

Uria aalge -- (Pontoppidan, 1763)

ANIMALIA -- CHORDATA -- AVES -- CHARADRIIFORMES -- ALCIDAE

Common names: Common Murre; Guillemot; Guillemot de Troil

European Red List Assessment

European Red List Status

NT -- Near Threatened, (IUCN version 3.1)

Assessment Information

Year published:	2015
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Assessor(s):	BirdLife International
Reviewer(s):	Symes, A.
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Assessment Rationale

European regional assessment: Near Threatened (NT)

EU27 regional assessment: Least Concern (LC)

This auk began undergoing rapid declines in its European breeding range during the 2000s. Extrapolated over a three generation period (45 years) these declines result in its classification as Near Threatened in Europe.

Within the EU27 the range size has not been quantified, but it is not believed to approach the thresholds for Vulnerable under the population size criterion (<10,000 mature individuals with a continuing decline estimated to be >10% in ten years or three generations, or with a specified population structure). The population size is extremely large, and hence does not approach the thresholds for Vulnerable under the population size criterion (<10,000 mature individuals with a continuing decline estimated to be >10% in ten years or three generations, or with a specified population structure). The population trend appears to be increasing, and hence the species does not approach the thresholds for Vulnerable under the population trend criterion (>30% decline over ten years or three generations). For these reasons the species is evaluated as Least Concern within the EU27.

Occurrence

Countries/Territories of Occurrence

Native:

Belgium; Denmark; Faroe Islands (to DK); Greenland (to DK); Estonia; Finland; France; Germany; Iceland; Ireland, Rep. of; Italy; Latvia; Lithuania; Netherlands; Norway; Svalbard and Jan Mayen (to NO); Poland; Portugal; Russian Federation; Spain; Sweden; United Kingdom

Vagrant:

Bulgaria; Czech Republic; Malta; Romania; Switzerland; Gibraltar (to UK)

Population

The European population is estimated at 2,350,000-3,060,000 mature individuals. The population in the EU27 is estimated at 1,590,000-1,600,000 mature individuals. For details of national estimates, see [Supplementary PDF](#).

Trend

Although a number of populations are increasing, including in the UK (which holds nearly half the European population) since 2000 (JNCC 2014), a recent sharp decline was observed in Iceland (where nearly a quarter of the European population is found) since 2005. As a result of the reported decline in Iceland, the estimated and projected rate of decline of the European population size over the period 2005-2050 (three generations) varies from 25% to more than 50%. In the EU27 the population size is estimated to be increasing. For details of national estimates, see [Supplementary PDF](#).

Habitats and Ecology

This species is exclusively marine, occurring along sea coasts on rocky cliffs and offshore islands. It breeds mainly on steep sea cliffs and low, flat islands. During the winter it is mostly found offshore, along the edge

of continental shelf and shallow banks, marine coasts and bays, usually in boreal waters but some birds occur in the cool subtropical zone. The time of breeding is variable and is largely determined by water temperature and ice. Generally egg-laying takes place mid-May to early June and fledging mostly by late July to mid-August. It lays on a broad or narrow cliff ledge and on low, flat islands; occasionally also in crevices, under boulders and in caves. It does not build a nest and lays a single egg on bare rock. It is a pursuit-diving marine bird which forages primarily during daylight (Wanless et al. 1988). During the breeding season, schooling pelagic fish species are the most important prey for adults, though benthic species can also be important. In Labrador, Canada, Shannies (Sicheaidae) were the main source of food, comprising 84% of the diet in 1996 and 52.9% in 1997 (Bryant and Jones 1999). Capelin (*Mallotus villosus*) were also important, forming 44.7% of the diet in 1997 (Bryant and Jones 1999). In the U.K., the main prey taxa are sandeel (*Ammodytes* spp.) and clupeids. Small gadoids are also important at some colonies. The species winters mostly within its breeding range with some birds remaining relatively sedentary (Nettleship et al. 2013).

Habitats & Altitude		
Habitat (level 1 - level 2)	Importance	Occurrence
Marine Coastal/Supratidal - Sea Cliffs and Rocky Offshore Islands	major	breeding
Marine Neritic - Macroalgal/Kelp	suitable	breeding
Marine Neritic - Macroalgal/Kelp	suitable	non-breeding
Marine Neritic - Pelagic	suitable	breeding
Marine Neritic - Pelagic	suitable	non-breeding
Marine Neritic - Seagrass (Submerged)	suitable	breeding
Marine Neritic - Seagrass (Submerged)	suitable	non-breeding
Marine Neritic - Subtidal Loose Rock/pebble/gravel	suitable	breeding
Marine Neritic - Subtidal Loose Rock/pebble/gravel	suitable	non-breeding
Marine Neritic - Subtidal Rock and Rocky Reefs	suitable	breeding
Marine Neritic - Subtidal Rock and Rocky Reefs	suitable	non-breeding
Marine Neritic - Subtidal Sandy	suitable	breeding
Marine Neritic - Subtidal Sandy	suitable	non-breeding
Marine Neritic - Subtidal Sandy-Mud	suitable	breeding
Marine Neritic - Subtidal Sandy-Mud	suitable	non-breeding
Marine Oceanic - Epipelagic (m)	suitable	breeding
Marine Oceanic - Epipelagic (m)	suitable	non-breeding
Marine Oceanic - Mesopelagic (m)	suitable	breeding
Marine Oceanic - Mesopelagic (m)	suitable	non-breeding
Altitude	Occasional altitudinal limits	

