

# OLYMPIC COAST NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY OLYMPIC COAST DISCOVERY CENTER



VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER - MARCH / APRIL 2014

Orca Tour 2014

The Whale Trail, Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary,  
Feiro Marine Life Center and Sound Community Bank present

## Erich Hoyt

**"Adventures with Orcas in  
the North Pacific, from Stubbs to Iceberg"**

Thursday May 8, 7 PM (doors open 6:30 PM)  
Red Lion Hotel, 221 N. Lincoln St., Port Angeles  
\$5 (Kids Free!)

Advance tickets: [brownpapertickets.com](http://brownpapertickets.com)

Promoting awareness of the endangered Southern Resident Orcas throughout their range,  
from British Columbia to California. Learn more at [orcatur.org](http://orcatur.org)!

Logos for whaletrail.org, SOUND COMMUNITY BANK, Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary, and Feiro MARINE LIFE CENTER.

Orca Tour 2014 • 5/14 Monterey CA • 5/15 Santa Cruz CA • 5/18 Seattle WA • 5/20 Vancouver BC • 5/13 San Francisco CA • 5/10 Newport OR • 5/8 Port Angeles WA • 5/7 Port Townsend WA • 5/3 Saturnia BC • 5/17 Port Townsend WA • 5/8 Port Angeles WA • 5/10 Newport OR • 5/13 San Francisco CA • 5/14 Monterey CA • 5/15 Santa Cruz CA • 5/18 Seattle WA • 5/20 Vancouver BC

← **Thur. May 8th** "Adventures with Orcas in the North Pacific" presentation by Erich Hoyt at Red Lion 7:00-8:30pm (sponsored by The Whale Trail, OCNMS and Feiro)  
<http://thewhaletrail.org>

**Sat. May 24th** Olympic Coast Discovery Center Opens for 2014 season!

## STAY TUNED!

### **OCDC 2014 Spring Training!**

*We are seeking new, friendly and energetic volunteers for the 2014 season to interpret sanctuary resources and ocean issues to our domestic and international visitors! Please spread the word to your friends or community groups to help us recruit new ocean heroes. Current volunteers are welcome to join us as a refresher.*

### **Discovery Center Training Schedule:**

*Wed. April 30th 9am-1pm followed by  
Pizza Social for everyone & OCNMS staff!*

*Wed. May 7th 9am-1pm*

*Wed. May 14th 9am-1pm*

*Sat. May 17th field trip to Salt Creek  
tidepools + BBQ potluck picnic  
(all welcome!)*

*Wed. May 21st all day field trip to Neah Bay:  
Makah Museum & Cape Flattery*

*Wed. May 28th 9am-1pm*

*For registration or for more information  
contact [Jacqueline.Laverdure@noaa.gov](mailto:Jacqueline.Laverdure@noaa.gov) or  
(360) 457-6622 ext 21.*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Sat. April 5th** COASST Training at Clallam County Courthouse in Port Angeles from 11:00am to 5:00pm [coasst@uw.edu](mailto:coasst@uw.edu)

**Sat. April 19th** CoastSavers Washington Coastal Cleanup [www.coastsavers.org](http://www.coastsavers.org)

**April 26-27th wknd** Grays Harbor Shorebird & Nature Festival  
[www.shorebirdfestival.com](http://www.shorebirdfestival.com)

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## OLYMPIC COAST DISCOVERY CENTER

V O L U N T E E R   N E W S L E T T E R   -   M A R C H / A P R I L   2 0 1 4

### Volunteer Exchange with Monterey Bay NMS

We are excited to revive volunteer exchanges this year by hosting volunteers from Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary in conjunction with Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary's 20th anniversary and OCDC's 10th anniversary! In mid-July eight volunteers and MBNMS staff Carolyn Skinder will visit important sites in or around OCNMS, receive informational tours with OCNMS and partners, volunteer in the OCDC and at OCNMS's public anniversary celebration, meet YOU, and more! The exchange will help facilitate a greater understanding of the National Marine Sanctuary program as a system by delving deeper into the current features, programs and issues of a sister sanctuary. Volunteers will return with enhanced abilities to perform their volunteer and docent duties at their home sanctuary. *Thank you to those of you who have already offered to host our MBNMS guests!* Active OCDC docents will have the opportunity to visit Monterey Bay NMS in the winter of 2014-15, so stay tuned for planning later in the season!

