

### ***Lophelia pertusa* reefs**

EUNIS Code: A5.631 and A6.611

National Marine Habitat Classification for UK & Ireland code: SS.SBR.Crl.Lop

*Lophelia pertusa*, a cold water, reef-forming coral, has a wide geographic distribution ranging from 55°S to 70°N, where water temperatures typically remain between 4-8°C. These reefs are generally subject to moderate current velocities (0.5 knots). The majority of records occur in the north-east Atlantic. The extent of *L. pertusa* reefs vary, with examples off Norway several km long and more than 20m high. These reefs occur within a depth range of 200->2000m on the continental slope, and in shallower waters in Norwegian fjords and Swedish west coast. In Norwegian waters, *L. pertusa* reefs occur on the shelf and shelf break off the western and northern parts on local elevations of the sea floor and on the edges of escarpments. The biological diversity of the reef community can be three times as high as the surrounding soft sediment (ICES, 2003), suggesting that these cold-water coral reefs may be biodiversity hotspots. Characteristic species include other hard corals, such as *Madrepora oculata* and *Solenosmilia variabilis*, the redfish *Sebastes viviparous* and the squat lobster *Munida sarsi*. *L. pertusa* reefs occur on hard substrata; this may be *Lophelia* rubble from an old colony or on glacial deposits. For this reason, *L. pertusa* reefs can be associated with iceberg plough-mark zones. Areas of dead coral reef indicate the site supported coral reef habitat in the past and should be reported as this habitat type.

*See OSPAR Agreement 2008-07 for references*