

Grays Harbor National Wildlife Refuge

Hoquiam, Washington



Refuge Will Protect Shorebird Habitat

Congress authorized the establishment of the Grays Harbor National Wildlife Refuge in August 1988. The focus of the refuge is Bowerman Basin which is located in the northeast corner of the Grays Harbor estuary on the coast of Washington.

Grays Harbor is one of four major staging areas for shorebirds in North America. Over one million shorebirds gather, or stage, here in spring to store up fat reserves and rest for the non-stop flight to their northern breeding grounds. This is the largest concentration of shorebirds on the west coast, south of Alaska.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is currently negotiating with two major land owners, the city of Hoquiam and the Port of Grays Harbor, to acquire land and waters within the proposed refuge boundary. When land acquisition is completed, the refuge will include approximately 1,800 acres.



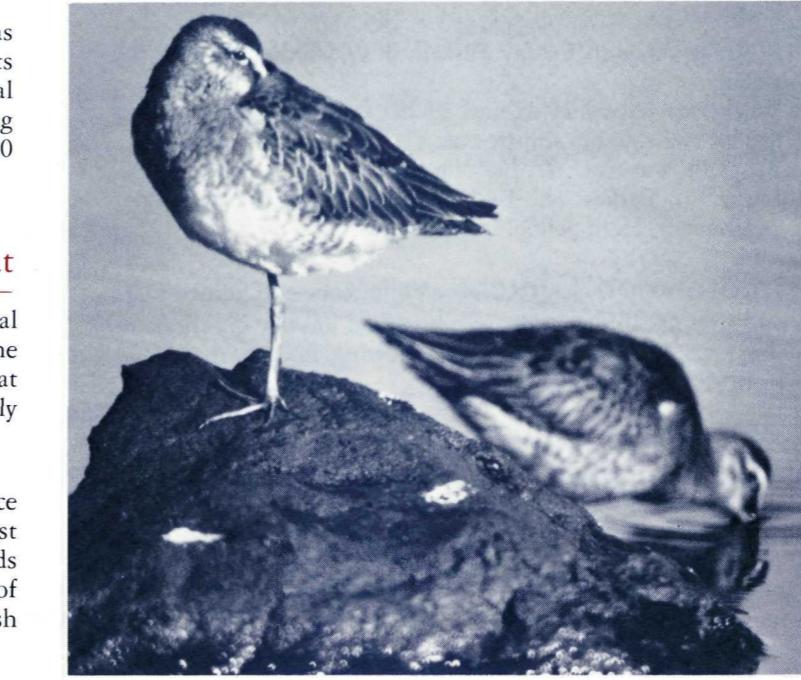
Migration Creates Shorebird Spectacle

Each spring over one million shorebirds, coming from as far south as Argentina, concentrate at the muddy tideflats of Bowerman Basin. This annual event has international significance because these Arctic-bound shorebirds are among the world's greatest migrants, many traveling over 15,000 miles round trip.

Bowerman Basin Provides Critical Habitat

Although Bowerman Basin occupies only 2% of the intertidal habitat of Grays Harbor estuary, it hosts up to 50% of the shorebirds. A combination of features provides ideal habitat for these birds who must peck or probe almost continuously to obtain a constant supply of food.

Due to its higher elevation, Bowerman Basin is the last place in Grays Harbor to be flooded at high tide and the first place to be exposed as the tide recedes. This gives the birds extra feeding time. The mudflats provide an abundance of tiny, shrimp-like animals for food, and surrounding saltmarsh vegetation provides protective cover and roost sites.



Many Species Depend Upon These Mudflats

About two dozen species of shorebirds use the Grays Harbor estuary. The five most abundant species are the western sandpiper, dunlin, short-billed and long-billed dowitchers, and semipalmated plover. Western sandpipers compose 85% of the shorebirds present in the spring. From June through October the shorebirds return to the estuary on their way south but in lesser concentrations. Thousands of dunlins stay for the winter.

Other birds including peregrine falcons, northern harriers, red-tailed hawks, and a variety of waterfowl, wading birds, gulls, and terns are also present.

The uplands around Grays Harbor are used by black-tailed deer, coyotes, voles, and songbirds. In addition, the estuary is home to salmon, steelhead, crabs, clams, shrimp, and oysters.

