

Marine Birds – Common Murre Colonies

description

The Common Murre (*Uria aalge*) has a short neck and a long, straight bill and a colouration that resembles that of a penguin: black above and white below. Common Murres also have a white wing-bar and, during the winter, white cheeks and white streaks up the neck. Common Murres typically nest on wide, open ledges on rocky cliffs. They spend much of the time on the open ocean and in large bays, but are found closer to rocky shorelines during the breeding season. Relative to their size, Common Murres have the most densely packed nesting colonies of any bird and incubating adults may actually touch their neighbours on both sides. They do not build nests.

This atlas page depicts active and historic Common Murre colonies in terms of their relative importance, a value that corresponds to the number of “individuals” estimated at any one site during the most recent survey year. Because only three sites had estimated counts in the most recent survey year, the sites have been subjectively classified based on expert opinion and both Triangle Island (count = 4,327) and Kerouard Island (count = 377) have been classified as ‘high’ importance. Sites have been included regardless of whether breeding had been previously confirmed at a particular site. Attributes for each site include the date that breeding was last confirmed and the most recent survey results. Colony locations were buffered to represent some of the marine habitat used by these birds adjacent to each colony, based on the distances employed in the creation of the Canadian Wildlife Service’s Marine Bird Areas of Interest dataset.



PHOTO: DAVID THYBERG

data sources

- Environment Canada (Canadian Wildlife Service) – British Columbia Seabird Colony Inventory
- Parks Canada – Nesting Seabird Colonies

data resolution

- 1:250,000 (some points have been adjusted to match the 1:20,000 TRIM coastline)

data collected

- 1977-2004 (years breeding was confirmed)

date compiled

- 2008

reviewers

- Harry Carter, Consultant
- Representatives from Environment Canada, Canadian Wildlife Service

reviewer comments

- Note that White Islet near Florencia Bay is missing from the map. This is a possible breeding site (see Carter et al. 2001, 2006; Carter 2004).
- Possibly keep colonies with zero counts in the ‘low’ relative importance category as they have been occupied in the very recent past.
- Sites labelled as ‘rock attended by Common Murre but breeding not confirmed’ are likely just roost sites and could be removed.

caveats of use

- Gaps in the extent of this feature should not be inferred to be an absence of the species, but rather an absence in survey effort.
- Buffer distances do not represent the entire foraging area of the birds.
- Sites of low relative importance may include extirpated sites or sites where the most recent survey did not obtain a count for breeding birds. Not all colonies are surveyed each year and colonies that were active in the past may or may not still support breeding populations. Therefore, these sites are still deemed important by the experts.
- Possible breeding sites are sites where breeding is suspected but has not been confirmed or counted. This information is only available for the Parks Canada dataset for Haida Gwaii.
- Recommended date of expiry for use of these data in a marine planning context: None provided.

map, feature data and metadata access

- Visit www.bcmca.ca/data for more information.

references

- Carter, H. R., U. W. Wilson, R. W. Lowe, M. S. Rodway, D. A. Manuwal, J. E. Takekawa, and J. L. Yee. *Population trends of the common murre (Uria aalge californica)*. In: Manuwal DA, Carter HR, Zimmerman TS, Orthmeyer DL, editors. *Biology and conservation of the common murre in California, Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia. Volume 1: Natural history and population trends*. Washington, DC: US Geological Survey, Information and Technology Report USGS/BRD/ITR-2000-0012. 2001. p. 33–132.
- Carter, Harry R., Ken H. Morgan, Trudy Chatwin, and Francis Bruhwiler. Notes on recent breeding of Common Murres at Starlight Reef and Cleland Island, British Columbia. *Wildlife Afield* 3. 2006. 117-121.
- Carter, H. R. Temporary colonization of Cleland Island, British Columbia, by common murres in 1969–82. *Wildlife Afield* 1. 2004. 39–45.

Species description contains material from:

- B.C. Conservation Data Centre. *Species Summary: Uria aalge*. BC Ministry of Environment (MoE) 2010. 21 Sep. 2010 <http://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/eswp/>
- Environment Canada (Canadian Wildlife Service). *The Scott Islands* Revised 2004. www.pyr.ec.gc.ca/scottislands/mwa_e.htm
- Seattle Audubon Society. *BirdWeb – Seattle Audubon’s Guide to the Birds of Washington*. Revised 2008. www.seattleaudubon.org/birdweb

BCMCA Atlas

Marine Birds

Common Murre Colonies

Legend

Relative Importance

(range in individuals)

High (238-4,327)

Low (40-237)

Historic/Possible Sites

Notes:

- Polygons of high relative importance have been drawn last and may overlap polygons of lesser importance.
- Colonies have been buffered by 5 kilometres.

Data Sources:

Environment Canada
(Canadian Wildlife Service),
Parks Canada

Base Data:

ESRI Base Data, GeoBase, GeoBC,
NOAA, Natural Resources Canada,
USGS, Washington State Government

Thematic Data:

For more information on data sources
and methods please refer to the
facing page to this map

Projection: BC Albers NAD83

0 25 50 75 100 125 150

Kilometres

0 25 50 75

Nautical Miles

1:4,250,000 *

* Written scales are approximate and
are based on a 11 x 17 inch paper size.

Prepared for:



Map template by Caslys Consulting Ltd.

August 19, 2010



PACIFIC
OCEAN

Inset Map

1:500,000*

Note: The inset has been provided to illustrate the level of detail available in the data. The inset is for illustrative purposes only and does not imply any significance to this region.