

Oregon Coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex
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For National Wildlife
Refuge System Information
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<http://www.fws.gov>

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September 2000



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Oregon Coast

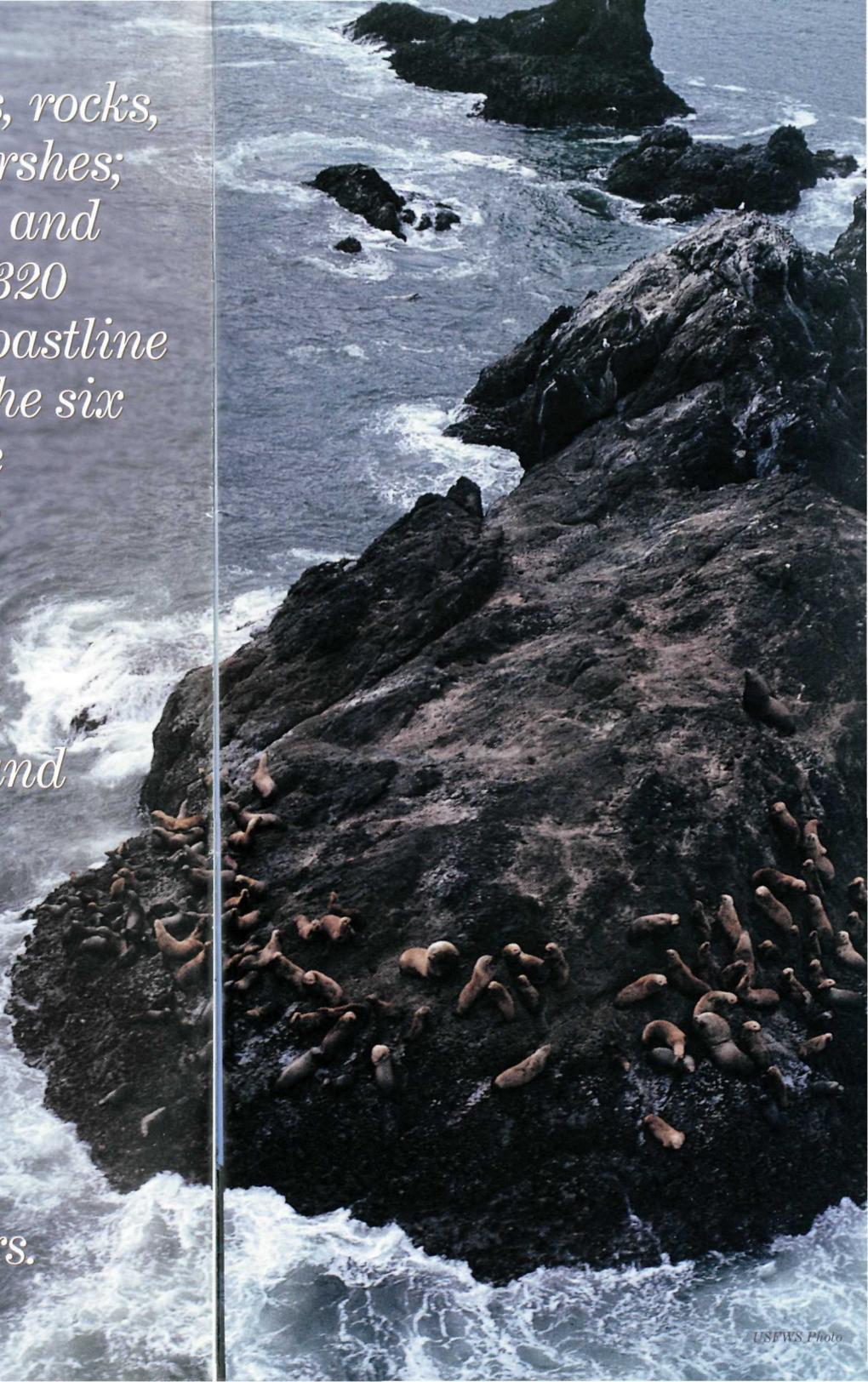
National Wildlife Refuges



*View of Mack Reef from Crook Point,
Oregon Islands National Wildlife Refuge*

*Over 1400 islands, rocks,
and reefs; saltmarshes;
old-growth forest; and
headlands along 320
miles of rugged coastline
are protected by the six
National Wildlife
Refuges along the
Oregon Coast.*

*In these protected
places, sea lions and
seabirds return
each year to breed
on coastal rocks,
salmon and
waterfowl return
to saltmarshes,
as they have for
thousands of years.*



The Coastal Refuges Protect a Variety of Habitats



The relatively small amount of land protected by the six National Wildlife Refuges along the Oregon Coast belies their tremendous value to fish and wildlife. Oregon Islands and

Three Arch Rocks NWRs support some of the most important seabird nesting colonies in the United States. Over a million seabirds, including murres, puffins, cormorants, and storm-petrels nest

here. Without these protected nesting areas many seabird populations would be in jeopardy.

