

# OLYMPIC COAST NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

## OLYMPIC COAST DISCOVERY CENTER



### VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER - JULY 2014

#### Upcoming Events

**Aug 22<sup>nd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup>** Makah Days, Neah Bay.  
[makah.com/activities/makah-days](http://makah.com/activities/makah-days)

**Sat. Sept. 20<sup>th</sup>** CoastSavers International Coastal Cleanup [www.coastsavers.org/volunteer](http://www.coastsavers.org/volunteer)

**Fri. Sept. 26<sup>th</sup>** Sanctuary Advisory Council meeting 10am-3:30pm, Grays Harbor Historic Seaport Authority, Aberdeen. All members of the public welcome and encouraged to attend.

**Sept 27<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup>** Dungeness River Festival, Sequim  
[dungenessrivercenter.org](http://dungenessrivercenter.org)

#### THANK YOU ALL!

Our 2014 season is going very well, thanks to all of your time and energy! From our opening in late May through the month of June, Olympic Coast Discover Center received **1,560** visitors with a total of **15** docents contributing **173** volunteer hours; for the month of July, OCNMS received **1,646** visitors with a total of **13** docents contributing **131** hours!

#### OCNMS's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!

Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary (OCNMS) turned 20 this month. Jacqueline says, "I know what you're thinking- it doesn't look a day over 18!" But it's true, OCNMS has been managing and protecting our unique marine environment since 1994. To celebrate this landmark, OCNMS was the stage sponsor at the Port Angeles free Concert on the Pier on July 16<sup>th</sup>. Superintendent Carol Bernthal spoke to the crowd and presented Karsten Turrey with the OCNMS Volunteer of the Year award for 2013. She also introduced "Sanctuary Sam" the Sea lion, who became an instant hit. Sanctuary Sam danced to the bluegrass band performance by *Luck of the Draw*, stopping only to greet, give flipper high-fives to and pose for photographs with countless fans!

Nicole Harris led an educational activity at OCNMS's information booth with volunteers from Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. Kids crafted sanctuary orca fans to match the life-sized inflatable orca on display, "Mike J26". Four of our partners participated by hosting family-friendly information booths with educational activities: Feiro Marine Life Center, CoastSavers, Olympic National Park and U.S. Fish & Wildlife. Youth from the ROV Explorers summer camp led by OCNMS and Feiro Marine Life Center gave in-water demonstrations of their vehicle and marine debris art sculptures of a wolf eel and



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## OLYMPIC COAST DISCOVERY CENTER



### VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER - JULY 2014

harbor seal by local artist Sarah Tucker were on display. The community turnout was excellent and folks asked if we could do it again at the following week's Concert on the Pier!



enriching opportunity with our only NMS of the Great Lakes. Overall, our guests from one of our sister sanctuaries on the West Coast benefitted from experiencing the natural and cultural diversity of Olympic Peninsula. Together we explored coastal tidepools, witnessed a new beach and estuary at the mouth of Elwha River—site of the world's largest dam removal and restoration project—and former lower dam site, hiked alpine habitat and wildlife atop Hurricane Ridge, visited sites on Makah reservation and in the community of Quileute Tribe, cruised in sanctuary waters aboard *R/V Tatoosh*, followed trails leading to waterfalls in Olympic National Park and visited several natural and cultural interpretive centers and museums. MBNMS volunteers also participated in our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration at the Port Angeles Concert at the Pier and served as docents in Olympic Coast Discovery Center.

### Volunteer Exchange with Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary - We Did It!

Eight volunteers from California's Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and Education staff Carolyn Skinder visited OCNMS in mid-July to learn more about the national marine sanctuary (NMS) system as a whole and what makes OCNMS unique. In 2007 OCNMS was the first sanctuary to initiate a



volunteer exchange between volunteers from different NMS sites, with OCDC docents visiting Hawaiian Island Humpback Whale NMS. In 2010 an exchange between volunteers from Thunder Bay NMS and OCNMS provided another



As ambassadors for the national marine sanctuary system, volunteers are committed to learning and sharing their knowledge and enthusiasm back at their home site. The volunteer exchange to OCNMS provided educational enrichment and reinforced the connection we have to the system-wide national sanctuary program, and hopefully renewed their motivation to model ocean stewardship. We feel very fortunate to have revived a planned exchange with Monterey Bay NMS in time for our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary



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## OLYMPIC COAST DISCOVERY CENTER

### VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER - JULY 2014

celebration, along with Olympic Coast Discovery Center's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, which added to the festivity and wonderment of our special West Coast marine waters. Olympic Coast Discovery Center volunteers are looking forward to their visit in winter or spring of 2015! Below are reflections from some of our participants.