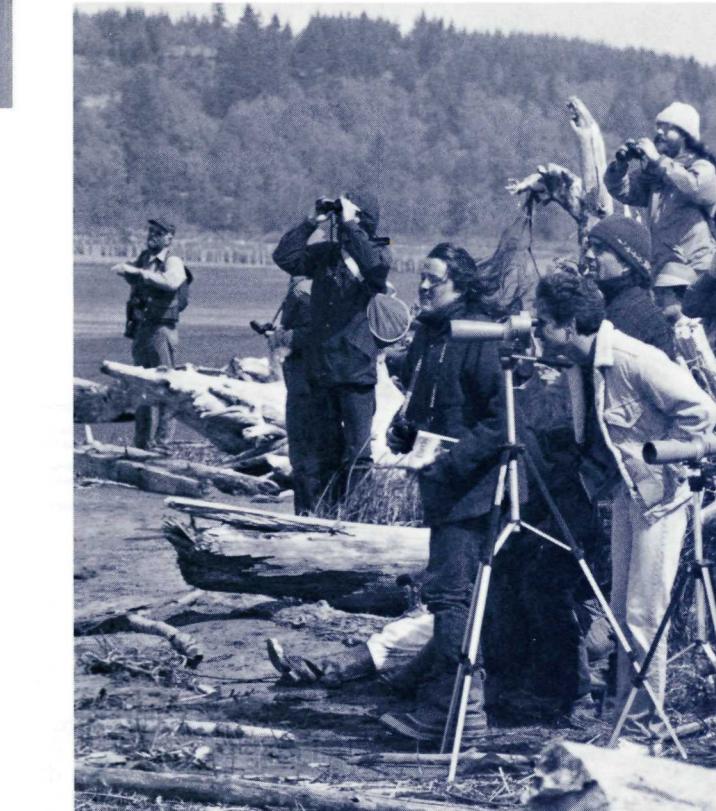
For more information, contact:

Grays Harbor National Wildlife Refuge
c/o Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge
100 Brown Farm Road
Olympia, WA 98506
Phone (206) 753-9467

or for information on lodging and services in the Hoquiam area:

Grays Harbor Chamber of Commerce
506 Duffy Street
Aberdeen, WA 98520
Phone (206) 532-1924

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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
March 1990

HOQUIAM

1890 - 1990

Hoquiam Shorebird Festival
A Centennial Event

Grays Harbor National Wildlife Refuge
c/o Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge
100 Brown Farm Road
Olympia, WA 98506

How to View the Shorebirds

Hours The best viewing times are the hour before and the hour after high tide. Please refer to the adjacent chart.

Parking

Monday through Friday Park in designated areas near the airport.

Weekends (April 21-22 and 28-29) Park at Hoquiam High School and ride the shuttle bus.

Buses Park at the FAA Building.

Large RV Park at the FAA Building during the week and at Hoquiam High School on weekends.

Information Center

Volunteers and refuge staff will provide information, exhibits, and answer questions at the FAA Building during peak viewing hours. Open daily from April 21 through 29.

Shuttle Bus A shuttle bus will run between Hoquiam High School and the Information Center on two weekends during the peak migration (25 cent fee for round-trip).

Saturday, April 21 7:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Sunday, April 22 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Saturday, April 28 12:00 noon - 8:00 p.m.
Sunday, April 29 12:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Shorebird Viewing Areas Shorebirds may be seen from parking areas near the airport or from openings along the trail to the top of the peninsula. Please do not go beyond the viewing area boundary that has been marked with twine. This boundary protects the shorebirds and allows them to feed and roost without being disturbed. Bring binoculars, spotting scopes, and cameras with telephoto lenses to get closer views and photographs.

Trail The one-mile trail to the shorebird viewing areas is usually wet and muddy, especially through the saltmarsh near the tip of the peninsula. Rubber boots are recommended.

Barrier Free Access Parking spaces are designated near the airport and chemical toilets are located at the FAA Building. Shorebirds are generally visible during the highest tides from these parking spaces and from the hard-surfaced airport road. Binoculars or spotting scopes will provide closer views.

No Pets Please leave your pets at home or in your vehicle.