Nestucca Bay, Siletz Bay and Bandon Marsh NWRs provide vital feeding areas for shorebirds and waterfowl during their migrations. Protecting and restoring saltmarsh habitat in these refuges will also benefit recovery of wild salmon and steelhead

populations. Cape Meares NWR protects old-growth forest used by marbled murrelets, peregrine falcons, bald eagles, and many other species.



The Oregon Coast Refuges are part of the National Wildlife Refuge System, a network of over 520 refuges set aside specifically for wildlife. Managed by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the System is a living heritage, conserving wildlife and habitat for generations to come.

Red dots on map indicate the major rocks, reefs, and islands of Oregon Islands National Wildlife Refuge and Wilderness Area.



Wildlife Viewing Highlights

Visiting the Refuges along the Oregon Coast is rewarding year-round, because each season brings different wildlife viewing opportunities.

Spring

Spring is one of the best times to visit the Oregon coast. Nesting seabirds, including common murres, tufted puffins, pigeon guillemots, and Brandt's, pelagic and double-crested cormorants breed on many of the coastal rocks and islands. Northward-migrating gray whales are visible from March through May from the same viewpoints overlooking Oregon Islands NWR. Watch for endangered brown pelicans beginning to arrive during this time.



Brown pelican
USFWS Photo

Summer

Seal and sea lion numbers peak around mid-July and late August. Young seabirds fledge in July and August. Raptors such as peregrine falcons and bald eagles hunt the nesting seabirds and waterfowl that migrate along the coast, and can be seen at Cape Meares, Nestucca Bay, Siletz Bay, and Bandon Marsh.



Long-billed dowitcher
© Thomas Rountree

Fall

Thousands of shorebirds migrate along the Oregon coast in the spring and fall, stopping at estuaries to feed and rest. Shorebird numbers peak in April as they fly north to arctic breeding areas, and again in September as they fly south to wintering areas. Nestucca Bay, Siletz Bay, and Bandon Marsh are excellent places to watch for migrating shorebirds and waterfowl.



Harbor seal

Winter

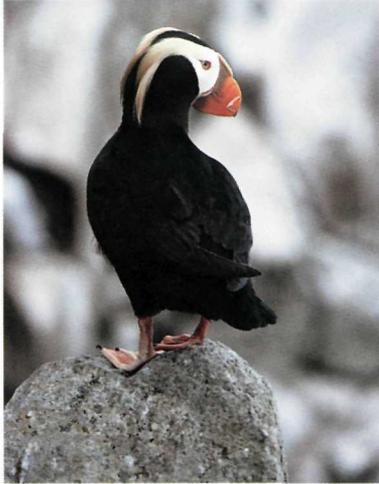
Sea ducks and waterbirds are most abundant during the winter. Common species include surf, white-winged and black scoters, harlequin ducks, common and Pacific loons, and western, horned, and red-necked grebes. Estuaries host wintering ducks, geese and a variety of raptors. Gray whales migrate south in December and January on their way to calve in the coastal lagoons of Baja Mexico.



Pigeon guillemots

Three Arch Rocks National Wildlife Refuge

One of Oregon's best known landmarks, Three Arch Rocks NWR lies ½ mile offshore from the community of Oceanside.



© Roy Lowe

This refuge supports Oregon's largest breeding colony of tufted puffins, and the largest breeding colony of common murre south of Alaska. Three Arch Rocks NWR is also the only breeding site for Steller sea lions on the northern Oregon coast.

Visitor Opportunities

Waters within 500 feet of this refuge are closed to all watercraft from May 1st through September 15th each year. To prevent disturbance to extremely sensitive seabirds and marine mammals, the refuge rocks are closed to public entry year-round. Oceanside Beach and Cape Meares provide excellent views of Three Arch Rocks.