#### ***MBNMS Volunteer Reflections***

by Leslie McGarry



*"What a spectacular week we had! Every day was packed with memorable activities. On our first night we got a chance to meet so many*

*wonderful people both from OCNMS as well as some volunteers from MBNMS who we hadn't met before.*

*We also got our first look at Feiro Marine Life Center – all I could say was WOW! Monday was a jam-packed day starting off with tidepooling at Salt Creek. This incredible location hosted some of the largest mussels and barnacles I've ever seen. We even found a wonderful pool that had an abundance of intertidal life in it, if you just sat and watched. Visits to the*

*Elwha River's estuary and former site of the lower dam were inspiring and demonstrated what can be done to fix mistakes from the past. We also visited Feiro and Olympic Coast Discovery Center (OCDC) – so much to learn. And then a beautiful finale to the day at Hurricane Ridge for a picnic dinner and hiking, a perfect evening complete with deer and mountain goats! Tuesday was a treat, with a trip to Neah Bay to tour the Makah Museum and learn about the Makah tribe. This cultural knowledge was coupled with an unforgettable visit to Cape Flattery – ooohh, the beautiful vistas and the lush greenery – especially for us coming from parched California. Wednesday was a great day for us to give back to the OCNMS by staffing OCDC. It was exciting to meet folks visiting the area from distant lands. And the evening's concert and 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary event were a blast – dancing with the kids and Sanctuary Sam was the highlight for me.*

*Thursday was another perfect day. In the morning we brought ideal weather to Second Beach of Olympic National Park where we explored the abundance of life in the tidepools. I saw more sea stars than I've seen in years, plus a mother river otter with two pups! In the afternoon we cruised on R/V Tatoosh from La Push, home of the Quileute tribe – easily the highlight of my trip! It was a beautiful day to be at sea and we observed countless marine birds (especially common murre), sea lions – and my wish came true – Tufted Puffins! Lots of Tufted Puffins!*



# OLYMPIC COAST NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY



## OLYMPIC COAST DISCOVERY CENTER

### VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER - JULY 2014

*As if it couldn't get any better, on Friday we ventured to Sol Duc Falls and Lake Crescent, two amazingly beautiful areas – especially for a water starved Californian! It was an idyllic ending to a fantastic week. The icing on the cake was the chance to meet so many wonderful people at OCNMS and MBNMS who love the ocean and all the life it supports. I hope to continue many friendships in the future, especially with my host Carol. Thanks to Karlyn for all her hard work planning and taking us around. And many thanks to all of our hosts for welcoming us into their homes. I'm looking forward to the visit from OCNMS volunteers and hope we can provide you with as memorable a trip as we received!"*

by Dana Bragshaw



*"When I saw the e-mail informing us about the invitation to participate in a volunteer exchange with Olympic Coast, I*

*immediately replied that I wanted to go, announcing the event to my husband that evening. The fact that fellow docent Pauline reacted the same and agreed to go with me on Amtrak cinched it.*

*A beautiful sunny evening on July 13, plus the welcoming potluck from the resident docents, got us off to a great start in Port Angeles. We all met up for the first time together at Feiro Marine Life Center, where I found the specimens in the tanks fascinating and the array of healthy sea stars exciting. Their demo model of the Elwha dam removal also impressed me.*

*My host Pat and her family delighted me in their beautiful condo over-looking the harbor with magnificent views and sunsets. Since I was tired from my trip, and too excited to sleep the first night, I found our first day a bit too much, but I don't know what I would have given up: Salt Creek tide-pools? No. The magnificent beach created by the Elwha dam removal? Certainly not. The trip to Hurricane Ridge topped the day off with a warm evening and clear skies to see the snow-covered mountains, wild-flowers, and for some, even mountain goats. I slept like a baby that night.*