#### Itinerary Overview:

**Sun., July 13** Arrive to PA by 5pm, meet OCNMS volunteers/ hosts for social potluck

**Mon, July 14** Tidepooling at Salt Creek, visit to Elwha River dam removal/restoration, tour OCDC, Feiro Marine Life Center, visit Hurricane Ridge

**Tues., July 15** Neah Bay field trip to Makah museum, Cape Flattery, Hobuck Beach

**Wed., July 16** Act as Docent for OCDC and participate in OCNMS 20th Anniversary Event and educational booth at city's evening "Concert on the Pier"

**Thur., July 17** Tidepooling at Second Beach and sanctuary boat cruise from La Push

**Fri., July 18** Lake Crescent, Sol Duc, Marymere & Madison Creek falls, farewell dinner

**Sat., July 19** Return to CA or extend stay in the area on own accord

### Marine Debris Educational Art Project



OCNMS is interested in finding volunteers to help spread the word about marine debris in a unique way. The sanctuary is working with local artist, Sarah Tucker, on a project to help raise awareness about the issue of marine debris by creating sculptures from trash collected during the upcoming Washington Coastal cleanup on Saturday, April 19th. One of these sculptures will be on permanent display at Olympic Coast Discovery Center, others will travel to special events and accompany Washington CoastSavers' exhibit on marine debris.

Volunteers are needed to help sort beach garbage in several locations at the following times:

- The Landing Mall: 12:00 – 3:00pm
- Salt Creek County Park: 10:00am – 1:00pm
- Peabody Creek (Olympic Powersports parking lot): 10:00am – 12:00pm
- Dungeness Spit NWR: 10:00am – 1:00pm
- Hobuck Beach campground: 9:00am – 3:00pm

*If you cannot participate in the cleanup on the outer coast or strait, consider assisting in this opportunity to make this project more successful and meaningful!*

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## Port Townsend Marine Science Center Field Trip

Spring has sprung on the peninsula and we are jostled into this lighter energy and reminded that the new OCDC season is just around the corner! To refresh our minds and learn about another marine environmental education and conservation effort in our area, we traveled to Port Townsend Marine Science Center (PTMSC) on March 29. Karlyn, Rob and seven Discovery Center docents embarked on our first field trip of 2014 while our daily commitment to staff the OCDC is still on “off-season” mode.

PTMSC Volunteer Coordinator Amy Johnson welcomed us with an overview of their background, including their education, citizen science and other programs. We were warmly joined by several of their volunteers and Board members on a personalized tour of the marine exhibits and natural history exhibits, and had the opportunity to discuss and exchange experiences together. Their marine exhibits on the pier had just opened for the new season, and the highlight was viewing two early-hatched skates (*Raja binoculata*) and a nursery of thumb-sized Pinto abalone (*Haliotis kamtschatkana*). We also compared their two octopuses, the mature “Matty”,

and younger “Inky” to Feiro Marine Life Center’s soon-to-be-released “Opal” and their small new addition, “Obeka”.



The Natural History Exhibit, “*Learning from Orcas—The Story of Hope*” is showcased by one of the only completely articulated orca skeletons in the United States. Hope was a transient female orca who beached and died on the Dungeness Spit in 2002. Her necropsy and further investigations revealed that her death was caused by high toxicity in her body from environmental contaminants. This exhibit highlights Hope’s story and shares the many lessons learned in the process of researching her death and preparing her skeleton. Most of all, it compels us to work harder to be greener (or “bluer”) citizens, knowing how deeply connected we are to our surrounding marine world. It was a blustery day in the Pacific Northwest, but we were sheltered in good company and enjoyed discussing and learning with members of a like-minded organization, which helps us to be better docents and ocean stewards!