*Above:
Tufted puffin*

*Below: Three
Arch Rocks NWR*



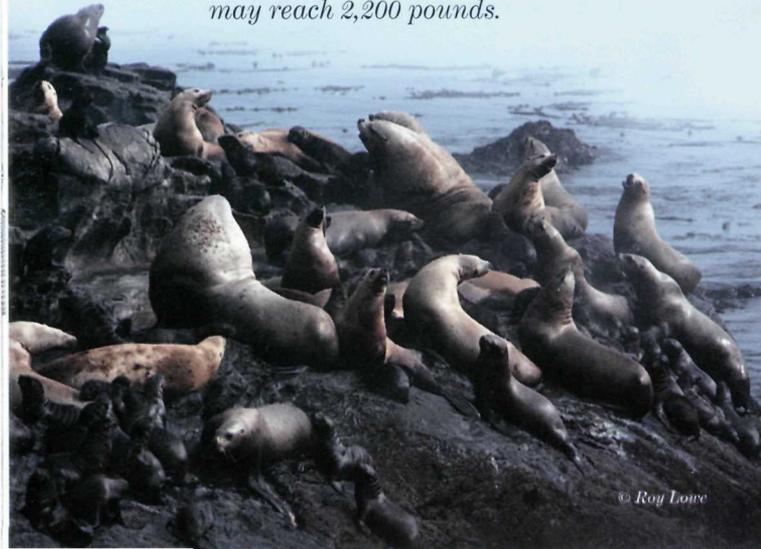
Did You Know...



...that common murre use a distinct body language which allows them to get along with others of their kind in crowded nesting colonies? A murre can share one square foot of space with six others!

...that Theodore Roosevelt designated Three Arch Rocks as the first National Wildlife Refuge west of the Mississippi River in 1907 because of its importance to nesting seabirds?

...that the male Steller sea lion is the only North American sea lion that roars? Much larger than California sea lions, Stellers may reach 2,200 pounds.



© Roy Lowe

Oregon Islands National Wildlife Refuge

Oregon Islands NWR, a designated National Wilderness Area, includes over 1400 rocks, reefs and islands, and two headland parcels along the Oregon coastline. Thirteen species of seabirds nest here, including common murrens, tufted puffins, Leach's and fork-tailed storm-petrels, rhinoceros auklets, Brandt's, pelagic and double-crested cormorants, and black oystercatchers.

This rocky, wave-battered refuge provides essential habitat for thousands of pinnipeds (seals and sea lions) for breeding and haulout areas.

Visitor Opportunities

Coquille Point is open to the public. A hiking trail, beach access, and interpretive panels are open during daylight hours. To protect sensitive wildlife, all offshore rocks, islands and reefs are closed to public entry, but can be viewed from many sites along the coast.

Coquille Point is a mainland unit of Oregon Islands NWR and can be reached by going west on 11th Street in Bandon until you reach the beach.

Red dots indicate the major rocks, reefs, and islands of Oregon Islands National Wildlife Refuge.



Did You Know...



...that Simpson Reef at Cape Arago is the world's northernmost pupping site for northern elephant seals, and is the largest marine mammal haulout site on the Oregon coast?

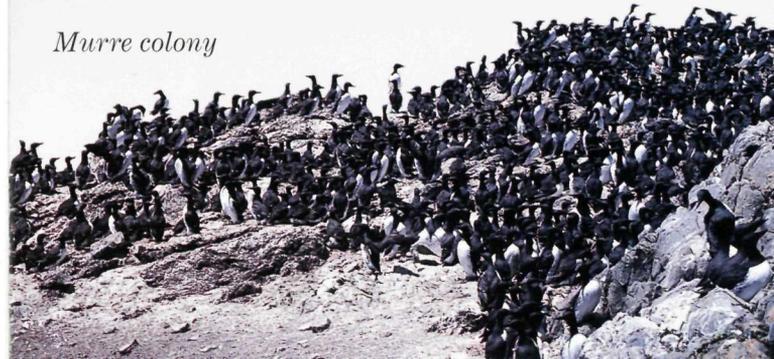


...that without oil to waterproof their feathers, cormorants must spread their wings out to dry after diving for fish?

USFWS Photo

...that Oregon's population of nesting seabirds is larger than California's and Washington's combined?