*The following day on the Makah reservation proved a total joy – the museum tour was awesome, led by a warm, honest, and inspiring Makah woman. The Warm House restaurant couldn't take us? No problem. We found a delightful cafe with a young Makah chef and her plucky red-headed assistant. I'll never forget the chef yelling at her kids hanging around, "Go to the beach!" Then to stand at the end of Cape Flattery, the most northwestern point of continental USA, with a handsome young Makah man interpreting the wildlife for us, thrilled me to pieces!*

*I appreciated the flexibility of our next day based in Port Angeles and explored the town before my shift as a docent in Olympic Coast Discovery Center. In the evening we all helped out with the sanctuary's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration on the pier and witnessed the community in action- it was great fun, too. I think I enjoyed Thursday the most: being able to stay on the sands of*





# OLYMPIC COAST NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY



## OLYMPIC COAST DISCOVERY CENTER

### VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER - JULY 2014

*Second Beach along the water's edge and walk in front of what I dubbed "sea star row" a stretch of rocks lined with good-sized and healthy ochre stars. And the boat trip on R/V Tatoosh was exhilarating-Tufted Puffins and Steller sea lions! On our last day we visited Sol Duc – beautiful forest and falls, followed by relaxing at wonderful Lake Crescent which we had passed and admired from the road many times – a perfect ending. While others went on hikes, Pauline and I rented a canoe and paddled to the other side of the lake where we found a perfect swimming hole to slide into – the water so clear and such a pleasant temperature. Then we shared good food and great company that night for one final dinner together.*

*I'm back in Santa Cruz now filled with new knowledge and images. I found myself bringing up what we saw and learned at OCNMS already several times at our Sanctuary Exploration Center. Thanks to all who made our Olympic Peninsula visit so memorable and enjoyable."*

#### OCNMS Host Reflections

by Carol Turner



*"The volunteer exchange with the folks from California was a packed week of Olympic Peninsula beauty and*

*hands-on learning. I hosted a volunteer from Cambria, Leslie, a charming lady with an obsessive love for puffins. Leslie has been a docent at the Coastal Discovery Center at San Simeon Bay for many years, and I learned a lot from her ability to identify bird calls in the forest and her knowledge of*

*marine life. My greyhounds quickly accepted her into the pack and each morning she was greeted with nose rubs and a bowl of yoghurt. (I provided the yoghurt, not the nose rubs.) I felt like*

*a mom dropping my kid off to school as I delivered her to Karlyn for each day's busy schedule and picked her up each night, tired and sunburned but full of good stories. Tuesday of that week was particularly fantastic for me as a group of OCNMS volunteers were treated to a ride in the sanctuary's R/V Tatoosh vessel out of La Push. I learned a whole new seabird vocabulary and*



*witnessed the harem of lazy-looking sea lions that surrounded a bellowing alpha male. The noise of it was unforgettable. On Wednesday it was the sanctuary's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration and Leslie and I volunteered to serve as "experts" on the wolf eel made of marine debris, a scary looking sculpture that attracted a lot of attention. It made its point. On Friday I couldn't resist joining in for the day at Sol Duc Falls and Crescent Lake. There, I got some great shots of the falls and foolishly followed Karlyn and Nelson up a cliff-like mountain trail called Storm King. Somehow I made it to the overlook, with fantastic views of lake.*

*I'm new in town and felt proud showing off the region's natural beauty. The more time I spend with like-minded folks who appreciate the wonder of the world's oceans, the more involved I want to be. I admire the knowledge and dedication of those I've met, both from Olympic Coast and Monterey Bay national marine sanctuaries. It's clear that you can't spend any time learning about the ocean without developing a powerful desire to protect it."*

# OLYMPIC COAST NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

## OLYMPIC COAST DISCOVERY CENTER



### VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER - JULY 2014

by Gerri Ferguson



*Laurie and Nelson Balcar were the couple Bruce and I hosted in our home July 13-19. I guess we were all a bit anxious,*

*but no need. Laurie hugged me when we first met and that set the tone for a fun week. They were game for any and all adventures. I was not able to go on all adventures but Bruce made sure they made it to daily pick up/drop off points. The Balcars are a fun, relaxed couple and it was a joy to host them. We laughed and just got to know each other and all liked what we saw!*

