



# Kittlitz's Murrelet Coordinated Observation Program



## KIMCOP

A cooperative effort between the USGS Alaska Science Center, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the USGS Alaska Volcano Observatory.

You can contribute to this effort by reporting Kittlitz's murrelet nests to the contacts listed below.

The Kittlitz's murrelet (*Brachyramphus brevirostris*, KIMU) is a rare seabird and a candidate species under the Endangered Species Act. KIMU nest in very remote areas, typically at high elevation, on vegetation-free, gravel-size scree slopes in recently deglaciated landscapes. There is limited information on KIMU reproduction. KIMU have cryptic mottled plumage for camouflage on their rocky nests that are usually dispersed widely on mountainous slopes. The single egg, which is laid on bare ground, often at the base of a large rock, is also camouflaged. The egg is mottled, ranging from speckled to streaked. Chicks are downy fluff-balls with cryptic plumage. Most nests are found by flushing the adult from its nest.

If you find a KIMU nest and have tools at hand, please help by providing us with the following information:

### PHOTOGRAPHS:

1. Close-up of egg or chick
2. Nest cup with egg or chick and scale reference (ruler, knife, or other)
3. Nest cup and ca. 5 meter diameter surrounding terrain
4. General view of terrain surrounding the nest, with cairn in background



Adult Kittlitz's murrelet

USFWS

### MEASUREMENTS AT NEST:

1. Nest cup diameter and depth
2. Dimensions of any sheltering large rocks, with distance to nest cup
3. Aspect of nest; specify reference to magnetic or true north
4. Latitude and longitude; specify coordinate system (e.g. NAD 83) and include accuracy if GPS fix

### MEASUREMENTS OF CHICK (if calipers and scale are available):

1. Wing chord length (from "elbow" bend to tip of longest down/feather)
2. Weight

### QUALITATIVE DESCRIPTIONS:

1. Nest location relative to USGS topo maps or local landmarks
2. Surrounding snowpack or estimated melt pattern
3. Nest's exposure to, or protection from, prevailing winds
4. Rough dimensions of rocks comprising the nest cup, as well as surrounding rocks
5. Average slope of the terrain at nest, and position relative to any nearby peaks
6. Egg coloration, or chick coloration and behavior
7. Note potential nest predators (ravens, raptors, foxes, etc.)

**To avoid attracting predators to the nesting site, be quick!**

Contact John Piatt, USGS, (jpiatt@usgs.gov) or Ellen Lance, USFWS, (ellen\_lance@fws.gov) with your information.

Visit [alaska.fws.gov](http://alaska.fws.gov) for more information on Kittlitz's murrelets.



Kittlitz's murrelet egg on nest

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Kittlitz's murrelet chick on nest

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