Murre colony



Cape Meares National Wildlife Refuge

Located on Three Capes Scenic Route, west of Tillamook, Cape Meares NWR protects one of the few remaining stands of coastal old-growth forest in Oregon.

Cape Meares was acquired from the U.S. Coast Guard in 1938 and was designated as a Research Natural Area in 1987.

Huge Sitka spruce and western hemlock, some over 200 feet tall and

hundreds of years old, provide habitat for threatened bird species, including northern spotted owls, bald eagles, and marbled murrelets.

Visitor Opportunities

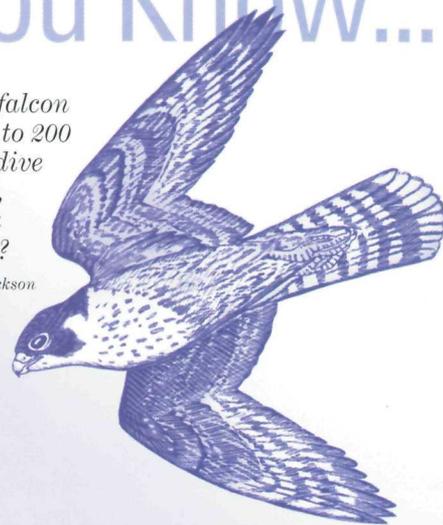
Interpretive overlooks at adjacent Cape Meares State Park provide opportunities for viewing seabirds, peregrine falcons, and marine mammals. In addition, the popular Oregon Coast Trail runs through the refuge.



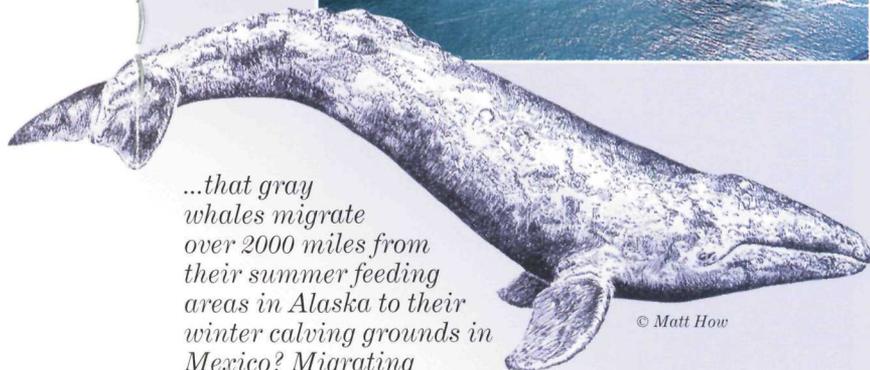
Did You Know...

...that the peregrine falcon can reach speeds up to 200 miles per hour in a dive while pursuing prey, making it the fastest animal in the world?

© Shari Erickson



...that Cape Meares Lighthouse has been in operation since 1890 and has the shortest light tower (38 feet) on the Oregon Coast?



...that gray whales migrate over 2000 miles from their summer feeding areas in Alaska to their winter calving grounds in Mexico? Migrating whales can be seen from Cape Meares December through May.

© Matt How

Nestucca Bay National Wildlife Refuge

Established in 1991, Nestucca Bay NWR provides habitat for a variety of fish and wildlife, including waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors, small mammals, and amphibians. Refuge habitats include managed pastures, wooded uplands, riparian wetlands, dunes, sphagnum bogs and saltmarsh.