### Volunteer Appreciation Cruises on R/V *Tatoosh*

In mid-July, Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary provided 3 annual volunteer appreciation cruises for sanctuary volunteers on the R/V *Tatoosh* out of La Push. Bob Boekelheide, who serves as the Citizen-at-Large representative on the Sanctuary Advisory Council, was invited to join as the naturalist/birder on July 14 and 15, and wrote the below account:

*"Our cruise track both days headed north from La Push past Cake Rock to Sea Lion Rock, around Carroll Island and Jagged Island, then south of La*



*Push to the Quillayute Needles. We were never more than about three miles offshore. Weather was lovely both*

*days — overcast with light winds. These islands include substantial nesting colonies of several seabird species, so they are very interesting to see up-close in mid-nesting season.*

*We saw several very active feeding flocks of gulls, alcids, cormorants, shearwaters, pelicans, and occasional harbor porpoises, suggesting forage fish are doing well this year. But most of the birds we saw were just*



*loafing on the water, looking like they had their fill of fish and were simply hanging out. Most nesting species are probably on eggs right now; we only saw a couple puffins carrying small fish, and no murrelets carrying fish yet. Nesting colonies were very busy, with lots of bird activity. We saw several hundred Steller's sea lions and a few California sea lions hauled out at Sea Lion Rock and other islands, along with harbor seals and harbor porpoises along the way."*

Some birds of interest, as reported by Bob:

- White-winged and Surf Scoter - Scattered small flocks flying south, all adult males. Likely post-breeding migrants already leaving northerly nesting areas.
- Sooty Shearwater - Common, but not abundant. Some were mixed in with feeding flocks, but most lazily flying north. Sooties are southern-hemisphere nesters, so this is



# OLYMPIC COAST NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

## OLYMPIC COAST DISCOVERY CENTER



### VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER - JULY 2014

their non-breeding season. They sometimes appear off the WA coast in tremendous flocks, occasionally outnumbering all resident nesting species combined, but not right now.

- Manx Shearwater - Two birds on 7/15. One was in a feeding flock between Cake Island and Sea Lion Rock, and another went soaring by with Sooties near Carroll Island. Manx Shearwaters are a puzzle in coastal WA as they are normally a bird of the north Atlantic. They are seen occasionally off our coast in summer and may be nesting here.
- Brandt's Cormorant - We didn't see any nest sites of this species, which has nested in the area in the past. We did see several hundred mostly one-year-old Brandt's Cormorants roosting on various islands, likely birds from colonies in Oregon or California.
- Double-crested Cormorant - There were approximately 30 Double-crested Cormorant nests on the highest ridge of Jagged Island.
- Pelagic Cormorant - Nesting on all the islands with suitable cliff ledges.
- Brown Pelican - We saw scattered individuals and a few small flocks, all immature except one adult. Some were very active in feeding flocks, dipping on the surface rather than plunging from the air. This year pelicans nesting in the Gulf of California had a very poor breeding season, so we expect large numbers of failed breeders here as the summer progresses.
- Bald Eagle - Other than adults around La Push, we only saw one immature on offshore rocks at Quillayute Needles. Bald Eagles are notorious for causing havoc in coastal seabird colonies, particularly at Tatoosh Island.



- Greater Yellowlegs - Two flew around the mouth of the Quillayute River, near where adults were found with chicks three years ago, possibly the only nesting record of this species in WA.
- Black Turnstone - Six on Sea Lion Rock, perhaps newly-arrived birds from their nesting areas in western Alaska.
- Heermann's Gull - Numerous adults and few immatures, mixed in with feeding flocks and flying by. Most Heermann's Gulls nest in the Gulf of California, here as post-breeding migrants.
- Common Murre - We saw several thousand, mostly in large rafts near islands, but also in feeding flocks. The largest nesting colonies observed were at Carroll Island and Quillayute Needles.
- Pigeon Guillemot, Rhino Auklet, and Marbled Murrelet - These nesting species were present each day, but only in scattered groups or individuals, never in large numbers.
- Cassin's Auklet - Several individuals and small rafts, total number 25-30 each day, mostly in the vicinity of Carroll and Jagged Islands, where thousands apparently nest. Cassin's are rarely seen in large numbers nearshore during the day, because they only fly to colonies at night to avoid gull predation. They also feed lower in the food web, largely on euphausiids, other zooplankton, and larval fish, so they infrequently join in feeding flocks with larger birds.
- Ancient Murrelet - This species is rarely seen in WA during summer. We spotted one lone adult on 7/14 near Carroll Island. Curiously, Carroll Island is the only spot in WA where Ancients have been



