Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

Department of Aquatic resources

Degree thesis project: Evaluating camera monitoring for breeding seabirds

Common guillemots *Uria aalge* L. (Am. Eng.: Common Murre) are marine piscivorous top predators with a circumpolar Arctic distribution. Long-term studies have shown that they can be important indicators of changes in marine food webs and ecosystems.

The largest Common guillemot colony in the Baltic Sea (~ 15 000 pairs) is at the island of Stora Karlsö. Since 1997, a long-term research program is following this colony and collects annual data on survival, reproduction and diet, among other things. In 2008, a world unique research facility, the Karlsö Auk Lab, was built in the middle of the colony. Scientists can study breeding birds from the inside of the Auk lab at a very close distance (20 – 30 cm). This opens up for extremely detailed studies to a low disturbance.

This degree thesis is about evaluating a new technology for monitoring breeding success in Common guillemots – through automatic cameras. Today breeding is monitored through daily observations to check which eggs and chicks that are present. The new technology builds on images taken at regular intervals, and at a later stage analysis of the images. If this technology is working, there is a big potential of increasing data collection and reduce time spent close to the birds (which also leads to lower disturbance levels). The field work includes both traditional observations studies and collection and analysis of images.

At least four weeks will be spent at Stora Karlsö for field work. The island has a simple field station in the period May – early July. The student will work with experienced field personnel and a field work coordinator. The project is planned for Bachelors level (15 ECTS) but can be expanded into a Masters project as well (30 – 60 ECTS).

Links

www.balticseabird.com
www.storakarlso.se

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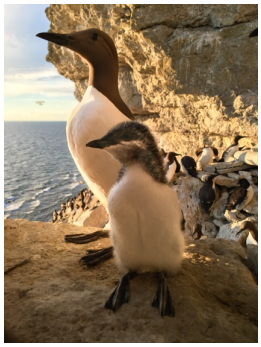

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