Wild Rivers Coast Alliance
Grants Funds to SEA

By Bill Stenberg, Vice President, SEA

A critical component of the work that SEA does is the spotting scopes and tripods that we use to draw visitors closer to the sea birds and marine mammals that visit our coast every spring and summer. Equipment like this wears out over time, and we recognized that it needed to be replaced. Last fall we launched a GoFundMe campaign to raise the $7,960 needed for the new equipment. This effort fell far short of our goal. In March we were fortunate to receive a $250 grant from Coos County, but that still left us $6,710 short of what was required.

Fortunately, our region is home to Wild Rivers Coast Alliance. Wild Rivers Coast Alliance is a grant making organization. All net proceeds from Bandon Preserve at Bandon Dunes Golf Resort are dedicated to the grant making of Wild Rivers Coast Alliance to support a thriving south coast of Oregon through conservation, community, and economic development projects. WRCA looked favorably upon the grant application we submitted in early May, providing us with the needed funds for purchasing the scopes and tripods.

Our new Vortex scopes will have HD clarity and will give much better definition to the sea birds and marine mammals we highlight for visitors to our region. We invite you to stop by Face Rock in Bandon and Simpson Reef out of Charleston to see why we are excited. We expect to have the new scopes by the end of June.

Many thanks to Wild Rivers Coast Alliance for their support of our mission and for their affirmation of the work our volunteer wildlife interpreters perform every summer.

Tufted Puffins at Face Rock

It appears a number of Tufted Puffins have decided Face Rock is a world class destination resort! A number of the elusive birds have been seen this Spring and we have photos to prove it! Thanks to Bill Stenberg and Steve Garrett for contributing the following photo and comments about their recent sightings. On May 19, Bill shared, “Thought you might enjoy hearing that today at Face Rock was a puffin performance like none I’ve seen in my 3 years volunteering with SEA! We saw as many as four at once. But the remarkable thing is that almost any time we looked through a scope throughout the entire 4-hour session there was a puffin. And, they were not just ‘sitting around.’ They were constantly moving, ducking in and out of burrows, strolling over the green areas, flying off a boulder only to come right back in a matter of seconds. Visitors were naturally as mesmerized as Teri, Susan and I were. Hope this means we are watching healthy puffins who are going to produce healthy chicks that will continue to entertain and delight all of us.”

More on the handsome Tufted Puffin on Page 4!

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Off to a New Adventure
SEA bids Eric, Erin and Owen Mruz a fond farewell and best wishes as they embark on relocating to Minnesota. We know they will be very happy there with family nearby and a new occupational challenge. SEA will sincerely miss the incredible cooperative relationship we shared with Eric as well as his genuine concern and interest in USFWS and SEA’s mutual mission. Best wishes always!

On May 26, two Board Members and Simpson Reef volunteers, Bill Binnewies and Bill Stenberg, were granted by Mother Nature the memorable, breathtaking gift of witnessing a Harbor Seal give birth. In Bill Binnewies’ words, “Another exciting day at the reef. A Harbor Seal gave birth on the reef nearest to the overlook. Again, immature and adult bald eagles (and one plucky raven) descended on the afterbirth. I have video of the mother protecting her pup from the pesky eagles.” And, Bill Stenberg recapped the day saying, “Bill Binnewies and I had a day to remember at Simpson Reef last Saturday. I encourage you to visit the SEA web page (sea-edu.org) to check out the blog I posted - along with video - and you’ll see what I mean. It was unforgettable! I feel so fortunate to have video of it as well.”
Plastic is in the forefront of the news as of late and rightfully so. This is not an overblown media slant. It is truly ugly and horrifying to see so much garbage in our oceans and on our beaches. The plastic is a visual reminder of all the harmful things we cannot even see, such as micro-plastics, chemicals, radiation and sewage waste that is ending up where nature is so sensitive. The oceans are not big enough to absorb this kind of abuse. It is easy to think, that all this happens elsewhere. But the oceans are joined and the problem has made it to all our back yards.

