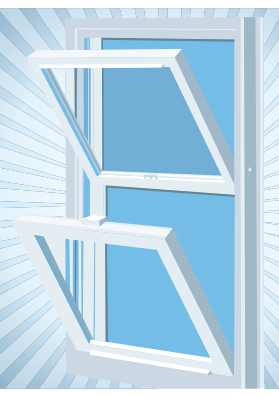
Opening the Windows of Curiosity

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The Mini Page®

Founded by Betty Debnam

Next Week:
Amazing Arizona



Spectacular Seabirds

photo by Zach Jackson

Mini Fact:
The albatross, a seabird, has a wingspan of up to 11.5 feet.

If you've ever been near the ocean, you've probably seen a seabird. These birds rely on a special type of **habitat**, or environment, to survive.

The Mini Page learns more about seabirds, including puffins, this week.

What is a habitat?

A habitat is a place where animals can live and reproduce. Habitats range from oceans to deserts, from mountains to prairies. They provide animals with:



photo courtesy of USFWS Headquarters

- food
- water
- places to hide
- nesting places
- material to make nests
- protection from heat and cold.

Some species need other things, too. For example, most songbirds need something to perch on.

Seabirds, or birds that live on or near the sea, need a habitat that is free of mammals. For that reason, they usually nest on islands too far out for mammals to swim to.

Experts believe an alarming number of plants and animals on Earth are at risk. One of the main reasons they are at risk is the destruction of their habitats.

Human development and the growth of cities are main causes of habitat destruction.

Dangers to habitats

There are about 300 species of seabirds in the world. About one-third of them are threatened or endangered.

One of the main threats is people bringing mammals to islands where seabirds nest. Rats and cats are especially big problems because they eat chicks and eggs.

Seabird habitats can also be destroyed when the ocean rises and floods the islands. Global warming is a cause of rising oceans. One hurricane can wipe out a species. Oil spills also destroy island habitats and the fish the birds need to eat.

Puffin facts



photo by John Finn

Puffins are seabirds affected by changes to their habitat. There are four species of puffins in the world: the Atlantic puffin, horned puffin, tufted puffin and rhinoceros auklet.

The Atlantic puffin is the only species living on the Atlantic Ocean. The rest live on the Pacific Ocean.

Puffins are great swimmers. When they dive for fish, they can stay underwater for as long as one minute. They use their wings to swim, seeming to fly under water. They can swim 200 feet under the water. They drink from the ocean, and they eat small fish.

Puffin parents

Puffins make their nests under boulders on islands. If there are no boulders, they may dig burrows in the soil. Puffin pairs return to the same burrow each year. Their burrows are filled with feathers, grass and seaweed.



photo by Charlie Marshall

They lay only one egg a year. It takes about six weeks for the egg to hatch, and then about another six to 16 weeks for the parents to raise the chick, or **puffling**.

Both parents help care for the puffling. Males and females usually remain mated to the same partner. They return to the same burrow each year to lay their new egg.

When they are about 6 weeks old, puffins fly out to the ocean, where they live for two to three years. When they are about 5 years old, they are ready to breed. They then return to an area near where they were hatched to raise pufflings of their own.

Adult puffins usually spend the winter on the ocean, returning to land in the summer to breed.

Resources



On the Web:
- bit.ly/3TFeoCi

At the library:
- "Puffin: Amazing Facts About Nature's Colorful Seabird for Kids" by Dylanna Press

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Try 'n' Find



Words that remind us of seabirds are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:

ALBATROSS, CHICKS, COLD, DESTRUCTION, DIVE, EGGS, FISH, FOOD, HABITAT, HATCH, HEAT, NEST, OCEAN, PUFFIN, RISK, SPECIES, SWIM, WATER.

S	A	U	O	N	Y	Y	R	E	T	A	W	Q	T	O
P	F	L	K	J	R	E	G	G	S	R	X	S	L	V
E	H	A	B	I	T	A	T	E	P	O	E	B	T	N
C	G	C	B	A	D	L	O	C	V	N	T	M	D	I
I	O	W	N	G	T	W	E	C	H	I	C	K	S	F
E	C	Y	F	G	A	R	S	Q	D	Q	D	M	H	F
S	E	H	A	T	C	H	O	A	G	I	A	M	S	U
I	A	K	S	I	R	J	C	S	W	J	K	I	I	P
H	N	O	I	T	C	U	R	T	S	E	D	W	F	I
I	D	O	O	F	H	G	T	A	E	H	B	S	U	A

Cook's Corner

Sticky Cinnamon Popcorn Balls



You'll need:
- 8 cups popped popcorn (1 microwave package)
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 3 cups small marshmallows
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 8 sheets wax paper (10 by 12 inches)

What to do:
1. Pop microwave popcorn according to package directions.
2. Remove unpopped kernels and place popcorn in large glass bowl.
3. In another glass bowl, add butter and marshmallows. Microwave for 2 minutes at 50% power.
4. Stir to combine butter and marshmallows; add cinnamon and blend well.
5. Pour marshmallow mixture on top of popcorn. Stir to coat evenly (mixture will be sticky).
6. Place one cup of coated popcorn in middle of wax paper sheet. Roll up edges of paper to form a popcorn ball. Store in airtight container. Serves 8.

* You'll need an adult's help with this recipe.

ROOTONYM®

by Jan & Carey Orr Cook

1. Of or relating to birds creating a place to lay eggs (7-letter adjective)
2. Make by putting materials together (5-letter verb)
3. High, steep surfaces of rock near oceans (6-letter plural noun)
4. A sandy part of shore near an ocean (5-letter noun)



Answers: Nesting, Build, Cliffs, Beach.

1. Seabirds will fly long distances to reach _____ areas.
2. Seagulls put down grass to _____ a safe spot for eggs.
3. Tall _____ may have holes in them where birds nest.
4. Birds move grass found on the _____ to their habitats.

Study the definition, when you know the missing word, fill in the letter boxes and the sentence blanks.

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Mini Jokes



Sylas: What seabird is the most optimistic?
Soraya: A peli-CAN!

Samara: Which bird is always out of breath?
Santiago: A puffin!

Eco Note



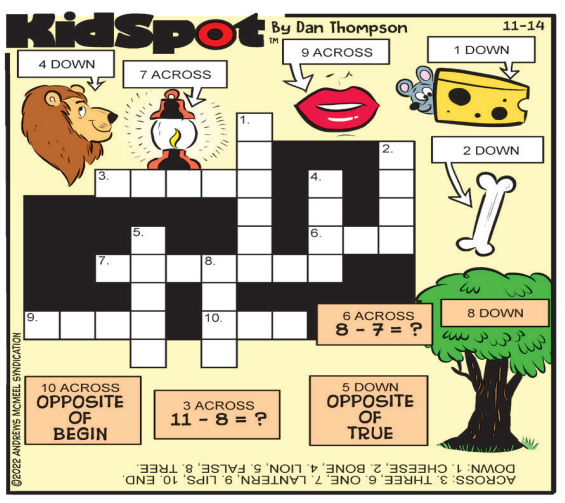
Switzerland's glaciers exhausted their protective annual winter snow unusually early this summer, exposing the underlying ice to direct melting for the remainder of the season. Glacier Monitoring Switzerland said "Glacier Loss Day" arrived on June 29, the second-earliest date on record and only three days later than during the disastrous melt year of 2022. Low winter snowfall, Saharan dust and two June heat waves contributed to the early snowmelt. The decline is part of a much longer retreat across the Alps. Since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, Alpine glaciers have lost more than half their surface area and approximately two-thirds of their ice volume.

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For later:

Look in your local newspaper for articles about birds.

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