## COASST / News from the Field

### April 5th COASST Training in Port Angeles

Coastal Observation and Seabird Survey Team (COASST) will host a free training session on Saturday, April 5 at the Clallam County Courthouse in Port Angeles from 11:00am to 5:00pm. COASST is a citizen science project dedicated to involving volunteers in the collection of high quality data on the status of coastal beaches and trends of seabirds. Their goal is to assist government agencies and other organizations in making informed management and conservation decisions, and to promote proactive citizen involvement and action. COASST volunteers systematically count and identify bird carcasses that wash ashore along ocean beaches from northern California to Alaska. Volunteers do not need experience with birds, just a commitment to survey a specific beach each month. For more information, contact [coasst@uw.edu](mailto:coasst@uw.edu) or 206-221-6893.

### COASST Expanding Marine Debris

Thanks to a recent award from the National Science Foundation Advancing Informal STEM Learning, COASST is expanding to monitor marine debris. Their new Marine Debris Program team has been creating scientific protocols for monitoring debris in a way to collect information useful for resource managers, while remaining feasible for COASST volunteers to gather. OCNMS Superintendent Carol Bernthal and Citizen Science Coordinator Heidi Pedersen were both involved in Advisory

Council meetings to work through questions on survey methodology and design. The team is rapidly progressing toward the 2015 launch of marine debris surveys. Meanwhile, Heidi and NOAA marine debris monitoring volunteers continue to monitor marine debris using an already established NOAA method.



Heidi with volunteer Russ Lewis at the Beachcomber's Fun Fair in Ocean Shores in early March.



A Gray Whale skull found on Tom's first COASST survey at Steamboat Creek, WA.

See more at <http://blogs.uw.edu/coasst>

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### Creature Feature

#### **Ocean Sunfish (*Mola mola*)**

The ocean sunfish is the heaviest bony fish in the world, weighing up to 5,000 lbs, with an average adult weight of 2,200 lbs. But their curious body shape—tailless and latterly widened—is what makes them unforgettable. *Mola molas* swim awkwardly through the waters with their dorsal and anal fins flapping synchronously, their body resembling a giant swimming head. When their fins are extended, their body can be as tall as they are long! Ocean sunfish have a rather small mouth and eyes proportionate to their body size, and lack scales. They are covered by tough, elastic skin and mucus and appear silver or bluish-gray in color, sometimes with a shiny iridescence.

Globally distributed, sunfish can live in tropical, subtropical and temperate waters, feeding predominantly on jellyfish as well as crustaceans, mollusks, squid, and small fish. *Mola molas* have been recorded to reach a height of 10.5 feet and females boast the largest production of eggs known to any vertebrate—a single female can produce up to 300 million eggs at a time! When hatched, the ocean sunfish fry look like miniature puffer fish.

Ocean sunfish are often sighted during research and monitoring trips aboard the sanctuary's *RV Tatoosh* during the summer and fall. They have been seen "basking" near the surface, tilted to one side, possibly for regulating body temperature or to receive cleaner fish or birds who will remove parasites. Seabirds have been known to eat parasites from the sunfish's body when they assume this position (for a great video of a *Mola mola* being cleaned by a gull, visit <http://www.arkive.org/sunfish/mola-mola/video-11.html>). Last summer on our OCDC volunteer appreciation cruise we observed two sunfish from the vessel. On both occasions a seabird perched on the sunfish's body took flight as soon as we approached the large fish. While adult *Mola molas* are vulnerable to few predators, marine debris from humans has become a threat. Floating plastic bags in the water can be confused for jellyfish and can choke them or clog their stomach, resulting in harm or even death.

