

**Premier of Greenland, Mr. Kim Kielsen**

**Minister for Fisheries, Hunting and Agriculture, Mr. Karl-Kristian Kruse**

**Minister for Nature, Environment and Justice, Mr. Mala Høy Kúko**

March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016

**Re. Imminent risk of extinction of more murre colonies in Greenland (Thick-billed Murre *Uria lomvia*)**

Dear Premier, **Mr. Kim Kielsen**, Minister for Fisheries, Hunting and Agriculture, **Mr. Karl-Kristian Kruse** and Minister for Nature, Environment and Justice, **Mr. Mala Høy Kúko**

So far, about 20 large and smaller murre colonies have gone extinct in Greenland. Among these are several colonies that 80 years ago numbered tens of thousands or even more than 100,000 murre and now are empty. The next colony in imminent risk of extinction is Ritenbenk in Disko Bay that previous numbered 45,000 murre, but now has less than 1000.

On this serious background, the Greenland Institute of Natural Resources has clearly indicated that a moratorium on hunting murre is necessary to halt the extinctions. We quote from the latest scientific paper published by the Institute<sup>1</sup>: *“Murre colonies situated far from larger human settlements are the only ones still thriving – local hunting and disturbances during the breeding season are therefore still a major conservation concern and this probably can explain much of the continued population decline. A more persistent information campaign, a better law enforcement (e.g. more hunting wardens) and a total hunting ban on murre in Greenland are probably all needed to avoid additional local extinctions in Greenland. A total hunting ban in Greenland would also benefit the declining breeding population in Iceland and Svalbard, which makes up a large part of the murre wintering in Southwest Greenland.”*

As stated in this quote, hunting of murre in Greenland is not only a concern for Greenland’s own colonies, but may be a contributing reason for declines among murre colonies in both Svalbard and Iceland.

---

<sup>1</sup> Merkel, F.R., Labansen, A.L., Boertmann, D., Mosbech, A., Egevang, C., Falk, K., Linnebjerg, J., Frederiksen, M & Kampp, K. 2014. Declining trends in the majority of Greenland’s thick-billed murre (*Uria lomvia*) colonies 1981–2011. – Polar Biology (on line) DOI 10.1007/s00300-014-1500-3

In a situation, where murre colonies are declining and some of the Greenlandic colonies are in imminent risk of extinction, we are deeply worried about the proposal currently considered by the Greenland authorities to *maintain two months of autumn/winter hunt and reopen the very harmful spring hunting* on murres for one month.

Being highly worried about this serious situation, we urge you to comply with the best scientific advice available, i.e. introduce a moratorium on murre hunting. By doing so, you have the chance to achieve the same fine results as was the case with the recovery of the common eider population in NW Greenland that has benefitted all stakeholders. We find this so much more important in a world where Greenland is dependent of having an international reputation of responsible and sustainable management of its natural resources.

Sincerely yours,

**BirdLife International**

Patricia Zurita, CEO

[Patricia.Zurita@birdlife.org](mailto:Patricia.Zurita@birdlife.org)

[www.birdlife.org](http://www.birdlife.org)

**Fuglavernd, BirdLife Iceland**

Hólmfríður Arnardóttir, CEO

[fuglavernd@fuglavernd.is](mailto:fuglavernd@fuglavernd.is)

[www.fuglavernd.is](http://www.fuglavernd.is)

**Norsk Ornitologisk Forening, BirdLife Norway**

Kjetil Aa. Solbakken, CEO

[kjetil@birdlife.no](mailto:kjetil@birdlife.no)

[www.birdlife.no](http://www.birdlife.no)

**National Audubon Society, BirdLife USA**

David Yarnold, CEO

[mhsiclait@audubon.org](mailto:mhsiclait@audubon.org)

[www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org)

**Dansk Ornitologisk Forening, BirdLife Denmark**

Sigrid Andersen, CEO

[sigrid.andersen@dof.dk](mailto:sigrid.andersen@dof.dk)

[www.dof.dk](http://www.dof.dk)