

OLYMPIC COAST NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

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V O L U N T E E R N E W S L E T T E R - A U G U S T 2 0 1 1



Coming Events

Pacific Science Center - Monday, August 29

We have a limited number of passes to the Pacific Science Center for volunteers who staffed the OCDC this summer. Leaving from Port Angeles about 8:00, we'll carpool to the Bainbridge ferry terminal, and take a bus from the waterfront to the Science Center. Please let us know as soon as possible if you are interested in participating by calling 457-6622 ext 31.

A Day at Sea - Tuesday, September 27

Another volunteer appreciation event; a limited number of OCDC volunteers are invited to spend a day at sea in Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary aboard the *RV Tatoosh*, either out of Neah Bay or La Push. More details will be available in September, but please let us know if you would like to participate by calling 457-6622 ext 31.

Visiting Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary

Reported by Jim Fedderly

The entire trip to Thunder Bay and beyond was so eventful, that it's difficult to pick out just one or two events to write about. Being in Michigan for the first time and seeing three of the Great Lakes (Superior, Michigan and Huron) was awe inspiring. Two of the highlights for me occurred on the 4th of July. The Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary sponsors a fun event called Maritime Fest every 4th, and this year the volunteers from Olympic Coast got to help out. There were throngs of visitors, and many food and entertainment booths/tents were set up. They have a boat building exhibit at the Sanctuary that is a small version of the Wooden Boatbuilding School in Port Townsend, and I spent my first hour or two showing visitors around. But my favorite task was being one of three judges of the Cardboard Boat Races on Thunder Bay River. These boats were large enough to hold 1 to 6 paddlers, and the boats and paddles had to be made entirely of cardboard and tape. The tradition is for the participants to bribe the judges before the race, and being a strong believer in tradition, I felt I must go along with the bribery! I ended up with a great wet tee shirt taken off of one of the participants, 1/3 of a sixpack of beer which I never saw, and the festival received the \$50 or \$60 we judges were also promised. It was great fun, and one or two of the boats actually made it across to the finish line.

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That night, we went out on Thunder Bay on the *Pride of Michigan*, which is a training vessel for the US Naval Sea Cadets Corps. The crew consisted of very courteous young men and women who ran the entire voyage. They were, of course, under the supervision of a couple of adults, one of whom was the captain. We motored for a half hour or so offshore and watched the City of Alpena's fireworks show. It was great! I was very impressed with the young cadets and the entire program.



Since the TBNMS has as its sole focus, shipwrecks, I would be remiss in not mentioning some of those. We got to go out on a glass bottomed boat *Lady Michigan* and cruise over the wreck of the *Monohansett*. It was interesting to see the shoals hidden just beneath the surface of the lake, which is one of the reasons there are so many shipwrecks, not to mention 40-50 foot waves at times! Janet and I also got to snorkel over the wreck of the Portland.

The Great Lakes are referred to as Inland Seas, and after being there, it all makes sense. They

are so large that you cannot see from one shore to another. It took a lot of experimenting (tasting the water, etc.) for me to accept the fact that they aren't oceans! I would like to go back some day, but I think it won't be when the ice is 18 inches thick!



Exploring the Upper Peninsula

Reported by Trish Fedderly

Since we had never been to Michigan before and figured that we'll never get there again, Jim and I decided to see more than just Alpena. We arrived a few days early and were treated to a trip to the Upper Peninsula. Our host, Pat Leahy, took us north to visit a few of her favorite spots. One of them was Mackinac Island. We took a boat to this delightful island where the mode of transportation is either by foot, bicycle, or horse drawn vehicle (being a horse person, I loved it). The Island is the home of the third oldest fort in the United States. And of course, the home of the famous Mackinac Fudge! After the Island, we headed to Sault Ste. Marie where the Soo Locks are located between Lake Superior and Lake Huron. We didn't get to observe any

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ships going through the locks, but we were very impressed by the size. From here we made a trip into Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, to visit the Bush Plane museum. Since Pat's father had been a pilot, she was very excited to show us around. Our next stop was Whitefish Pt. lighthouse. This is the home of the museum for Lake Superior shipwrecks, from the wreck of the *Invincible* in 1816 to the *Edmund Fitzgerald* in 1975. Super interesting! While we were in the Upper Peninsula, we also visited Tahquamenon Falls. Although this was a whirlwind tour of northern Michigan, we were extremely impressed by the countryside, the people, and the sites. The friendship that has developed between Pat and her daughter, Ginger, and Jim and myself was made possible by this exchange and I am sure it will continue. So, when I said that we would most likely never get back to Michigan, I was wrong. We are already looking forward to our next trip.

My Trip to Thunder Bay Michigan

Reported by Gerri Ferguson

The first morning we toured the La Farge cement plant, the largest cement plant in the world. The limestone in this quarry is about 300 million years old, and contains many fossils from the Devonian era. We learned more about the history and geology of the area at the Besser Museum, including how to identify some of the amazing fossils that have been found in the area. After the tour I really enjoyed putting on goggles, holding a chisel and hammer, and finding my own fossils amongst the huge boulders next to the museum. It was fun to bring the fossils home



and remember my time in Alpena with fossils from another era. I had not expected fossils to be the "WOW" moment of the trip. Another highlight was watching a painted turtle lay her eggs in the sand off the deck of the home where we were staying, and watching huge white swans gliding past in the mornings.

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“Sea of Birds - Cape Flattery and Beyond”

Reported by Genie DeVine and Miriam Bobkoff

On Friday, July 15 in Neah Bay, Dr. Julia Parrish from the University of Washington gave a talk on “Sea of Birds - Cape Flattery and Beyond” which described her 20 years studying Tatoosh Island and the near shore and offshore birds found in Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary. Dr. Parrish started out as a fisheries biologist and naturally transitioned to the birds feeding on those fish. Some highlights of her talk:

Tubenoses, including Fulmars, have a very fine sense of smell. They nest in Alaska and spend time on the northwest Coast in the fall. They’re very long lived birds - up to 60-70 years - as opposed to storm petrels with a life expectancy of 30 years.

Shearwaters nest in New Zealand and Chile and travel the North Pacific to Alaska. In 2006 there was a massive wreck of Short-tailed Shearwaters in Unalaska with over 500 carcasses/km., the largest documented seabird wreck anywhere. Migration pushes these birds right to the edge of survival.

Short-tailed Albatross are starting to appear here from the Hawaiian Islands. There are only around 2000 left of this endangered species which were hunted for their feathers.



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Marbled Murrelet are especially hard to study because of their nocturnal habits. They can only be studied by scientists who are out on the ocean at night and climb old growth trees to observe their nesting.

Rhinoceros Auklets are members of the puffin family. The center of the population is on Protection Island. They are night active and 70% of their diet is sand lance.

has been reduced and the amount of bait used by fishermen is also reduced. A win-win situation. Dr. Parrish described the COASST program which monitors 320 beaches from Alaska to Northern California. Washington coast has the lowest chronic oiling rate on the globe. "I run the largest dead bird program in the world" claimed Dr. Parrish and her team is currently working on a dead bird identification guide for the Atlantic Coast.



Common Murre is somewhat penguin-like in appearance. Dr. Parrish has been studying them on Tatoosh since 1990. In 2007 and 2008 there was total reproductive failure due to eagles flying over during nesting season and scaring the adults off their nests and abandoning them.

Dr. Parrish explained how carcasses of pelagic birds sometimes turn up on more interior beaches as a result of bycatch in longline fishing. By using streamer lines, the mortality of seabirds