

ICES criteria	Evaluating comments
Relatively easy to understand by non-scientists and those who will decide on their use.	<p>There is a clear link between the anthropogenic input of mercury and organochlorines into the environment and the concentration of these substances in bird eggs. Their level in bird eggs provides an indication of their level and trends in the ecosystem.</p> <p>Common Tern, Arctic Tern and Eurasian Oystercatcher are coastal birds which are well known to the public.</p>
Sensitive to a manageable human activity	Most of these substances enter the ecosystem entirely through human activities, which can be controlled by management intervention.
Relatively tightly linked in time to that activity	<p>Bioaccumulation and persistence in ecosystems mean that some linkage will occur, but not always.</p> <p>Mercury and organochlorines in the environment are very persistent, and tend to increase up food chains. Because of this persistence, a time lag would exist between applying management measures and the response in seabird eggs.</p>
Easily and accurately measured, with a low error rate	Eggs are readily available and the analytical methods are well established. The ability to integrate pollutant signals over time and space of bioaccumulating contaminants in tissues means that to obtain a given level of accurate measurements, a smaller number of animal samples is required than of physical samples thus increasing the power of trend analyses.
Responsive primarily to a human activity, with low responsiveness to other causes of change	Fully responsive to human activity. However, due to the persistence of many of these compounds, it will take many years before they disappear from the environment.
Measurable over a large proportion of the area to which the EcoQO metric is to apply	Common Tern and Eurasian Oystercatcher are abundant and widely distributed throughout the North Sea area. Alternatively, eggs of Arctic Tern can be analyzed instead of Common Tern. As these species occur also on coasts of the west Atlantic and comparable species even on the coasts of other oceans there is potential to expand the EcoQO to other seas of the world.
Based on an existing body or time-series of data to allow a realistic setting of objectives	The combination of long time series of data for the Wadden Sea (since 1980's) and the current pilot project (2008-2010) confirm the existing EcoQO metrics and values.