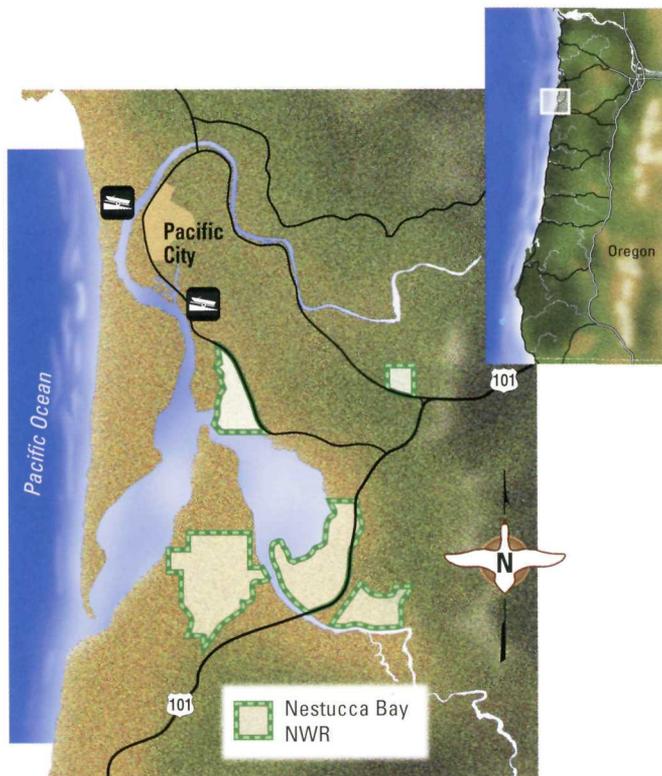


Nestucca Bay supports the only coastal population of dusky Canada geese and a wintering population of 100-130 Semidi Islands Aleutian Canada geese. Nestucca Bay and its tributaries also support large runs

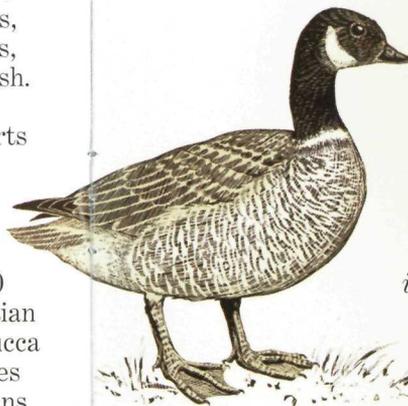
of chinook and coho salmon, cutthroat trout, and steelhead.

Visitor Opportunities

Visitor access is being developed. Contact the refuge manager for more information.



Did You Know...



© Shari Erickson

...that Aleutian Canada geese almost went extinct after arctic foxes were introduced by fur trappers to their nesting islands in Alaska? As a result of removing the foxes and other management efforts, numbers of Aleutian Canada geese increased from a low of 800 birds in 1962 to over 36,000 by 2000.

...that the short grass pastures around Nestucca Bay host the largest concentration of wintering Canada geese on the Oregon Coast.



...that the abundance of salamanders and other amphibians can be a good indicator of an area's environmental health?

Long-toed Salamander



Siletz Bay National Wildlife Refuge

Established in 1991, Siletz Bay NWR is located just south of Lincoln City, Oregon. This estuarine refuge protects a variety of coastal habitats including saltmarsh and brackish

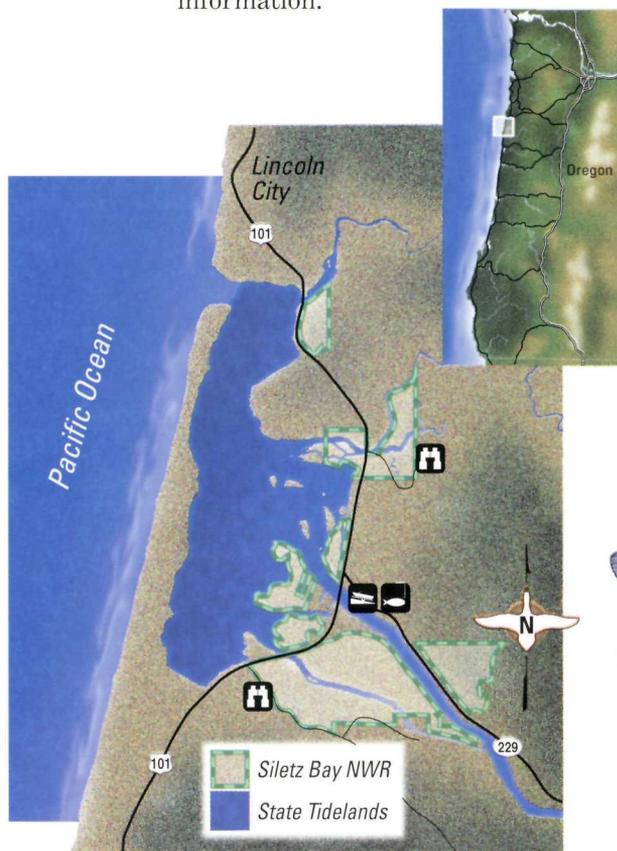


marsh, tidal sloughs and mudflats, and coniferous and deciduous forestland. These habitats are essential to a variety of fish and wildlife species including shorebirds, waterfowl, wading birds,

anadromous fish including coho and chinook salmon, steelhead and cutthroat trout and other estuarine-dependent finfish, shellfish and wildlife populations.

