



PROJECT PROPOSAL FORM

Making the Most of Masters aims to improve collaboration between employers and universities by providing opportunities for postgraduate students to undertake work based projects as an alternative to a traditional university dissertation. Projects should address a real need within the host organisation and be beneficial to both host and student.

The Marine Alliance for Science and Technology for Scotland (MASTS), pools the majority of Scotland's marine research capacity. MASTS members provide Masters courses in a range of marine related disciplines and many of their students are keen to undertake applied projects outside of academia.

Notes on Topic Selection

A relevant academic will work with your organisation to refine your proposed topic and ensure it meets both your needs and the academic requirements of the student. Projects should typically be achievable within a 12–16 week timeframe (including writing the final report).

Your proposed project could be:

- A specific project title or topic for the student to deliver;
- A general idea of a business need which requires further development;
- A core research theme to be developed by the student into a bespoke project;
- An intended outcome for the organisation.

The level of detail you provide will determine the extent to which further discussion may be required with the relevant programme director to ensure suitability.

desk-based/data studies that will easily facilitate remote working and remote supervision are welcome, as well as in person and/or experimental based projects where appropriate.

What's Next?

Please send your completed form to the MASTS Programme Coordinator & Deputy Dean of Grad School, Dr Emma Defew (masts@st-andrews.ac.uk) before the deadline.

Following submission of the form, it will be channeled to the leaders of the various Masters programmes that operate within the MASTS community and a representative from the most relevant programme or department will get in touch to discuss the project scope, delivery and the selection of an appropriate student. If more than one student expresses an interest in your project, you will need to ensure discussions take place to enable the most suitable student to be matched with your project. The projects themselves usually won't start until May or June.



Making the Most of Masters

MASTS - Making the Most of Masters – Project Proposal Form

Name and address of Organisation:

NatureScot
Great Glen House, Leachkin Road, Inverness, IV3 8NW.

Name of the key contact in Organisation:

Eunice Pinn

Contact e-mail and phone number:

eunice.pinn@nature.scot (01463 725216)

Title of proposed project:

Global Biodiversity Framework and the development of the GB Red List for Marine Mammals

Project outline and intended outcomes:

Marine mammals are a ubiquitous feature of almost every international conservation convention. Although not specifically mentioned, the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) is no different. For example through Target 4, Contracting Parties must '*Ensure urgent management actions, to halt human induced extinction of known threatened species and for the recovery and conservation of species, in particular threatened species, to significantly reduce extinction risk, as well as to maintain and restore the genetic diversity within and between populations of native, wild and domesticated species to maintain their adaptive potential, including through in situ and ex situ conservation and sustainable management practices, and effectively manage human-wildlife interactions to minimize human-wildlife conflict for coexistence.*'

On 1 August 2024, the UK submitted the indicators against which our progress to implementing the GBF targets will be measured, with the first progress report due in January 2026. These indicators included an ongoing commitment to the Red List Index. Previously, through the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the UK has been reporting against the Red List Index using the global level IUCN assessments rather than GB assessments. For GBF, however, it has been proposed that the UK will utilise GB level assessments. Currently there are no marine Red List assessments available at a GB level.

Red list assessments are objective and based on scientific information and ongoing research. This information can help make decisions about conserving biodiversity, but are not a list of conservation priorities per se. The aim of this project is to utilise existing assessments (e.g. those undertaken for the Scottish Marine Assessment 2020, the OSPAR Quality Status Report 2023 and the forthcoming Habitats Regulations reports) as a basis for producing GB Red List assessments for marine mammals, focusing on those species currently designated as Priority Marine Features in Scottish waters. In addition, the project will consider the potential for alignment across our various national and international reporting commitments for marine mammals, and how these might be streamlined for future assessments.

Useful References:

[Guidelines for using the Red List Categories and Criteria](#)
[OSPAR Quality Status Assessments 2023](#)
[UK Habitats Directive Reports 2019](#)
[Scotland's Priority Marine Features](#)
[Review of Management Units for cetaceans in UK 2023](#)
[Reports from the Special Committee on Seals \(SCOS\)](#)
[Scotland's Marine Assessment 2020](#)

Any additional comments e.g. details of specific disciplines required, methods to be used, travel involved, where the work would take place (i.e. at the host site or at the University), whether you foresee any Intellectual Property or confidentiality issues (and if so, what form might these take?):

This project would suit a student with an interest in the interface between science and policy. Good critical evaluation skills will be required with a need to differentiate between evidence and opinion. There may also be a need to use statistics and/or GIS depending on the approach chosen by the student. This project is desk-based and can be carried out at the university with regular online supervisor meetings. It may be possible to arrange a visit to one of the NatureScot offices.

This project will involve working with Dr Eunice Pinn (Marine Indicators Advisor) at NatureScot and Roma Banga (Senior Marine Mammal Advisor) at the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC).