SEAscope

Friends of the Southern Oregon Coastal Islands
National Wildlife Refuges

Shoreline Education for Awareness, Inc.
P.O. Box 957
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Winter/Spring 2019

Shoreline Education for Awareness Begins its 29th Year

Shoreline Education for Awareness begins its 29th year providing onsite coastline wildlife interpretation at Face Rock (Bandon) and Simpson Reef (Sunset Bay State Park). SEA volunteers also branched out to assist with tide pool walks, beach cleanup, whale watch and other related coastal activities. SEA volunteers contacted 11,000 + visitors. Providing an opportunity for visitors to view coastal wildlife through SEA spotting scopes and being able to share interpretive literature and stories about coastal wildlife with visitors from all over the world leads to a greater understanding on the part of the public about coastal wildlife and its associated habitat. So often the SEA volunteers witnessed the **"WOW"** factor as visitors looked through the scopes for the first time. Visitors were very appreciative in finding SEA volunteers at the overlooks.

SEA was fortunate to have **Kay Gilman** at Simpson Reef as our National (RV) volunteer. Kay was at Simpson Reef every Friday, Saturday and Sunday and assisted the Sunset Bay State Park with their interpretive programs on weekdays. Kay will be returning for her 3rd season this year. Also, **John and Cindy Dillard** will be returning as the Bandon RV volunteers as Bullard's Beach State Park is providing an RV space for them. We are delighted to have them back and wish to thank Sunset Bay and Bullard's Beach state parks for providing the RV sites.

Consider becoming a coastline wildlife interpreter. Last season we witnessed the birth of harbor seals at Simpson Reef followed by bald eagles swooping in to fight over the afterbirth. The mother seal was not happy to have the eagles so close to her pup. Elephant seals, black oystercatchers, murre, and puffins make up part of the dynamic moasic seen daily along the coast.

SEA Tufted Puffin Party

SEA will hold its annual **Tufted Puffin Party** at Face Rock Overlook on Saturday, April 27, from 10 AM – 1 PM. Yes, there will be Tufted Puffin Muffins and, hopefully, Puffins.

We had about four nesting pair of puffins on Face Rock this last summer. They were very cooperative and remained visible most of the summer, loafing in front of their dens. We celebrate the arrival of puffins and murres and follow their progress through the summer as they give birth to their chicks and start their migration back to the far north. Black Oystercatcher, Pigeon Guillemot, Cormorant, Surf Scoter, Gull and a variety of other shore and seabirds give an added dimension to the dynamics of our offshore islands and rocks.

Kelp Habitat on the Oregon Coast and Rocky Shore Ecology

On Saturday, April 20, 10:00 a.m. at the Bandon Library Sprague Room SEA will host two presentations. The first is on ***Kelp Habitat on the Oregon Coast*** presented by Sara Hamilton, Doctoral Student in the Department of Integrative Biology at Oregon State University. Kelp plays a critical role in supporting ocean biodiversity. Sara will speak about kelp forest along the Oregon coast and its importance to marine life. At 2:00 p.m., Dr. Bruce Menge, Distinguished Professor of Marine Biology at Oregon State University will cover ***Rocky Shore Ecology.*** The great diversity along our shoreline is shaped by a variety of rock formations which have been changing over time. In addition to the two presentations, there will be a ***field trip to tide pools*** at 8:30 a.m.

SEA's Year 2018 Annual Meeting

Shoreline Education for Awareness held its Annual Meeting Saturday, October 27, 2018. The guest speaker was Lisa Hildebrand, Oregon State University Wildlife Science Master Student. Lisa and her team conducted research on gray whale populations near Port Orford to find out more about their age, numbers of males and females, food sources, feeding patterns and trends in the whale population. Observations were made from the shore, on the water and below the surface of the ocean. This information was collected as part of OSU's Geospatial Ecology Marine Megafauna Lab's research program. Reports were given by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and SEA. Dan and Raini Williams and Mike Mueller were elected as new SEA board members.

Welcome Kate

Hello SEA! This is my first column in the SEA newsletter and I'd like to introduce myself. My name is Kate Iaquinto and I'm the new Southern Oregon Coast Refuge Manager for the Oregon Coast National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) Complex. What does that mean you ask? Well, I'm situated at Bandon Marsh NWR and my primary responsibilities are there. However, part of my job is to oversee the Southern portion of the Oregon Islands NWR from Bandon South, including Coquille Point, Crook Point and the islands themselves. This is my first job as a refuge manager. My previous position was at Monomoy NWR on Cape Cod, Massachusetts where I was the station wildlife biologist. Monomoy NWR is a barrier beach island that is home to the largest common and roseate tern colony on the east coast. It is also home to many pairs of nesting piping plovers and American oystercatchers. Gray seals pup on the island and it is a major horseshoe crab spawning area. The Chatham Massachusetts area where the refuge's islands are situated is also a major stopover site for southward migrating shorebirds. And, in collaboration with partners we studied the movements of the federally threatened juvenile and adult red knot. The refuge is federally designated wilderness. Seasonal staff camp on the island during the nesting season to monitor the seabirds and shorebirds and conduct predator management. The refuge has a large and long established biological program that I feel very lucky to have lead. Like Bandon Marsh NWR, Monomoy NWR is also a satellite refuge of a larger complex, the Eastern Massachusetts NWR complex which is comprised of eight refuges in the region. Though Monomoy will always have a special place in my heart, I decided recently that it was time to move on. I applied to the Bandon Marsh position because I wanted a change. I wanted to remain coastal and to work with the coastal birds and habitats that I love, but I also wanted to move my career forward. By taking this refuge manager job, I feel that I'm doing that. My family and I moved to the West coast in November and we are loving it so far. Prior to coming here**,** we had travelled to the West coast but never to the Oregon coast. I continue to be shocked and amazed by its beauty. I am married. My husband Tim works from home, which has allowed us to move here and keep his job which is wonderful. Last year we welcomed our first child, Gemma Pearl who is now almost ten months old, crawling like a champ and enjoying discovering her new home in North Bend. We've been out quite a bit hiking and driving around, trying to get to know the place! I have a Bachelor of Science in Wildlife Conservation Biology from the University of Rhode Island and I am

currently working on completing my Master's in Environmental Conservation at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Since I've been at Bandon, I've learned a lot. Being a manager is a big change but I'm getting the hang of it. I've been spending most of my time trying to meet our partners and taking stock of what we have going on here at the refuge. Our recent South Coast refuge tour with the staff of the Oregon Coast NWR Complex has helped to build a large to do list that I'll be working from. In my first year I hope to learn a lot and get started on some new projects as well as to continue the projects started by Eric Mruz, the previous manager that I'm sure you all know. I want to thank the SEA board and members that I have met thus far for being very welcoming to me and my family. We are looking forward to working with you and getting to know you better. SEA has a long history of great work on the Oregon coast.

Early Arrivals

Common Murre February 19, 2019

Middle Coquille Point Rock

The first colonies of Common Murre have arrived on the offshore islands off of Coquille Point. Murre migrate from artic and sub-arctic to their breeding grounds on the offshore islands and rocks along the Oregon Coast. They look similar to a penguin but they are not related. They lay one egg on the bare rock and males and females take turn incubating the egg. Each egg has a unique spotted pattern so parents can tell theirs from the many hundreds of eggs in their vicinity. There can be 6,000 birds nesting on the offshore islands from Face Rock to the North Coquille Point Rock. The early colonies will leave the rocks to feed before settling in to incubate their eggs around April and May. They leave to return to the Arctic at the end of July.

Volunteers Making a Difference

SEA members and volunteers can be found working alongside volunteers from other programs. SEA volunteer Bruce Williams has been coordinating SEA quarterly beach debris cleanups. On December 15, five teams totaling 28 volunteers cleaned 7 ½ miles of beach. Plastic debris is donated to Washed Ashore. If you are interested in helping you can contact Bruce at bewilliams16@gmail.com, or phone 541-329-2359.

SEA Adopts Mile 101, for Coast Watch

Submitted by Steve Garrett

SEA is happy to announce that it is now participating in Oregon Shores Conservation Coalition's Coast Watch citizen science program. A description of the program follows:

"*Coast Watch, a citizen monitoring program, engages Oregonians in stewardship in their shoreline. The program offers education about shoreline ecology and natural history along with opportunities to contribute data to a variety of citizen science projects. Volunteers adopt mile-long segments of Oregon Coast, observing and reporting natural changes and human induced impacts."*

SEA adopted Mile 101, which starts at the access point at Face Rock and extends to the access point at 8th Street near Table Rock. This section of beach was chosen as it encompasses our bird nesting sites of Face Rock and Coquille Point. Once a quarter, SEA volunteers will walk mile 101, completing the "Coast Watch Mile-by-Mile Observation Report." It is best to have at least two volunteers (though more are welcome) to observe the area and complete the report taking photographs of significant findings. Completed reports, along with photographs, will be entered into the Coast Watch data base. The more volunteers making the observations the better as there are never too many eyes watching the coastline.

Oftentimes people feel overwhelmed and somewhat helpless in making a difference in our environmental problems. Rest assured that this activity is beneficial in many ways, one of which is to help scientist understand trends and some possible effects of climate change. It is also a great opportunity to get out and enjoy our gorgeous coastline with fellow SEA volunteers. If you are interested in participating in this activity, please contact SEA at (541) 313-6751.

Sea Stars

Submitted by Loren Morris



Where have all the Sea Stars gone? This was, and still is a common question we hear from people visiting our beautiful Oregon Coast. Indeed, it seems like they just disappeared overnight. The 2013-2014 massive die-off along the North American Coastline occurred from Baja all the way to Alaska. So, what is killing the Sea Stars? The disease is called the "Sea Star Wasting Syndrome" (SSWS), and it is still present at low levels in many coastal areas.

Similar die-offs have occurred in the 1970s, 80s, and 90s, but never before at this magnitude covering such a wide geographic area. This mysterious disease has affected at least 20 species of Sea Stars with a loss of 90% of their populations. The outlook for the Sunflower Star is bleak at best.

The disease starts with lesions forming on the Sea Star's body and ends in a horrible death with the Sea Star's body breaking apart and dissolving. In some cases, it takes place in only three days. Currently researchers, along with a group of dedicated civilian scientist, are seeing the start of a comeback in some areas. This is not happening everywhere, but Recruits, which is what juvenile Sea Stars are called, are being seen in large numbers in some areas along the coastline of California and Oregon.

The eventual recovery of the Sea Star will rely on its ability to change its genetics and evolve quickly. Ongoing studies of the Ochre Sea Stars is showing that the surviving population has a genetic resistance to the disease. Research indicates that the Sea Star is going through a microevolution of sorts, which could lead to the Ochre Sea Star's full recovery.

The cause of the wasting syndrome (SSWS) outbreak is still largely unknown. One researcher from Cornell University, where much of the research is being done, has pointed to a particular "Densovirus," which has been found in Sea Star specimens dating back to the 1940s, as the cause. However, subsequent studies have identified an unspecified viral pathogen for which there is no cure. This pathogen, along with environmental stress caused by ocean warming and acidification, may be adding to the disease's viral nature.

There is much more research to be done, but we hope the Sea Star comeback that we are now observing will continue so we may see our Sea Star friends in their favorite place among the rocky intertidal zone.

Shoreline Education for Awareness, Inc
Board of Directors

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Your Contribution supports SEA's coastal wildlife interpretation and education programs as it continues its critical role in education of local residents and increasing numbers of visitors to the Oregon Coast.

Membership

_____ $20 Individual Membership
_____ $35 Family Membership (2 or more in the same household)
_____ $250 Lifetime Membership

Donation Other _____

Yes ____ I am interested in becoming a SEA Volunteer

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