Visitor Opportunities

Opportunities for public use are being developed. Contact the refuge manager for more information.

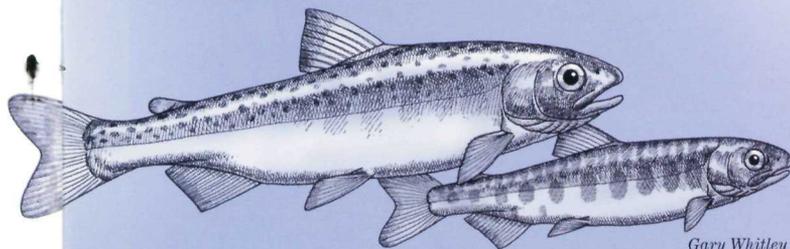


Did You Know...



... that bald eagles are nature's opportunists? Along the Oregon coast, bald eagles feed primarily on other birds, especially waterfowl and seabirds.

...that estuaries, areas where fresh and salt water mix, are among the earth's most productive habitats? Acre for acre, they produce 4 times more plant material than a good hay field. This material forms the base of the estuarine food chain.



Gary Whitley

...that young salmon venture into tidal channels in saltmarshes to feed on insects, tiny crustaceans and other invertebrates? Food is so abundant here that they can add 6 percent to their weight each day. That's like a 165-pound person gaining 10 pounds a day!

Bandon Marsh National Wildlife Refuge

Bandon Marsh NWR is located near the mouth of the Coquille River in Bandon, Oregon. The refuge was established in 1983 because of its value as habitat for migratory shorebirds and waterfowl.

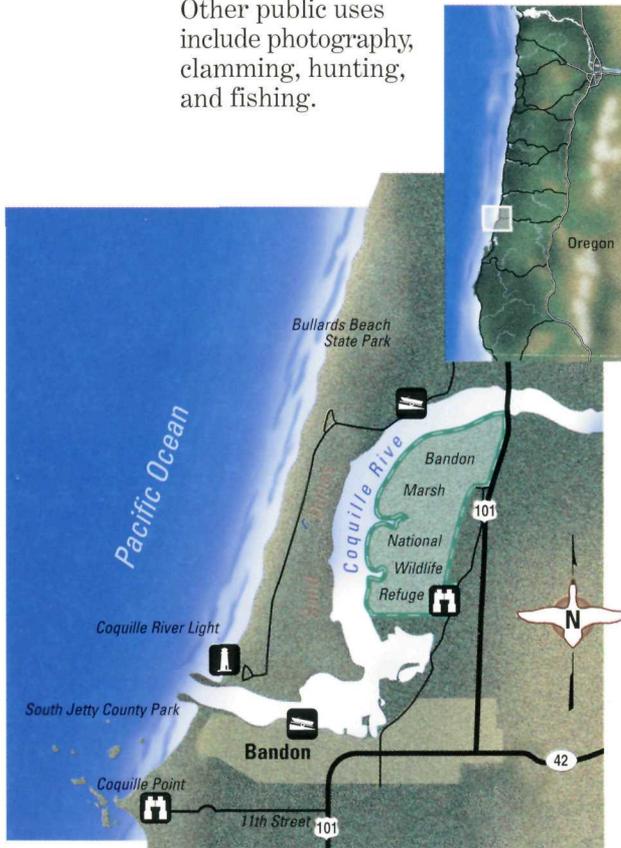


The refuge protects the largest remaining tidal saltmarsh within the Coquille River estuary.

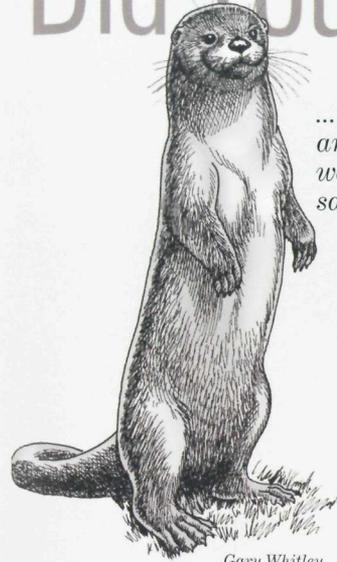
Recent acquisition of over 320 acres of diked pasture land just upstream of Highway 101 will eventually be restored to tidal marsh.