Trash is ugly, we want our beaches pristine. But the bigger picture is that it is not just litter, the plastic alone is damaging for what it is. We tend to think plastic is inert in itself. Plastic, however, seems to have a great infinity to entrapping, damaging or killing wildlife. Probably the worst case is that many sea animals seem to find various plastics edible! This is not because animals are stupid, but they didn’t evolve with plastics in mind; they have no protection. Their instincts tell them that plastic looks, sounds and smells like food to them. Once they ingest it, it can cause blockages and kill them at the worst or provide no nutrition and eventually kill them if they continue to target plastic. Blue Planet had an albatross bring food home to their chick and they regurgitated plastic! How utterly heart breaking.

Approximately 8 million metric tons of plastic enter our oceans every year.

I will let that statement hang there. It is appalling and only continues to grow. Plastic does not rot and mulch back into the environment. Plastic only breaks down into smaller and smaller pieces and continues to do harm to all it encounters.

Plastic garbage impacts not only the iconic species; sea turtles, whales, seabirds, fish and coral all over the world. But the micro-plastics are affecting plankton. This is where the ocean’s food chain is built from. Studies are being done on micro-plastics in the ocean. We know it cannot be good and action cannot happen soon enough. So we all agree that plastic pollution is bad. That it is a worldwide problem. What can one person do? How do you compete against other countries that have no control over their waste into huge rivers that dump into the seas? One has to take a deep breath and believe that every step matters. We have to have hope that if enough people become plastic aware, it can make a difference.

You can make a difference by:

1. Be aware and reduce usage of plastics such as; plastic bags, water bottles, straws, cups, utensils, take out containers, etc.. Refuse to take single use plastics when offered and carry containers or bags with you to use instead.
2. Recycle where every possible.
3. Participate or support beach and river clean-ups in helping remove plastic from the environment.
4. Become aware and support plastic Bans in other countries and encourage plastic usage bans in your community.
5. Support Organizations that are addressing plastic pollution or write your own letters to companies regarding products or practices.
6. Avoid products that have microbeads in them; this includes make-up, face scrubs, toothpaste and body-washes, etc… Look for words ‘polythelene’ or ‘polyproyln’ on ingredient labels.
7. Talk to friends and neighbors. Spread the word, help others understand this is a real and going concern.

For further information:

1. Google Plastic Pollution – there are a large number of articles
2. Review Nat Geo magazines recent piece on plastic pollution
3. Visit ‘Washed Ashore’, https://washedashore.org/ Art created by plastics, to clean up the environment and help bring awareness.
4. Review Blue Planet BBC documentaries Knowledge is power. Do what you can, when you can. No matter how small an effort, everything counts!

(See Pages 7 and 8 for “How Long” and “Reusables” flyers)
Bill retired from the National Park Service in 1994, after working in several national parks and monuments. He worked in mountains, deserts and on Indian Reservations, but had not lived on the coast. Bill visited Bandon with his parents and decided he would try out the coastal lifestyle. He’s been here ever since! Bill joined SEA in 1996 as it offered an opportunity to learn about coastal wildlife and habitat. He enjoys being at the overlooks sharing information about coastal wildlife with visitors. Bill became a member of the Board of Directors of SEA and served two years as President. He says, “Thanks to some great people serving as volunteers and Board members, SEA continues to adapt and change as it continues to tell the story about coastal wildlife to visitors, school groups and others.”

