

Making Connections

Oregon's Marine Reserves

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Everyone is busy these days with electronic devices attached to our ears and fingertips. Some say the surge in the use of electronic devices and technology creates or widens a gap in the relationship that people have with nature, the outdoors, and the ocean. The Oregon Marine Reserve Partnership begs to differ.

Using a suite of outreach tools, the consortium of nonprofit organizations is intent on creating an aware and informed public interested in and capable of participating in a dialogue about the future of marine reserves and protected areas in Oregon – by connecting people to these special places in a variety of ways, including the use of technology and websites.

Photo and Video Archive – A social scientist noted that the key difference between wilderness areas in terrestrial environments and “wilderness areas” or marine protected areas/reserves in marine environments is that you can “see” the difference in one, but not necessarily in the other. Case in point. Look at the difference in an “unmanaged” national park versus neighboring properties. But then look at a

marine reserve (from the eyes of the public) before it is dedicated, and after it’s been in existence for 10 years. The marine reserve “looks” the same. What does that tell us? We’ve got a job to do taking people “into” the reserve to see the species and habitats that they cannot, and never will see, without technology. So we recently launched a SMUGMUG site, a video and photo archive of Oregon’s marine reserves that allows people to enjoy the fish, wildlife and landscapes that define our marine reserves.

Interpretive Signs and Exhibits – Interpreting the values and importance of Oregon’s marine reserves in the context of the people that live in and visit these special places, the fish and wildlife that call them home, and the interrelationships that exist within the marine environment and between the marine environment and the land are critical to helping people connect with the ocean and marine reserves. Thanks to the support from the Harder, Lazar, and Packard Foundations, the Oregon Marine Reserves Partnership has been installing interpretive panels on the south coast of Oregon, and has begun the interpretive planning process

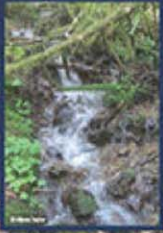
CAPE PERPETUA MARINE RESERVE

You're looking out at Cape Perpetua Marine Reserve, the largest in Oregon's Marine Reserve network. The reserve combines with three adjacent Marine Protected Areas to create 41 square miles of protected marine habitat.

This reserve joins 124 others in 29 nations all over the world. Reserve researchers tell us that the numbers and types of marine plants and animals are increasing over time within marine reserves. Conservation is working.



The wildlife in both forest and sea benefits as these two vast ecosystems cycle and recycle vital nutrients.



Rivers, creeks, and streams provide habitat for salmon and steelhead and at the same time transport sediment and nutrient-rich waste from the forest floor to the ocean.

EXPLODING WITH LIFE

This nearshore area is filled with forage fish species and the marine mammals and seabirds that eat them. Millions of migrating seabirds come for the food, along with 15 seabird nesting colonies and the state's highest concentration of Marbled Murrelets.

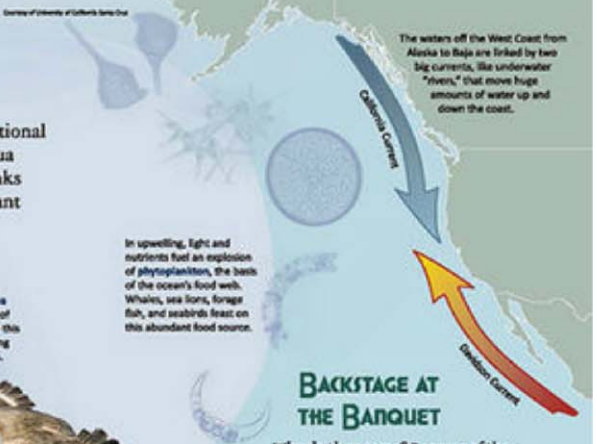
Nearby, the forest supports hundreds of species of freshwater fish, 69 species of mammals, and 235 species of birds.



INTERNATIONAL DESTINATION

Every year, threatened or endangered birds from all over the world find a rich source of food and shelter in the waters off Cape Perpetua. They migrate from breeding grounds as far away as Antarctica, the Arctic, Japan, and New Zealand.

Because of this amazing influx of international travelers, the nearshore waters of Perpetua Banks, Heceta Banks, and Stonewall Banks have been designated a Globally Important Bird Area.



The Ancient Murrelet, a cousin of our local Marbled Murrelet, breeds in the Yellow Sea Islands off China and Korea and comes here for food.



The South Polar Skua migrates thousands of miles north to reach this area from its breeding ground in Antarctica.



BACKSTAGE AT THE BANQUET

Why do they come? Because of the California Current System, and the rich food resources it provides.

In spring and summer, the slow-moving California Current comes from the north, bringing nutrient-rich water with it as it moves closer to shore. As northwest winds blow, the nutrients rise to the surface in a process called upwelling.

Volunteers are tracking seabirds throughout the Reserve. Grab your binoculars and join the search! Find out about it at www.oregonmarinereserve.org

The Black-footed Albatross breeds on the Northern Hawaiian Islands and the islands of Japan. It travels long distances to find food.



Cape Perpetua Marine Reserve adds a vital layer of protection from the shoreline to 3 miles out to sea in this section of the California Current System along the Oregon Coast.

The rare Buller's Shearwater comes here in late summer and fall after breeding in New Zealand.











on the mid- and north coast. The Land-Sea Connection, international destination for seabirds, fishers as stewards of the resource, research, and legacies of protection are just a few of the themes interpreted on the panels. Visitors that view the marine reserves from land will better be able to connect to the reserves and appreciate the values reserves are capable of providing. In addition to interpretive signs, the partnership is working with the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry to create a traveling exhibit as well as a backlit display at the Oregon Zoo in Portland.

Social media – No, we’re not doing simultaneous tweets, with Instagram and Facebook and . . . well, you know the drill. Yes, we realize it’s the hip thing to do, blasting, and re-blasting and tweeting and re-tweeting . . . But we believe that every message we send, every step we take, needs to be carefully considered in an effort to build a relationship with individuals and improve our understanding about how and why people connect with the ocean. We started slow with Facebook and are enjoying our journey with “Fun Factoid Fridays” and posts from our members that elicit interest from the recreational, cultural, spiritual, economic, social, and other aspects of marine reserves. Will we get to a place where we implement a “full-blown” social media strategy? Maybe. But not at the expense of keeping it real – to us and to Oregonians.

Public events – The Oregon Marine Reserves Partnership has provided funding to support an annual Land-Sea Symposium annually, and the group supports Redfish Rocks on the Docks and other events that bring people together to talk about the status of Oregon’s marine reserves, what we’ve learning, and why it’s important. These types of events create opportunities for people to interact one-on-one with biologists, managers, cheerleaders, and others.

The ocean environment poses significant challenges to those that seek to create opportunities for people to truly “connect” with these special places. People that don’t live on the coast are one step further removed from connecting on a regular basis. But that shouldn’t discourage us. If anything, it should encourage us to be more creative, inspiring people to connect with and understand how ocean health equates to human health, and how quality of life is achieved through an enhanced connection with our marine environment.