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» Digital aerial surveys are flown regularly over offshore renewable lease areas to help characterise the baseline environment for marine megafauna

» These data feed directly into Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

» Digital aerial data from HiDef collected since 2009 were collated for the **UK and Ireland** and a commercially important area (the **North Sea**)

Digital video aerial surveys around UK and Ireland: 2009 - present

- » ~53,000 marine mammals
 - » ~46,000 cetaceans
 - » ~7,000 pinnipeds

- » ~33,000 harbour porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*)

- » ~12,000 common dolphin (*Delphinus delphis*)

- » ~300 minke whale (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*)

Digital video aerial surveys within the North Sea: 2009 - present

- » ~27,000 marine mammals
 - » ~25,000 cetaceans
 - » ~2,000 pinnipeds

- » ~24,000 harbour porpoise

- » ~1,000 grey seal (*Halichoerus grypus*)

» The North Sea is a commercially important area, with many areas currently leased for offshore wind within which data are regularly collected

» But where do the data go post-consent?

WHERE

DO

THESE

DATA

GO?!

Impact Assessment

- Typically data aren't available past summaries presented in Environmental Impact Assessment
 - Generally, these reports, and the processed data, are only available for download for a limited time
 - Commercially sensitive data!
 - Can upload to Crown Estate Marine Data Exchange (MDE), but may not include full mammal dataset

Research?

- Possibility for large data spanning multiple years and seasons
 - But have to think about commercial sensitivities!
 - Traditional survey methods (for cetaceans) biased towards the summer and generally include only one survey

Data repositories?

- Licensing conditions call for data to be uploaded to publicly available databases
 - Hard to enforce!
 - Needs to come from Regulators
- Databases (e.g. Joint Cetacean Data Programme (JCDP), Crown Estate (MDE))
 - Difficult to get permission to upload commercially sensitive data
 - MDE most recent digital aerial data ~2014

Conservation?

- Increased knowledge on distribution/abundance of cryptic species
- Understanding movements of highly mobile, wide ranging species.
 - Span across international borders