Visitor Opportunities

Bandon Marsh is renowned for shorebird viewing opportunities. The marsh and interpretive facility on Riverside Drive are open to the public sunrise to sunset. Other public uses include photography, clamming, hunting, and fishing.



Did You Know...



Gary Whitley

...that river otters and sea otters are the only members of the weasel family that spend time in salt water?



...that thanks to abundant fish, shellfish, and waterfowl the number of Native Americans living near Bandon Marsh hundreds of years ago was as large as Bandon's present population?

Oregon State University
Horner Collection (#6580)

...that Oregon has lost over 75% of its saltmarshes, vital habitat for many species of fish and wildlife, such as the coho salmon?



A History of Wildlife Conservation

By the early 1900s, many seabird colonies on the West Coast were in danger of being wiped out. During the California Gold Rush, egg hunters harvested millions of eggs annually to supply restaurants in San Francisco and the gold fields. Adult birds were slaughtered for target practice as weekend sport.

Unfortunately, most people were unaware of the problem.

In the early 1900s, naturalist and photographer William L. Finley and his partner Herman Bohlman visited the Oregon Coast and documented the devastation. They launched open boats through heavy surf and then literally risked life and limb to haul heavy equipment up and down steep, treacherous cliffs.

Finley informed President Theodore Roosevelt of the national importance of this seabird nesting area, convincing him to issue an Executive Order designating Three Arch Rocks the first National Wildlife Refuge on the west coast in 1907. Oregon Islands National Wildlife Refuge followed in 1935.

*H.T. Bohlman and
William L. Finley
preparing to photograph
murre colony at Three
Arch Rocks, 1903.*

*Oregon Historical Society
Negative # Finley A-2520*

Managing Habitats for Wildlife

Today, the men and women of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service continue to honor the work of Finley and Bohlman by protecting and monitoring wildlife populations as well as maintaining, and sometimes creating, the habitat fish and wildlife need for survival.



Island habitat is managed by minimizing human presence as much as possible and monitoring wildlife populations by photos from air or water. Other habitats are managed by a variety of techniques and approaches: dike removal, replanting native species, restoring riparian areas and native grasslands, and enhancing freshwater marshes.

*Above:
Aerial photo
survey of seabird
populations over
Three Arch Rocks
NWR.*

*Reforestation of
Sitka spruce at
Bandon Marsh.*



Other Nearby Wildlife Recreation Opportunities

Oregon State Parks and other scenic overlooks along the Oregon Coast provide excellent observation areas for viewing wildlife inside the National Wildlife Refuges. They also offer excellent opportunities for wildlife viewing of their own.

Some of the best locations are:

1. Ecola State Park
between Seaside and Cannon Beach
2. Haystack Rock at Cannon Beach
3. Yaquina Head Outstanding Natural Area, Newport
4. Heceta Head Lighthouse / Devils Elbow State Park
between Yachats and Florence
5. Cape Arago State Park
southwest of Coos Bay
6. Cape Blanco State Park
south of Bandon
7. Boardman State Park
north of Brookings

For Further Information

Consult the *Oregon Wildlife Viewing Guide*, local chambers of commerce, or contact the Refuge Manager at (541) 867-4550.

Wildlife Viewing Tips

Here are a few tips to make watching wildlife enjoyable and rewarding:

Plan your visit according to the season and time of day. Wildlife is generally more active in mornings and early evenings than in the afternoon.

Keep voices down while approaching a viewing area to avoid scaring wildlife away before you get there. Although animals may disappear when you arrive, they often return shortly if you are quiet and still.

Use binoculars and spotting scopes to bring animals "closer" to you without disturbing them.

Bring a field guide to help you identify various species and the habitats they prefer.

Avoid Disturbing Wildlife

Public use at the Oregon Coast Refuges is restricted to limit disturbance to wildlife and their habitats. **ALL COASTAL ROCKS AND ISLANDS ARE CLOSED TO PUBLIC ACCESS AND ALL WATERCRAFT SHOULD STAY AT LEAST 500 FEET AWAY.**

Caution

Coastal areas, with their steep cliffs, strong currents, and heavy surf, can be extremely dangerous. Exercise caution during your visit. Stay away from cliff edges, and observe posted warnings. Avoid climbing on driftlogs as they can roll in the surf at any time. Consult weather forecasts and tidal charts before boating, canoeing, or kayaking.

Harlequin ducks

