candidate Indicator:

B7 – Marine bird habitat quality

IA 2029 assessments of B1 and B3 will be made for all OSPAR Regions: OSPAR Region I – Arctic Waters; OSPAR Region II - Greater North Sea; OSPAR Region III – Celtic Seas; OSPAR Region IV – Bay of Biscay and Iberian Coast; and OSPAR Region V – Wider Atlantic. The geographical extent of the assessments in each Region will depend on the amount of data available to Contracting Parties.

The indicator B5 builds not only on bycatch data (not a subject of this data call), but also needs estimates of bird population sizes, which may be supported by offshore survey data. B5 will be included in IA 2029 wherever it is possible. In IA 2029, there will be a pilot assessment for the candidate indicator on Marine bird habitat quality (B7). This candidate indicator also needs offshore survey data and will be tested in OSPAR Regions where such data is available.

The data will be used to construct regional indicators, baselines and thresholds. Assessments will then be performed against the respective threshold values. The work will be conducted by OSPAR's nominated lead for B1, B3, B5 and B7 and will be overseen by the Joint OSPAR/ICES/HELCOM Working Group on Marine Birds– JWGBird, reporting to the OSPAR Biodiversity Committee (BDC), via the OSPAR Intersessional Correspondance Group on Coordination of Biodiversity Assessment and Monitoring (ICG-COBAM). The results will be used by JWGBird and ICG-COBAM to provide Contracting Parties with an assessment of marine bird common indicators for the IA 2029.

Both indicators will be constructed from data collected by existing monitoring schemes. Both assessments were included in the QSR 2023 for OSPAR Regions I, II, III and IV (https://oap.ospar.org/en/ospar-assessments/quality-status-reports/qsr-2023/indicator-assessments/), and now extended to include OSPAR Region V for the IA 2029.

Data Access

The data will be stored in ICES Biodiversity Portal, ICES European Seabirds at Sea (ESAS), and where possible (whilst respecting data licencing) made available via the OSPAR Data and Information Management System (ODIMS).

Data submitted to ICES for inclusion in OSPAR assessments are licenced in accordance with the ICES Data Policy (https://www.ices.dk/data/guidelines-and-policy/Pages/ICES-data-policy.aspx) and are provided as either open access (according to CC BY 4.0 data license, https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0) or as restricted (according to ICES Biodiversity Licence, https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.9302). By submitting data for this assessment, data providers are agreeing with the licencing terms.

OSPAR is committed to making as much information as possible publicly available, consistent with achieving other similarly important goals of public policy. The framework for this is set out in Article 9 of the OSPAR Convention and Annex 3 of the OSPAR Rules of Procedure (2013-2): https://odims.ospar.org/en/data_policy/

Contracting Parties should contact Chris Moulton (Chris.Moulton@ospar.org) if they have any queries regarding data licencing.

Do not remove, add, or adjust any columns or calculations included in the associated MS Excel reporting sheets.

Do not use any thousand separators (commas, apostrophies, or blanks) in number fields.

Always use the latest version of the reporting sheets. Do not use old versions. The latest guidance and formats are available from: https://www.ices.dk/data/data-portals/Pages/Biodiversity.aspx

Fields marked with * are used to recognise data resubmissions.

Annex 1 – Table 1. File_information

Field	Example	Description	Mandatory/Optional
Country*	SE	Select from drop-down list	Mandatory
Reporting_organisation*	"3512" for The Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management	EDMO code lookup (Vocabulary) Select from: https://vocab.ices.dk/?ref=1398 See: 'Vocabularies' worksheet	Mandatory
Preparation_date	31052026	Date of file preparation (DDMMYYYY)	Mandatory
Reporting_year	2026	Year of reporting (YYYY) For version control and back tracking	Mandatory

