



Common Name

Common Murre

Scientific Name: *Uria aalge*

FAMILY: Alcidae

ORDER: Charadriiformes

AZA MANAGEMENT: Studbook

GEOGRAPHIC RANGE

- EUROPE
- ASIA
- NORTH AMERICA
- NEOTROPICAL
- AFRICA
- AUSTRALIA
- OTHER

HABITAT

- FOREST Pelagic
- DESERT
- GRASSLAND
- COASTAL
- RIVERINE
- MONTANE
- OTHER

CIRCADIAN CYCLE

- DIURNAL
- CREPUSCULAR
- NOCTURNAL
- OTHER



TEMPERATURE TOLERANCE



From ° 40F to °80 F

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. Can tolerate 70-80 degree temperatures for short periods.

DIET

- FRUGIVORE
- NECTIVORE
- CARNIVORE
- OMNIVORE
- PISCIVORE
- FOLIVORE
- INSECTIVORE
- OTHER

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

LIFE EXPECTANCY

Median Life Expectancy

Maximum
Longevity

Within AZA 25-30 years

In the Wild 26 years



Within AZA 25-30 years

In the Wild 26 years



BREEDING INFORMATION



AGE AT SEXUAL MATURITY



Males 3-6 Years



Females 3-6 years

Incubation period: : Average of 35 days

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



CLUTCH SIZE, & EGG DESCRIPTION



1 egg is laid. The egg is pyriform to elliptical in shape. Varying in color from off-white to green/turquoise background with black spots and stripes.



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 are on the ground or sometimes guano. Nesting sites are in very dense colonies with up to 20 pairs per square meter.



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 the neck, cheeks, and a patch behind the eye. The chicks usually leave the nest to join their father in the water by jumping off cliffs at around 18-25 days and before they can fly. They will stay with the adult male for up to two months. Murre chicks can fly at about a month and a half then will be on their own.



PARENTAL CARE

Both parents 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.

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.

In Captivity: It is preferable to 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.



MIXED SPECIES EXHIBITS

Compatible in mixed species exhibits? YES

NO

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 1,354sq ft (41' x 22' 22, L x W x H) and using a proportion of 1/3 land surface area to 2/3 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. Murre need a minimum of a 12" ledge to properly nest.



MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES

Minimum Group Size: Minimum of 6 individuals

Maximum Group Size: Groups of 20 or more is optimal

Since murrelets 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 imprints 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

N/A

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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