

Species Fact Sheets

Order: Charadriiformes
Scientific Name: *Uria aalge*

Family: Alcidae
Common Name: Common Murre

AZA Management: Green Yellow Red None

Photo (Male):



Photo (Female):



NATURAL HISTORY:

Geographic Range: Europe Asia North America Neotropical
 Africa Australia Other [Click here to enter text.](#)

Habitat: Forest Desert Grassland Coastal
 Riverine Montane Other Pelagic

Circadian Cycle: Diurnal Crepuscular Nocturnal Other [Click here to enter text.](#)

Cold Tolerance: To 70° F To 60° F To 50° F To 40° F
 To 30° F To 20° F Other
 Optimal range is 40-60 degrees. If temps are below freezing, 100% of the colony must be able to get in the water to avoid frostbite

Heat Tolerance: To 30° F To 50° F To 70° F To 90° F
 To 110° F Other Can tolerate 70-80 degree temperatures for short periods. 40-60 degrees is optimal range.

Diet: Frugivore Carnivore Piscivore Insectivore
 Nectivore Omnivore Folivore Other (Add Below)

Captive Dietary Needs:

Murres eat a variety of fish, squid, and crustaceans in the wild. The captive diets can include capelin, sardine, anchovy, squid sp, herring, smelt and other commercially available species.

Life Expectancy in the Wild: Males: 26 yrs Females: 26 yrs

Life Expectancy in Captivity: Males: 25-30yrs Females: 25-30yrs

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BREEDING INFORMATION:

Age at Sexual Maturity: Males: 3-6 yrs Females: 3-6 yrs

Courtship Displays: Vocalizations, mutual preening, mutual bowing, duets, and fencing are part of the courtship displays for murre.

Nest Site Description: No nest is built. Eggs laid on ground or sometimes guano. Nesting sites are in very dense colonies with up to 20 pairs per square meter.

Clutch Size, Egg Description: 1egg is laid. Egg is pyriform to elliptical in shape. Varying in color from off white to green/turquoise background with black spots and stripes.

Incubation Period: Average of 35 days

Fledgling Period: 53-83 days with intermediate fledge stage of around 23 days

Parental Care: Both parent incubate and brood. Females can feed more than males, but males invest more when taking chicks to sea and feeding them for 1-2 months after fledging.

Chick Development: Chicks are semi-precocial and are fed whole fish by parents throughout the day. Hatchlings have grey down that is replaced by juvenile plumage consisting of less down with white on neck, cheeks, and a patch behind the eye. The chicks usually leave nest to join father in water by jumping off cliff around 18-25 day and before they can fly. They will stay with adult male for up to two months. Murre chicks can fly at about a month and a half then will be on own.

CAPTIVE HABITAT INFORMATION:

Social Structure in the Wild: Spend most time at sea, come to land to breed on rocky cliffs or islands in colonies of hundreds to thousands. Can be seen flying over the ocean in groups forming lines. Social, extroverted seabirds.

Social Structure in Captivity: It is preferable have a larger colony with an even sex ratio. The even sex ratio will keep aggression down. They are usually housed indoors, but can be held in either an indoor or outdoor exhibit.

Minimum Group Size: Minimum of 6 individuals

Maximum Group Size: Groups of 20 or more is optimal

Compatible in Mixed Species Exhibits: Yes **Comments:** Most commonly housed with other alcids, but have been housed with seaducks and oystercatchers.

Optimal Habitat Size: Minimum pool depth is 7 feet. The water should hold 75% of the bird population at once. The average exhibit size is 1,354 sq ft (41' x 22' 22, L x W x H) and using a proportion of 1/3 land surface area to 2/3

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water surface area has been successful at AZA institutions. There should be enough space for birds to get away from an aggressor or keeper during exhibit maintenance. Murres need a minimum of a 12" ledge to properly nest.

Management Challenges: Since murres nest in close proximity to each other, it can be challenging to identify pairs and parentage of abandoned eggs due to colonial nesting. They have "strong nest site fidelity" to management challenges. Since the COMU visually imprint on their eggs, and eggs can vary greatly in appearance, it can be challenging keeping appropriate dummy eggs on hand for each female. Once the egg is laid, they become strongly attached to that nest site. If the location is undesirable, it can be very difficult to move to a more desirable location.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Click here to enter text.

REFERENCES:

Cornell Lab of Ornithology- <https://birdsna.org/Species-Account/bna/species/commur/introduction>

Avian Scientific Advisory Group

<https://sora.unm.edu/sites/default/files/journals/auk/v111n01/p0207-p0209.pdf>

http://animaldiversity.org/accounts/Uria_aalge/

https://ams.aza.org/eweb/Temp/AZAAAnimalProgramReport__netforumaza_69113b97-571c-43da-ad47-87ad7ffccb018102017.PDF

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