

# Identification of new biotopes project



## Summary

The Marine Habitat Classification for Britain and Ireland was originally developed in 1996 using data collected for the Marine Nature Conservation Review (MNCR). These data were predominantly from coastal waters down to 50 m depth. The classification was updated in 2004 when more sublittoral biotopes were added based on literature review rather than analysis of survey data. There is still poor coverage of circalittoral habitats occurring in waters deeper than 50 m. Since 2004 numerous offshore surveys have occurred in deeper waters, and it has often not been possible to match data to existing biotopes. For this project, survey data is being analysed to identify new biotopes to fill in some gaps in the classification and update existing biotope descriptions, where necessary. The classification will be analysed in sections in the following order: sublittoral sediment, littoral sediment, circalittoral rock, then littoral and infralittoral rock. Revisions to the sublittoral sediment section will be published in 2022.

**Country:** UK

**Main drivers:** JNCC

**Period of work:** 2014 - present

**Contact point:**

[marinehabitatclassification@jncc.gov.uk](mailto:marinehabitatclassification@jncc.gov.uk)

**Partners to date:** NE, NRW, NS, DAERA, AFBI, Cefas, EA

## Work involved

- Run trials and develop an appropriate method for analysis.
- Identify new biotopes from a reanalysis of benthic survey data.
- Assess the validity of existing biotopes and consider revising them.
- Publish new and revised biotopes in the classification, section by section.

## Key outcomes

- New biotopes published to fill gaps in the classification.
- Report published which shows the method used.

## Future work

In 2022 work will continue on updating littoral and sublittoral rock sections of the classification.

## Further information

See [jncc.gov.uk/MarineHabitatClassification](https://jncc.gov.uk/MarineHabitatClassification)

