DESCRIPTION
Easily confused with the equally large fin whale, sei whales can reach more than 20 metres in length. Typically an offshore species, with distribution out in the Atlantic Frontier, they are rarely seen from our coasts (usually from the Northern and Western Isles) and as a result little known. Their populations are depleted from historic whaling, with including whales that were taken around St. Kilda during the summer months. Their diet is based around surface plankton, although they will take small schooling fish and squid. No good population estimates exist, but it is likely that there are only a few thousand sei whales in the North Atlantic.

DISTRIBUTION

THREATS
Historic whaling has had a devastating impact on large baleen whale populations, first blue and the fin and sei whales. Sei whales appear not to have recovered from this significant historical impact. Offshore activities, such as noise pollution, including from seismic surveys, shipping noise and military activities, may be causing disturbance.

ACTIONS REQUIRED
1. Inclusion of sei whales in management plans of relevant Scottish MPA designations, especially in the Faroes-Shetland Channel
2. Progress wider management decisions to fully consider European Protected Species, including sei whale
3. Improve collection of offshore field data to inform wider management decisions and conservation efforts

FURTHER READING
WDC Species Guide: http://uk.whales.org/species-guide/sei-whale

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