

# #8 REDUCE PLASTICS — BECOME A PUFFIN PROTECTOR

## Activities Can be Done At Home

Help fight back against plastic pollution! Every little action we take to reduce our consumption of plastic is a big step in protecting the future of our planet and our precious wildlife. [Earn 1 Point for each activity completed for a Total of 2 Points. Earn 1 Bonus Point for downloading our Bird ID Guide (<https://www.thesalishseaschool.org/id-guides>) and take a picture of yourself using it!!]



**COMPLETE ONE OF THE TWO ECO-FRIENDLY SWAPS.** Send a picture to [thesalishseaschool@gmail.com](mailto:thesalishseaschool@gmail.com) of you using them, and receive a Puffin Protector sticker from The Salish Sea School.

### **ECO-FRIENDLY SWAP #1: Plastic Toothbrush → Bamboo Toothbrush**

**Plastic Toothbrush Problem:** 3.5 billion toothbrushes are sold worldwide each year. These toothbrushes are made from polypropylene plastic and nylon and can take up to 500 years or more to decompose. [Learn more at National Geographic.](#)



**Solution** → **Bamboo toothbrush**

### **ECO-FRIENDLY SWAP #2: Plastic Wrap → BeesWax Wrap**

**Plastic Wrap Problem:** It may save your sandwich, but it is polluting the planet. It is difficult to recycle and is made from potentially harmful chemicals, especially as they break down in the environment. They do a great job of picking up bacteria and metals, which make it into our fish and ultimately our food! [Learn more at National Geographic](#)



**Solution** → **Beeswax Food Wrap and/or Re-usable Glass Containers**

**LEARN MORE ABOUT TUFTED PUFFINS** Look up the definition for the following words:

- Pelagic
- Seabird
- Alcid
- Monomorphic

*(More information about Tufted Puffins on the next page)*



**BONUS POINT: Download our Bird ID Guide** (<https://www.thesalishseaschool.org/id-guides>) and take a picture of yourself using it!

We believe the desire to save our natural world begins with first experiencing the creatures that rely on it, and we couldn't be more excited to see you out there!

# REDUCE PLASTICS - BECOME A PUFFIN PROTECTOR Continued...



## LEARN MORE ABOUT TUFTED PUFFINS

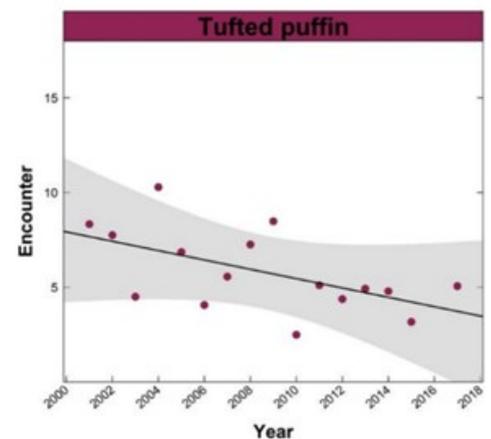
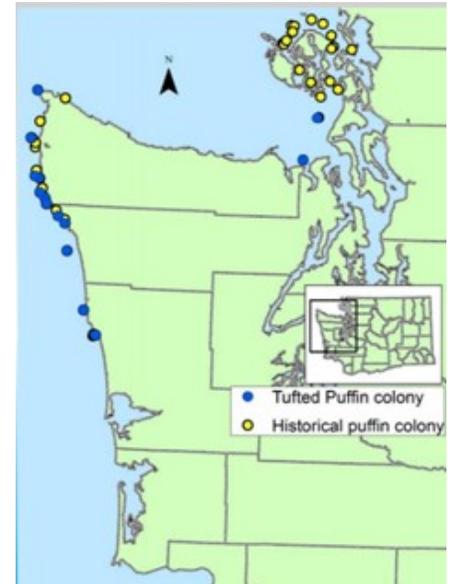
Tufted Puffins are web-footed diving birds known as Alcids or Auks (in the Alcidae family). Auklets, Mur-res, Guillemots, and Murrelets are also Alcids.

There are three species of puffins in the world: Tufted Puffins, Horned Puffins, and Atlantic Puffins. Although similar in appearance to penguins, they are not closely related. They are, however, very closely related to Rhinoceros Auklets.

Rhinoceros Auklets often get mistaken for Tufted Puffins. However, if you are not near Smith Island or Protection Island (blue inland dots on map), it is very unlikely that you will see a Tufted Puffin.

Tufted Puffin colonies used to be found throughout the San Juan Islands (see yellow dots on map); today there are only two known nesting sites in the Salish Sea: Protection and Smith Island.

There has been a ~90% population decline in Washington in recent decades (Hanson and Wiles, 2015). Tufted Puffins were designated a candidate for listing as a Washington state endangered species in 1998 and officially listed in 2015. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is currently considering the Tufted Puffin for listing under the general Endangered Species Act (Sewell 2014, USFWS 2015). The current on-the-water minimum population for the outer coast lies around 1,278 individuals in 2017 (S. F. Pearson, unpubl. data). This is well below the threshold recommended for long-term viability. To down-list Puffins to threatened, a minimum viable population (MVP) size of 4,500 on-the-water count of individuals is needed in at least three of the five years prior to the down-listing decision. A population target of 7,500 would down-list them to sensitive (WDFW Recovery Plan, 2019).



## FACTORS AFFECTING CONTINUED EXISTENCE

The causes of the Tufted Puffin decline in Washington remain undetermined because of a lack of scientific study. Throughout its range, the species is adversely impacted by a wide range of natural and human factors (Washington State Status Report, 2015). The identified threats set in the context of existing regulatory mechanisms and with particular attention to conditions in Washington include:

- Lack of Existing Regulatory Mechanisms
- Commercial and Tribal Fishing Bycatch
- Reduced Prey Availability
- Introduced Species
- Climate Change Effects
- Bald Eagle Predation
- Oil Spills
- Harmful Algal Blooms
- Plastic and Chemical Contaminants
- Pathogens and Disease



*It is so important to help protect seabirds! They are excellent indicators of ecosystem status. As highly migratory, near-apex predators, they travel across trophic levels, space, and time, and are easily studied relative to other marine species. They are co-dependent on marine and terrestrial ecosystems, which highlights the importance of marine conservation efforts in the Salish Sea beyond the high-tide mark!*