

The BirdLife International Seabird Foraging Range Database

Title

Since 2007 BirdLife International has been compiling a database of seabird foraging ranges and ecological preferences in the marine environment. The aim of the database is to provide an authoritative global dataset that can be used as a key tool to help delimit the extent of marine Important Bird Areas (IBAs) adjacent to major breeding colonies, as well as highlight gaps in our knowledge of foraging behaviour and help identify key areas for future research.

Compiling the database has involved a comprehensive review and collation of published information. Additional information has been sought from a large number of seabird experts worldwide, who have helped identify and fill gaps via the provision of further references or of unpublished information.

The results of the literature review have been transferred to the database where entries include information on: date and location of the study, stage of the breeding season, foraging distance, trip duration, dive depth, habitat associations, data quality and survey methods. The database contains over 4000 entries for 250 species obtained from more than 1000 references, with information for every seabird family.

Information contained in the database has been provided to, and used and tested by, a growing number of BirdLife Partners undertaking marine IBA analysis. Species and/or family specific fact sheets providing information from key foraging studies and references are being created to highlight how the distances can be used for marine planning purposes.

Poster abstract by Ben Lascelles (BirdLife International). Image credit: ©BenLascelles