Puffin fact sheet

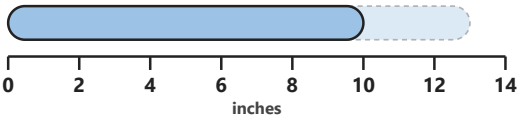
True facts about real puffins



Fact card

Kind of animal	Bird. A seabird in the auk family.
Scientific name	Fratercula arctica. "Fratercula" means "little friar."
Length	25 to 33 cm (10 to 13 inches), says Audubon
Wingspan	47 to 63 cm (18 to 25 inches)
Weight	310 to 550 grams (11 to 19 ounces). About as heavy as a can of soup.
Lives in	The North Atlantic Ocean, from Maine and Canada to Iceland, Britain and Norway
Eats	Small fish such as sand eels, capelin, herring and sprat
Babies	Called pufflings. One egg a year.
Lifespan	Often 18 to 20 years or more. The oldest known lived past 40.
Status	Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List. Millions are left, but the number is falling.

How big is a puffin?



An Atlantic puffin is 10 to 13 inches long (25 to 33 cm), about as long as a school ruler. The dark part of the bar is the shortest adult and the light part is the longest.

Why two numbers?

Where sources give different numbers, this sheet gives the range. That is how scientists do it too.

My notes

8 true puffin facts

1. A baby puffin is called a puffling.
2. A puffin can flap its wings up to 400 times a minute.
3. Puffins "fly" underwater. They push with their wings and steer with their feet.
4. A puffin can dive to around 200 feet (60 meters), though it usually fishes in shallower water.
5. A puffin can carry ten or more fish in its beak at once. Its spiny tongue presses them against the roof of its mouth.
6. Puffins dig their burrows with their beaks and feet. A burrow can be 3 to 7 feet long.
7. A puffin pair lays just one egg a year.
8. The bright beak is for spring and summer. After nesting, the colorful outer plates drop off and the beak looks smaller and darker.

Sources: Cornell Lab of Ornithology; Audubon Field Guide; Audubon; Audubon Magazine; National Geographic; National Geographic Kids, and 11 more. Every source and link: lumiscove.com/animal-facts/puffin

For personal and classroom use.

Puffin quiz and report

Page 2. The answers are upside down at the bottom.

Name: _____

True or false?

Circle your answer. Try it before you look at the fact sheet.

1. Puffins are a kind of penguin. **True** **False**
2. A baby puffin is called a puffling. **True** **False**
3. Puffins cannot fly. **True** **False**
4. A puffin can carry ten or more fish in its beak at once. **True** **False**
5. A puffin pair lays just one egg a year. **True** **False**
6. A puffin's beak is bright all year long. **True** **False**

My puffin report

A puffin is a kind of

_____

Puffins live in

_____

Puffins eat

_____

My favorite fact

_____

_____

One thing I still wonder

_____

_____

Draw a puffin

Answers: 1. False. Puffins are auks. They live in the north and they can fly. 2. True. 3. False. A puffin can flap its wings up to 400 times a minute. 4. True. Its spiny tongue holds them in place. 5. True. 6. False. The colorful outer plates drop off after nesting.

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