Threats

This species is highly vulnerable to human disturbance as it is found in high concentrations outside the breeding season. Throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, egg collection and shooting at colonies, as well as introduced alien predators caused severe declines in the world population and unregulated hunting in Greenland is still a major threat. As human populations increased and expanded the species was extirpated in many regions, particularly in the south of its range.

Other important threats are overfishing of important forage species (e.g. capelin, herring, cod and sandeels) in the North Atlantic (Barents Sea, Iceland), uncontrolled gill-net fisheries in the north-east Atlantic and oil pollution and offshore petroleum developments in areas such as the Barents and North Seas and Greenland (Nettleship et al. 2013). The species is susceptible to avian cholera (Österblom et al. 2004) so is threatened by future outbreaks of this disease. Wind farm development has a negative impact on this species as well (Vanermen et al. 2014). The species is also likely threatened by future climate change (Sandvik 2005, Frederiksen et al. 2013).

Threats & Impacts					
Threat (level 1)	Threat (level 2)	Impact and Stresses			
Biological resource use	Fishing & harvesting aquatic resources (unintentional effects: (large scale) [harvest])	Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact
		Ongoing	Unknown	Rapid Declines	Unknown
		Stresses			
		Species mortality			

Threats & Impacts					
Threat (level 1)	Threat (level 2)	Impact and Stresses			
Biological resource use	Hunting & trapping terrestrial animals	Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact
		Ongoing	Minority (<50%)	Slow, Significant Declines	Low Impact
		Stresses			
		Species mortality; Reduced reproductive success			
Climate change & severe weather	Habitat shifting & alteration	Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact
		Ongoing	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
		Stresses			
		Ecosystem degradation; Indirect ecosystem effects			
Climate change & severe weather	Other impacts	Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact
		Ongoing	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
		Stresses			
		Ecosystem degradation; Indirect ecosystem effects			
Climate change & severe weather	Temperature extremes	Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact
		Ongoing	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
		Stresses			
		Indirect ecosystem effects; Species disturbance			
Energy production & mining	Mining & quarrying	Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact
		Ongoing	Minority (<50%)	Unknown	Unknown
		Stresses			
		Indirect ecosystem effects; Species disturbance			
Energy production & mining	Renewable energy	Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact
		Ongoing	Minority (<50%)	Causing/Could cause fluctuations	Low Impact
		Stresses			
		Indirect ecosystem effects; Species mortality; Species disturbance			
Invasive and other problematic species, genes & diseases	Named species	Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact
		Ongoing	Majority (50-90%)	Slow, Significant Declines	Medium Impact
		Stresses			
		Species mortality			
Invasive and other problematic species, genes & diseases	Pasturella (PASTEURELLALES spp.)	Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact
		Ongoing	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
		Stresses			
		Species mortality			
Invasive and other problematic species, genes & diseases	Unspecified species	Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact
		Ongoing	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
		Stresses			
		Species mortality			
Pollution	Industrial & military effluents (type unknown/unrecorded)	Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact
		Ongoing	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
		Stresses			
		Species mortality; Species disturbance			
Pollution	Oil spills	Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact
		Past, Likely to Return	Unknown	Rapid Declines	Past Impact
		Stresses			
		Ecosystem degradation; Species mortality			
Residential & commercial development	Commercial & industrial areas	Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact
		Ongoing	Majority (50-90%)	Unknown	Unknown
		Stresses			
		Species disturbance			
Transportation & service corridors	Shipping lanes	Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact
		Ongoing	Majority (50-90%)	No decline	Low Impact
		Stresses			

Threats & Impacts		
Threat (level 1)	Threat (level 2)	Impact and Stresses
		Species disturbance

Conservation

Conservation Actions Underway

Uria aalge ibericus is found on Annex I of the EU Birds Directive. With the implementation of bird protection laws, a slow recovery occurred over much of the Atlantic breeding range up to early 1970s except in north Norway and probably Iceland (Nettleship et al. 2013).