Best Times for Shorebird Viewing for 1990

Saturday	April 14	4:15 p.m. - 6:15 p.m.
Sunday	April 15	5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Monday	April 16	5:45 p.m. - 7:45 p.m.
Tuesday	April 17	7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Wednesday	April 18	6:15 a.m. - 8:15 a.m.
Thursday	April 19	7:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.
Friday	April 20	8:45 a.m. - 10:45 a.m.
Saturday	April 21	9:45 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.
Sunday	April 22	10:45 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.
Monday	April 23	11:45 a.m. - 1:45 p.m.
Tuesday	April 24	12:45 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.
Wednesday	April 25	1:45 p.m. - 3:45 p.m.
Thursday	April 26	2:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Friday	April 27	3:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Saturday	April 28	4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.
Sunday	April 29	5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
Monday	April 30	6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
Tuesday	May 1	5:45 a.m. - 7:45 a.m.
Wednesday	May 2	7:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.
Thursday	May 3	8:15 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.
Friday	May 4	9:15 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.
Saturday	May 5	10:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.
Sunday	May 6	11:15 a.m. - 1:15 p.m.

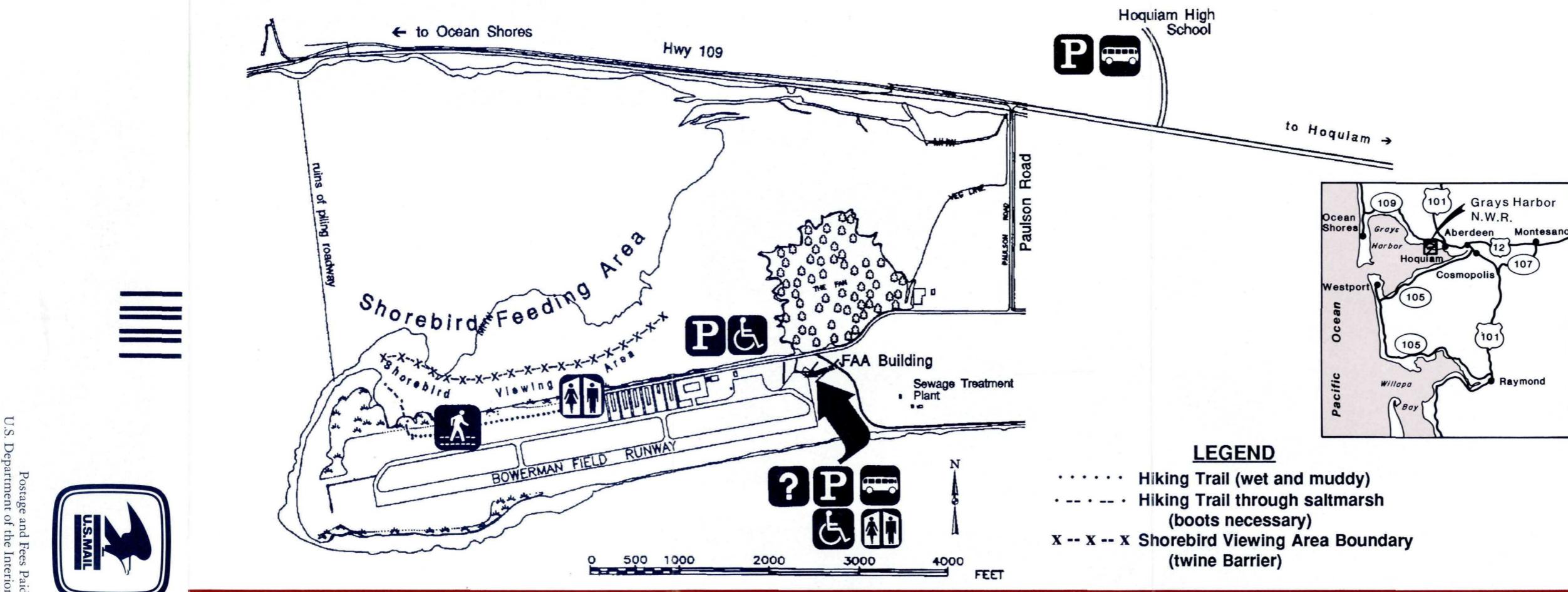
April 21-27, 1990, is the peak week which has the heaviest concentration of shorebirds at these times of day.

City and Port Cooperate

The Port of Grays Harbor and the city of Hoquiam have traditionally permitted public access to their lands at Bowerman Basin to view the shorebirds. Since the refuge is not yet in Fish and Wildlife Service ownership, please respect the current owners' regulations. Hoquiam celebrates its centennial in 1990, and has designated the "Hoquiam Shorebird Festival" a Hoquiam Centennial Event.

Remember

- Stay on the marked trail.
- Avoid wandering onto the airstrip and airport hangar area.
- Park only in the gravel strip parking areas or other designated locations.
- Use the chemical toilets located at the FAA building and along the hiking trail.
- Visit Hoquiam throughout the year for other Hoquiam Centennial Events.



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