Annex 2 – Table 2. B1_abundance_data

Field	Example	Description	Mandatory/Optional
NationalColonyID*	2568	A national unique identifier for each colony (links to Table 4: Birds_site_description)	Mandatory
AphiaID	137156	Automatically completed by the template based on the species name. AphiaID according to the World Register of Marine Species (WoRMS) – marinespecies.org	Auto filled
Species_name	*Rissa tridactyla*	Select from drop-down list. Scientific name, according to the World Register of Marine Species (WoRMS) – marinespecies.org	Mandatory
Year*	1987	The year that the reported data applies to. Please include a row for each year from 1980 to 2026 (allowing for data on wintering waterbirds to be submitted up to January 2026, if available) - even if there is no data to be reported for the year	Mandatory
Count	2456	Enter count, "-1" for no data, or "0" for a zero count i.e. the colony or site was surveyed but no birds or pairs were present. Integers only.	Mandatory
Count_unit	Pairs	Select from drop-down list: "Individuals", or "Pairs"	Mandatory
Count_flag*	breeding_data	Select from drop-down list Indicate if it is "breeding_data" or "non_breeding" (i.e. counts of overwintering or migratory birds)	Mandatory
Count_method	observed	Select from drop-down list. Indicate if the count was "observed" or was "modelled" (i.e. estimated or interpolated from an incomplete data time-series.)	Mandatory
Sample_breeding	Whole colony or site	Select from drop-down list. "Whole colony or site", or "Plot". Data on breeding numbers consist of whole colony counts and of plot counts. Whole colony counts are generated for all species by a complete survey of a colony. Plots are sections of the colony that are	Optional

Field	Example	Description	Mandatory/Optional
		easily demarcated by observers and generally contain no more than 200-300 birds or pairs. For a given colony, a sample of plots is chosen at random and the number of birds or pairs in each plot is counted (see Walsh et al. 1995). If you are entering plot data, please enter in the "Count" column the total number of birds or pairs in all the plots in a given year.	
Plot_combination	1	"1", "2", "3", "4", "5", etc. = the identity of each different combination of plots because different plot combinations may be used over the time period. Leave blank if the whole colony counted.	Optional
Adjustment_factor	12	Decimal (factor to adjust Plot count to whole colony). Mandatory if 'Plot_combination' is filled in. e.g., enter "12" if the plot combination count=one twelfth of the whole colony count	Optional
Time_period	January (peak count)	Select from drop-down list "January (peak count)", "Full year: July-June" (mean count), "Breeding season"	Mandatory
Data_access	Public	Select from drop-down list. Indicates if data is public or restricted. "Public" for data that are publicly accessible, "Restricted" if data, in their reported form, are not to be made publicly accessible. All aggregated data products are, by default, publicly available, including those derived from restricted data	Mandatory
SurveyID*	SMP	This is a unique identifier (generated by the submitter) that links to Table 5: Birds_survey_metadata	Mandatory

Annex 3 – Table 3. B3_breeding_success_data

Field	Example	Description	Mandatory/Optional
NationalColonyID*	2568	A National unique numerical identifier for each colony (links to Table 4: Birds_site_description)	Mandatory
AphiaID	137156	Automatically completed by the template based on the species name. AphiaID according to the World Register of Marine Species (WoRMS) – marinespecies.org	Auto filled
Species_name	*Rissa tridactyla*	Select from drop-down list. Scientific name, according to the World Register of Marine Species (WoRMS) – marinespecies.org	Mandatory
Year*	1987	The year that the reported data applies to (YYYY). Please include a row for each year from 1980 to 2025, even if there is no data to be reported for the year.	Mandatory
Sample_size	335	The total number of nests or breeding pairs that were sampled in the breeding success monitoring plot (this could be an entire colony). Enter count, or "-1" for no data, or "0" for a zero count i.e. the plot was visited but no birds or pairs were present. Integers only.	Mandatory

Field	Example	Description	Mandatory/Optional
Sample_size_unit	Apparently occupied nests/sites	Select from drop-down list. Enter unit of plot size: "Pairs", or "Apparently occupied nests/sites"	Mandatory
Chicks_fledged	300	The total number of chicks in the plot or colony that were estimated to have fledged. Enter count, or blank for no data, or "0" for a zero count i.e. the plot was visited but no chicks were fledged. Integers only.	Optional
Chicks_hatched	400	Where available (and in the absence of any data on chicks fledged) please enter the total number of chicks that hatched within the plot or colony. Enter count, or blank for no data, or "0" for a zero count i.e. the plot was visited but no chicks hatched. Integers only.	Optional
Pre-scored_success	breeding success >0.1 chicks per pair	Select from drop-down list. This is only required if there are no estimates of chicks fledged or hatched. This is used to record an assessment of whether breeding failure occurred or not. Indicate if: "breeding success >0.1 chicks per pair", or "breeding failure <0.1 chicks per pair"	Optional
Data_access	Public	Select from drop-down list. Indicates if data is public or restricted: "Public" for data that are publicly accessible "Restricted" if data, in their reported form, are not to be made publicly accessible. All aggregated data products are, by default, publicly available, including those derived from restricted data	Mandatory
SurveyID*	SMP	This is a unique identifier that provides links to Table 5: Birds_survey_metadata	Mandatory