Conservation Actions Proposed

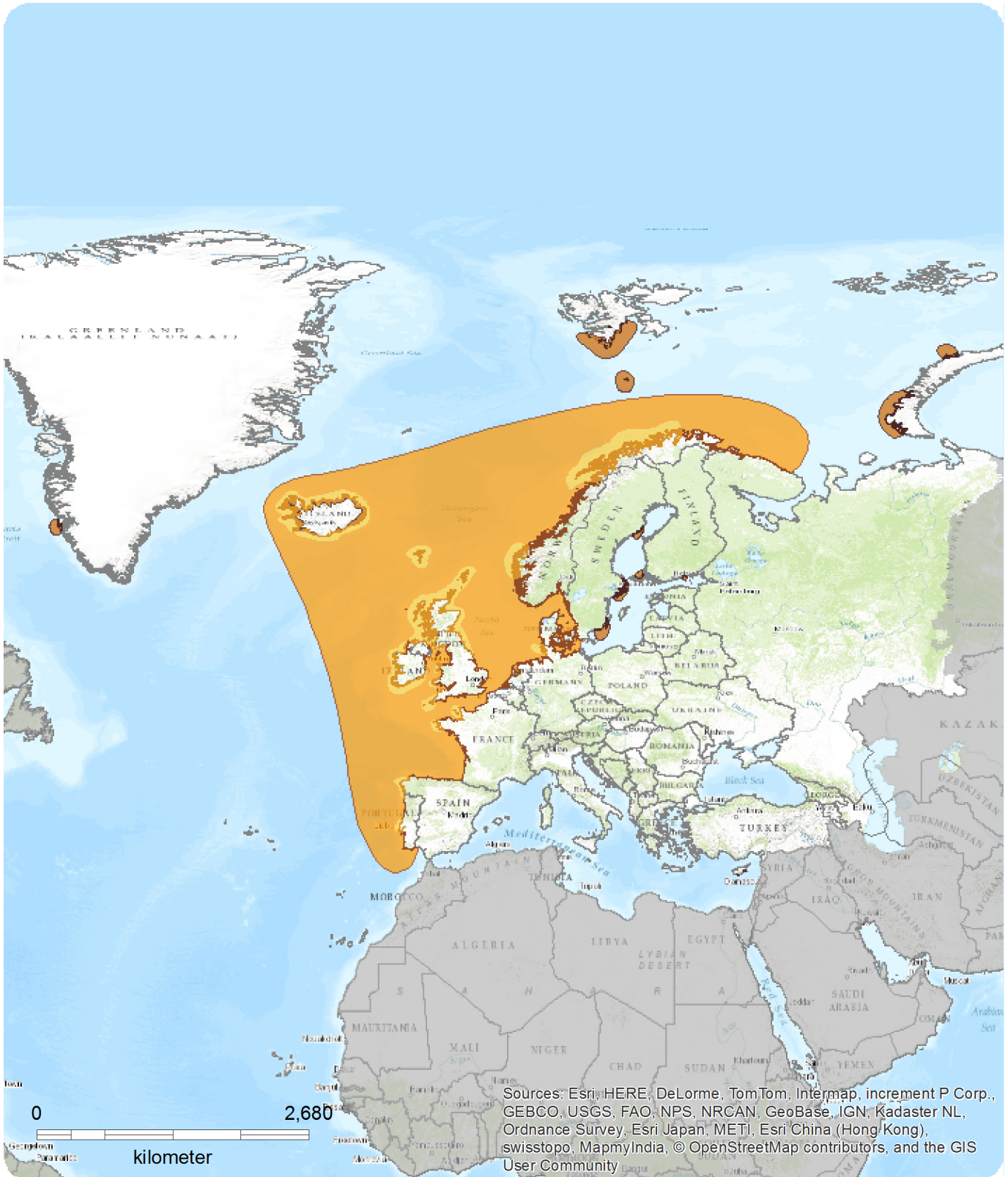
At major colonies, detailed monitoring is needed, particularly in Iceland, where the status of the largest Atlantic population is poorly known (Nettleship et al. 2013). The impact of bycatch in fish nets can be reduced in several ways: Protecting areas on a seasonal and/or diurnal scale; concentrating salmon fisheries when salmon densities are high to improve fishing efficiency and catch to bycatch ratios; changing to an alternative fishing technique may reduce seabird mortality; and gear modification (Österblom et al 2002).

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Map (see overleaf)

European Regional Assessment



Uria aalge

Range

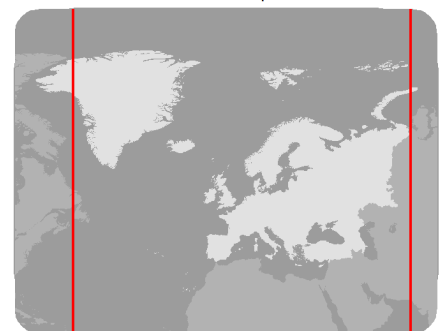
- Extant (breeding)
- Extant (non breeding)
- Extant (resident)

Citation:
BirdLife International (2015)
European Red List of Birds

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Map created 05/13/2015



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