Tufted Puffins are medium-sized, stocky seabirds that live out at sea a majority of the year, and only come near shore to breed, nest and fledge their chicks in spring and early summer. While at sea during the non-breeding season, their coloration is rather dull black with a massive, slightly orange beak, but they undergo a major transformation of image in spring to the recognizable black body, vivid red-orange beak, white face mask, and rather stylish, avant-garde pale-yellow plumes (tufts) on either side of their head. They are nicknamed the “Clowns of the Sea” and “Sea Parrots” because of their uniquely attractive looks. It probably is their impressive spring/summer appearance that draws people to eagerly seek a view of them, but there are other equally impressive attributes of Tufted Puffins. They are efficient divers and can dive to depths of 60 meters to grab fish in their huge beaks. They are able to hold many fish, some say as many as 20 at one time, to take back to their nests. A Puffin pair make a nest by digging a burrow into the substrate of an offshore island or coastal bluff with their beaks and
webbed feet or may use a crevice there. They prepare the burrow, which may be as deep as 6 feet, lining the far end with soft materials where they produce and incubate one egg per year. The pair share the duties of incubating and caring for their chick. Puffins usually keep the same mates and return to the same burrows as in previous years. Tufted Puffins nest along the North Pacific coast ranging from California to Northern Alaska, and in parts of Japan. Although their populations in Alaska currently appear stable, the numbers of Tufted Puffins along the southern part of their range, including California, Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia have declined significantly in recent decades. Due to the dramatic decline, they were listed as an endangered species by the state of Washington in 2015. According to a US Fish and Wildlife (USFW) report published in July, 2017, in the 20 years between USFW seabird burrow-nesting surveys encompassing the entire Oregon coast there was a tremendous decline in breeding Tufted Puffins. The study conducted in 1988 estimated a Puffin population of 4,858, while the 2008 study found only 142 of the birds along the Oregon coast. Subsequent USFW monitoring of Tufted Puffins at Haystack Rock in Cannon Beach, Oregon showed a relatively stable population of 92-143 individual Puffin identified between 2010-2016. The most frequently cited possible cause for the decline in Tufted Puffins is the warming ocean temperatures of the California current, which flows south along the coast from British Columbia to Baja. The warmer ocean temperatures negatively affect the Puffins’ food source. Other possible causes for the decline include increases in predators at the Puffins’ nesting sites, net fishing, and oil spills. The USFW website suggests that Tufted Puffins are best viewed in Oregon at Haystack Rock and our own Face Rock. Happily, SEA volunteers have consistently identified pairs of Tufted Puffins on Face Rock this breeding season and have assisted many visitors to Face Rock Wayside in viewing the Puffins via scopes since mid-May. SEA volunteers will continue to have viewing scopes there on Saturdays and Sundays from 10 A.M to 2 P.M. through July. Don’t miss the opportunity to see these wonderful “Clowns of the Sea” while they are here.
SEA held their Annual Volunteer Training on May 22 and 23 at the Bandon Community Center. The training offered two days of insightful, informative and relevant education. SEA would like to thank all the outstanding presenters; all of whom conveyed their expertise and expansive knowledge base free of charge and for the sole purpose of helping SEA volunteers better educate and communicate with the public about the Southern Coastal National Wildlife Refuges, wildlife and environments. Information on Seabirds, Marine Mammals, Marine Debris, Snowy Plover Recovery, and Tide Pools with a Tide Pool Field Trip were highlights of the two-day seminar. If you haven’t yet had the opportunity to attend the annual SEA Volunteer Training make plans to do so next year (May 2019). It will be well worth your while!
**7 SINGLE-USE SWAPS AND THE TRASH YOU CAN SAVE IN ONE YEAR**

- **4.4 lbs** of trash per day x **324 mil** people in the US = **700,000** tons of trash made every day in the US

- 1 bamboo toothbrush = 4 plastic toothbrushes
- 1 glass floss container = 7 plastic floss containers
- 1 reusable water bottle = 167 plastic water bottles
- 1 reusable bag = 170 plastic bags
- 1 reusable cup = 500 coffee cups
- 1 metal straw = 540 plastic straws
- 1 cloth towel = 7,300 paper towels

"THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE THE BIGGEST DIFFERENCE ARE THE ONES WHO DO THE LITTLE THINGS CONSISTENTLY."

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CONTRIBUTE TO THE WORK OF SHORELINE EDUCATION FOR AWARENESS

Your tax-deductible contribution to Shoreline Education for Awareness directly supports SEA’s coastal wildlife interpretation program as it continues its crucial role in the education of local residents and the growing number of visitors to our coast from around the world. You can also contribute by becoming a volunteer. Please use the form below to become a member, make an additional contribution to the program, or to indicate your interest in volunteering.

Enclosed is my contribution to help support SEA
I would like to volunteer for the wildlife interpretation program

Please call me at:_________________________________________________________
Or send me an e-mail at:__________________________________________________

Suggested Donations (Check One):

___ $20 Individual Membership       ___ $25 additional contribution
___ $35 Family Membership (2 or more in same household)___ $50 additional contribution
___ $250 Lifetime Membership       ___ $100 additional contribution
___ I would like to volunteer for the wildlife interpretation program.

Name:
Address
City, State, Zip:
E-mail:

Use the PayPal link on our website or make your tax-deductible check payable to:
Shoreline Education for Awareness
P.O. Box 957
Bandon, Oregon 97411