Annex 4 – Table 4. Birds_site_description

Field	Example	Description	Mandatory/Optional
NationalColonyID*	2568	A National unique numerical identifier for each colony (used to link to Table 2: B1_abundance_data and Table 3: B3_breeding_success_data).	Mandatory
Colony_name		Name of Colony (free text)	Mandatory
Latitude		WGS84, decimal degrees	Mandatory
Longitude		WGS84, decimal degrees	Mandatory
Location_definition	start point	Select from drop-down list. Indicate which part of the colony/site the Lat/Long refers to: "start point", "end point", "mid point", "centroid of a polygon", "arbitrary"	Mandatory
Area_type	OSPARRegion	Area reference type	Auto filled
Area_reference	2	Select from drop-down list. Indicates if the site lies in: "1" - Arctic Waters (OSPAR Region I), "2" - Greater North Sea (OSPAR Region II), "3" - Celtic Seas (OSPAR Region III), "4" - Bay of Biscay and Iberian Coast (OSPAR Region IV), or "5" - Wider Atlantic (OSPAR Region V)	Mandatory
Bird_subdivision	a	Select from drop-down list.	Optional

		Indicates if the site lies in a specific Bird subdivision of OSPAR Region I or II (Bird subdivisions are shown in **Error! Reference source not found.** and listed in the worksheet 'Vocabularies'). NB OSPAR Regions III, IV and V are not sub-divided.	
SurveyID	SMP	This is a unique identifier that provides links to Table 5: Birds_survey_metadata	Mandatory

Annex 5 – Table 5. Birds_survey_metadata

Field	Example	Description	Mandatory/Optional
SurveyID*	SMP	Use a unique identifier that provides links to Table 2: B1_abundance_data and Table 3: B3_breeding_success_data	Mandatory
Survey_name	Seabird Monitoring Programme (SMP)	Full name of survey with abbreviation in parentheses	Mandatory
Survey_parameter	breeding_succ ess	Select from drop-down list. Select from, and use only one parameter per cell: "breeding_success", "breeding_abundance", or "non-breeding_abundance"	Mandatory
Start_year	1986	Enter the year the survey started (YYYY)	Mandatory
End_year	2005	Enter the year the survey ended (YYYY). If the survey is ongoing, leave blank	Optional
Country	Sweden	Select from drop-down list. Enter one country per cell.	Mandatory
Contact	Jon Smitsson	Point of contact for survey (e.g. co-ordinator or data manager).	Mandatory
Email	jon.smitsson@ha vochvatten.se	Email address of contact	Mandatory
Institute	"3512" for The Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management	EDMO code lookup (Vocabulary) Select from: https://vocab.ices.dk/?ref=1398 See: 'Vocabularies' worksheet	Mandatory
Website	www.slu.se/en/se abirds	Website dedicated to survey, if available	Optional
References	Smitsson et al (2012)	Any relevant references that describe methods and/or results.	Optional
Notes		Please add any additional information you may think useful.	Optional

Annex 6 – Table 6. Area Population Estimate

Formerly called "Regional Weightings" the Area Population Estimate is now included as a sheet within the reporting format.

Field	Example	Description	Mandatory/Optional
Country*	SE	Select from drop-down list. ISO 3166 Code (2 ALPHA) See: 'Vocabularies' worksheet. Enter one country only per cell.	Mandatory
Species_name*	*Rissa tridactyla*	Select from drop-down list.	Mandatory

		Scientific name, according to the World Register of Marine Species (WoRMS) – marinespecies.org	
AreaPopulationRegionID*	c	Select from drop-down list. Enter the region ID, which is either the OSPAR region code or the Bird Subdivisions (see Figure 1.). See: 'Vocabularies' worksheet	Mandatory
AreaPopulation_value	28760	Enter the best estimate of the size of the population of each species (ideally, for example, from the most recent complete census.) Integers only	Mandatory
Source_year	1999	Source year (YYYY) (e.g. census year)	Mandatory
Count_unit	2	Select from drop-down list. "1" = Individuals, or "2" = Pairs	Mandatory
Count_flag*	breeding_data	Select from drop-down list. "breeding_data", or "non_breeding" (i.e. counts of overwintering or migratory birds). Separate entries can be made for breeding season and for wintering season total counts for a given species/region.	Mandatory