# OLYMPIC COAST NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY



## OLYMPIC COAST DISCOVERY CENTER

### VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER - JULY 2014

confirmed nesting (in 1924!), although there are recent reports along the WA coast of small chicks at sea with adults (Ancient Murrelet chicks go to sea when a day or two old). Could they be nesting there now?

- Tufted Puffin - We saw many puffins standing at nesting burrows in the big grassy areas on Carroll and Jagged Islands, where thousands apparently nest. They were common on the water, both in feeding flocks and near nesting islands, totaling a few hundred each day.
- Peregrine Falcon - There were single individuals perched at Cake Island and Quillayute Needles. These were likely Peale's Falcons, the subspecies that nests along the Pacific Northwest coast and eats seabirds.



*Note: All photos  
credited to  
Bob Boekelheide*



Charlie Wright, COASST data-verifier for and expert birder, served as the naturalist on July 16 and documented the following sightings:

#### Charlie Wright's Report from 7/16

<i>Bird Species</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Surf Scoter	350	
White-winged Scoter	6	
Sooty Shearwater	400	
Manx Shearwater	3	Seen well mixed with a single feeding flock of Sooty Shearwaters. Black above, white below, about 2/3 to 3/4 size of Sooty Shearwaters nearby. All had white undertail coverts.
Brandt's Cormorant	40	
Double-crested Cormorant	12	
Pelagic Cormorant	120	
Brown Pelican	50	
Black Oystercatcher	12	
Semi-palmated Plover	1	in La Push harbor
Least Sandpiper	12	in La Push harbor
Western Sandpiper	120	in La Push harbor and flying by offshore
Common Murre	2,000	
Pigeon Guillemot	30	
Marbled Murrelet	7	
Cassin's Auklet	1	
Rhinoceros Auklet	100	
Tufted Puffin	130	85 counted hiding in grass of Carroll Island slopes. Others counted in transit.
Heermann's Gull	50	
Western Gull	10	
California Gull	60	
Glaucous-winged Gull	50	
Western x Glaucous-winged Gull	200	hybrid
Caspian Tern	3	
Belted Kingfisher	1	
Peregrine Falcon (Peale's)	2	

Overall it was a fantastic week with favorable cruising conditions coupled with enjoyable wildlife and scenery. OCNMS Captains Justin, Rick and Kathy kept everyone safe and in good spirits and everyone hope to return again next year!



# OLYMPIC COAST NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

## OLYMPIC COAST DISCOVERY CENTER



### VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER - JULY 2014

#### COASST / News from the Field

COASST volunteers can now also participate in sea star surveys to help monitor the wide-spread and devastating sea star wasting disease. The disease was first observed along the West Coast in June of 2013 and has impacted 20 species of sea stars, both intertidal and subtidal, from Alaska to Mexico. For those interested of you interested in collecting this valuable information, try the sea star protocol at: [depts.washington.edu/coasst/toolbox/survey.html](http://depts.washington.edu/coasst/toolbox/survey.html)

For more updates on sea star wasting disease, visit: [www.eeb.ucsc.edu/pacificrockyintertidal/data-products/sea-star-wasting](http://www.eeb.ucsc.edu/pacificrockyintertidal/data-products/sea-star-wasting)  
or  
[www.udiscover.it/applications/seastar](http://www.udiscover.it/applications/seastar)



Beach art observed at Shi Shi by COASST volunteers Sue Nattinger and Coleman Byrnes.



The below photo was taken by Jody Schroeder who monitors marine debris at Ruby Beach.



COASST volunteers Peter and Helen found this Marbled Murrelet on Haskin Beach, WA. Note the 3-webbed toe, lack of hind toe, pale foot, dark secondary tips on fully-grown wings, and dark bill.



**Due to high level of content this month, we will be back with the Creature Feature column next month!**