

Shooting ban on Black guillemot (*Cephus grylle*) in Iceland

The Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources in Iceland has signed a regulation banning the shooting of Black guillemot in Iceland. The decision of conservation is made based on a review from the Icelandic Institute of Natural History and the Environment Agency.

Black guillemot is a medium-sized alcid. Coastal and favours shallow seas, rarely goes out to the ocean. Nests alone or in small colonies on islands, headlands and screes below bird cliffs. The population is hard to measure but a roughly it has been estimated that the Icelandic population is about 10,000-20,000 pairs. Monitoring strongly suggests a significant reduction in the number of last years.

In June Fuglavernd BirdLife Iceland in cooperation with Skotvís the Icelandic Shooting Association and Vistfræðifélag Íslands the Icelandic Ecological Society joined forces and asked the Minister to ban the shooting of Black guillemot based on a small and declining population in Iceland. The species has not been specifically sought after by Auk shooters but it was pointed out that has rather been bycatch.

The Regulation took effect on September 1st 2017.

Fuglavernd BirdLife Iceland celebrates this milestone but for other Auk species; Razorbill, Common Murre, Thick-billed Murre and the Atlantic Puffin the hunting season starts on September 1st. Shooting of these species is still legal.

So we march on. Based on a report prepared for the Minister for the Environment and Natural Resource back in 2011 titled: Ministers Workgroup on the Conservation and Restoration of Auk population - Statement and suggestions. In the working group were: Arnþór Garðarsson, Guðmundur A. Guðmundsson, Menja von Schmalensee, Sigurður Á. Þráinsson, Steinar R. B. Baldursson, Sæunn Marinósdóttir.

Direct quote from the report:

“The declining population of these five species has been significant for the past 10-15 years, and it is questionable whether they are sustainable and will tolerate hunting without further decline. The prerequisites for their utilization, whether by hunting or utilization, are therefore no longer available. The working group considers it important that action be taken immediately to increase the protection of these species while populations are declining and until they have recovered and breeding success reaches a level which is considered normal. The majority of the working group considers it necessary to stop temporarily the hunting and utilization of these five species. A minority of the working group (representatives of Skotvís and the

Environment Agency, respectively) thinks it vital to ban shooting on Black guillemot and Atlantic Puffin and their utilization and on the other hand, considers that it is sufficient to temporarily reduce Auk hunting.“

Usefull links:

- The original news in Icelandic on Fuglavernd BirdLife Iceland website.
<https://fuglavernd.is/2017/09/01/teista-fridud-fyrir-skotveidum/> +
- The Regulation amending Regulation No. 456/1994, on birdhunting and utilization of wild birds, with subsequent amendments. [Reglugerð um breytingu á reglugerð nr. 456/1994, um fuglaveiðar og nýtingu hlunninda af villtum fuglum, með síðari breytingum.](#)
- The report: Ministers Workgroup on the Conservation and Restoration of Auk population - Statement and suggestions.
Arnpór Garðarsson, Guðmundur A. Guðmundsson, Menja von Schmalensee, Sigurður Á. Þráinsson, Steinar R. B. Baldursson, Sæunn Marinósdóttir (2011).
Starfshópur umhverfisráðherra um verndun og endurreisn svartfuglastofna.
Greinargerð og tillögur starfshópsins.
http://www.umhverfisraduneyti.is/media/PDF_skrar/Tillogur-svartfuglahops-2011.pdf .
Reykjavík, Umhverfis- og auðlindaráðuneytið: 39.

Photos/attachments:

- Sindri
- Sveinn