

Circumpolar Seabird Expert Group (CBird) Implementation Update Faroe Islands, 2019

The [Circumpolar Seabird Expert Group \(CBird\)](#) promotes, facilitates, and coordinates conservation, management and research activities among circumpolar countries and improves communication between seabird scientists and managers inside and outside the Arctic.



*The study area on Skúvoy, Faroe Islands, which has been monitored for guillemots since 1972 and since 2001 also for kittiwakes and fulmars
Photo: Bergur Olsen*



Current CBird Priorities

● Country participating ● Country not participating

- The State of the Arctic Marine Biodiversity Report (SAMBR)
- Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative (AMBI) (Implementing the Circumpolar Flyway Workplan)
- Implementation of the species-specific conservation strategies and action plans
- Contributing seabird monitoring data to State of the Arctic Marine Biodiversity Report (SAMBR) and Seabird Information Network (SIN)
- Circumpolar Review of Arctic Tern Population Trends
- Assessment of seabird bycatch in Lumpfish fisheries
- Murre harvest study and scientific recommendations to international and national harvest schemes
- Black-legged Kittiwake conservation strategy
- Publication: Circumpolar dynamics of a marine top-predator track ocean warming rates (Descamps et al. 2017, Global Change Biology)

Links with National Priorities

The national priorities in the Faroes are to preserve the nature at the same time as some species are exploited for food and leisure-time activities. However, to do this properly in a sustainable way, regarding seabirds, we need much more information about the different seabird populations, for example their sizes, fluctuations and breeding biology. Most of the information is from the island Skúvoy, which is in the middle of the Faroe Islands, and the results about fluctuations in the guillemots, kittiwakes and fulmars are from a study area (figure 1) on this island. Now that tourism is rapidly increasing and boat trips to the seabird cliffs and hiking trips through seabird colonies are among the most attractive leisure-time activities it is a challenge to implement rules to minimize disturbance caused by these activities.

As a partner in the CBird group it is possible to discuss all these issues and to get ideas of how to solve the problems and also to contribute with information from the Faroes to the CBird priorities.

CBird Summary of 2017-18 Country Achievements

Breeding success of a Faroese kittiwake colony and the subpolar gyre index

Our most strategic contribution to CBird this year was that we show a close link between the breeding success of a kittiwake colony in the Faroe Islands and the subpolar gyre index. Successful breeding follows winters with an expanded subpolar gyre and, by inference, increased zooplankton abundances southwest of Iceland. The environmental conditions in the northwestern Atlantic during the non-breeding and pre-breeding seasons might therefore be important. Furthermore, the subpolar gyre dynamics might influence the local food abundance on the Faroe shelf during the breeding season. Since the open-ocean subpolar Atlantic is amongst the most predictable regions in the world, our results hold promise for predicting the general production to seabird populations over a large geographical region adjacent to the northern North Atlantic and the Arctic Mediterranean.

Hátún H, Olsen B and Pacariz S (2017) [The Dynamics of the North Atlantic Subpolar Gyre Introduces Predictability to the Breeding Success of Kittiwakes](#). Front. Mar. Sci. 4:123. doi: 10.3389/fmars.2017.00123.

Monitoring of the seabird cliff Høvdin

Contributing seabird monitoring data to State of the Arctic Marine Biodiversity Report (SAMBR) and Seabird Information Network (SIN)

We have figures for common guillemots, kittiwakes and arctic terns, but we have not contributed yet. The results for the fulmars have to be counted on pictures.

Circumpolar Review of Arctic Tern Population Trends

We have figures for the arctic terns on a citizens science basis since 2003

Black-legged Kittiwake conservation strategy

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