

Common Murre Mortality Fact Sheet

Who

Common Murres, *Uria aalge*, are a medium-sized fish eating seabird that breed in large colonies on sea cliffs throughout the northern hemisphere. Resembling penguins, with an upright posture and black and white coloration, Common Murres are long-lived, up to 2 decades, and produce one egg per year. The western North American population is 4-8 million birds.

On the Pacific Coast of North America, Common Murres breed from Monterey County, California to Cape Lisburne, Alaska. Closer to the Salish Sea, murres breed on islands off the Washington and Oregon coast. Though murres are seen all year long, an influx of murres thought to originate from Washington and Oregon colonies migrate to the Salish Sea around June and July, after the breeding season.

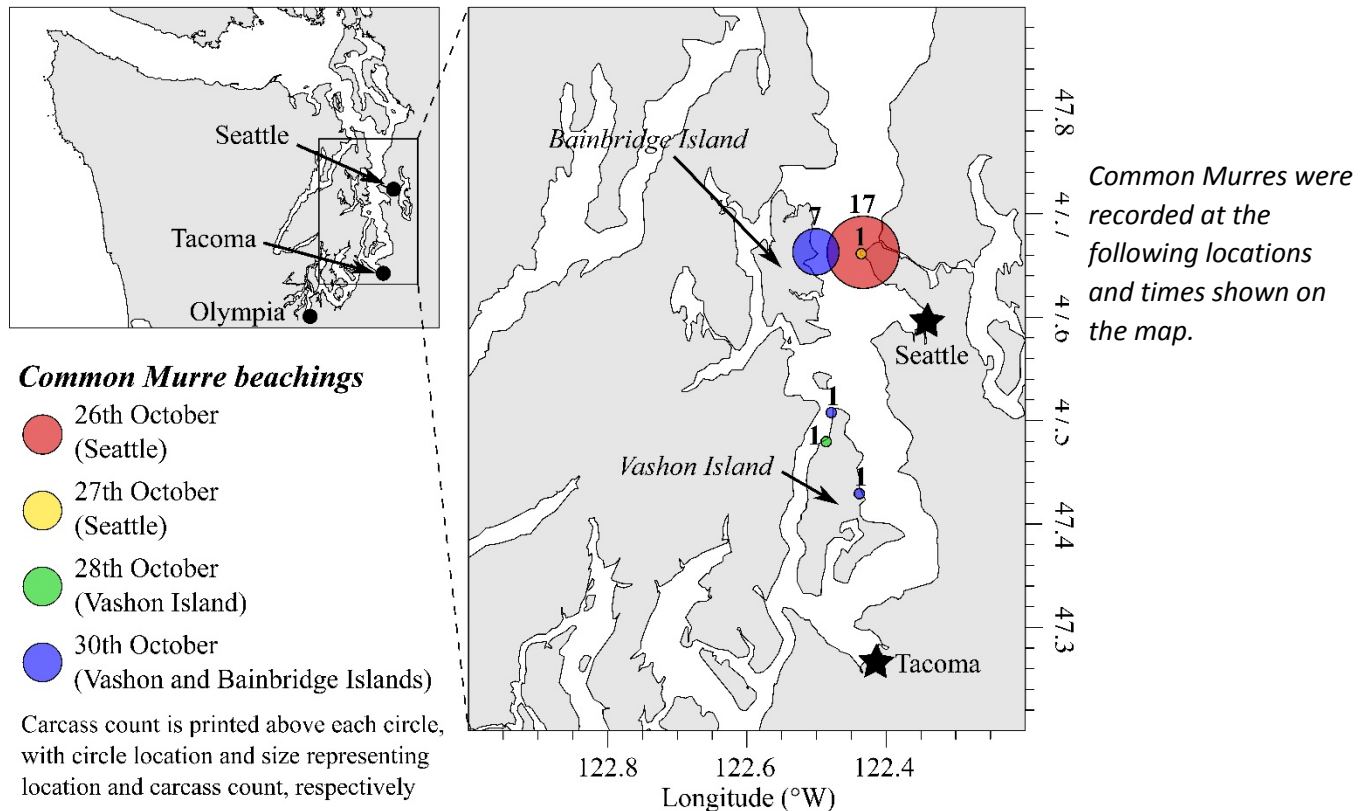
What, Where and How Many:

On October 26, 2017, the Coastal Observation and Seabird Survey Team (COASST) at the University of Washington received several reports of bird carcasses at Discovery Park from members of the public.

Seabird strandings are uncommon in Puget Sound, with an average of 1 encountered per 10km of beach each month. Common Murres beachings are very rare, with carcasses encountered only once every 100km on average.

COASST staff went to the site on October 26th & 27th to identified and collect carcasses along the shoreline. Other reports of murres on the beach came in for Vashon Island and Bainbridge Island.

Observations of Common Murre beachings in Puget Sound (October 2017)



What we are doing:

COASST alerted participants and agency officials within the region. Carcasses from Discovery Park were collected by COASST staff, and sent to the Slater Museum of Natural History and National Wildlife Health Center (USGS) for an evaluation of cause of death.

Cause of death:

We do not yet know what caused the death of these murre. Investigations are ongoing. Once we know the results of the necropsies, we will update this factsheet.

What You Can Do:

- Report dead or moribund bird sightings to COASST at coasst@u.washington.edu
Please include date, time, number, species and condition of birds (dead, moribund, fresh, decayed), and photographs along an approximate length of beach.
- Consider participating in regular monthly surveys through COASST. Visit www.coasst.org to learn more and find out about upcoming trainings in your area.
- Please don't touch or collect sick or dead birds. Birds tagged with colored zip-ties are part of ongoing monitoring, and have already been reported.
- Report dead or moribund marine mammals to the West Coast Marine Mammal Stranding Network at www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/publications/protected_species/marine_mammals/washington_gismap_2017.pdf

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