

Volunteer Newsletter

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Upcoming Events

TBD December Holiday Party!

Volunteer Exchange to MBNMS! We look forward to an amazing trip at our sister sanctuary in California February 21-27, 2015.



THANK YOU ALL!

Our season closed after Crab Fest weekend on October 12th. We are now only available by appointment until spring 2015. A boisterous THANK YOU (insert Dory's whale voice) for all of your time and energy this year! Overall in 2014 Olympic Coast Discovery Center received **5,607** visitors (up 200 from 2013), with a total of **20** docents contributing **1,285** volunteer hours (525 more hours than last year!).

Please stay tuned during the "off-season" for enrichment activities and social events!



Washington CoastSavers

CoastSavers International Coastal Cleanup

Washington CoastSavers, Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary (OCNMS) and other partners led the state's second International Coastal Cleanup effort to remove marine debris from coastal beaches on Saturday, September 20th. The event took place in conjunction with the annual global event established by Ocean Conservancy in 1986. Up to 500 volunteers participated in cleanup efforts on 64 different beaches spanning from the Columbia River to Cape Flattery and along the Strait of Juan de Fuca, an increase from 140 volunteers in 2013. OCNMS staff coordinated volunteer efforts at Neah Bay's registration station for Hobuck, Tsoo Yess, Shi Shi, Portage Head, and Point of the Arches beaches. OCNMS is a founding member of Washington CoastSavers and contributes significantly to the organization's long-range planning, funding, and event coordination. Volunteers sorted through marine debris to support recycling efforts, and to collect clear plastic that will be used for a marine debris sculpture. At the end of the day volunteers were able to relax and enjoy the beautiful weather at various barbecues, sponsored by Surfrider Foundation and DNC Parks and Resorts. The day was a great success due to volunteer dedication and strong collaboration between several organizations. The annual spring Coastal Cleanup date has been set for **Saturday, April 25th 2015**, so mark your calendars! Learn more at www.coastsavers.org.



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Dungeness River Festival

Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary educators Nicole and Danny staffed an information and education booth at the 15th annual Dungeness River Festival September 26-27 in Sequim (dungenessrivercenter.org/RiverFestival.html).

Participants learned from replica skulls of marine salmon predators, including an orca, sea lions, a porpoise, and seals. Over 3,000 visitors attended the Dungeness River Festival, hosted by the Dungeness River Audubon Center with more than 800 grade school students from the area joining for “Kid’s Day” on Friday September 25, when OCNMS provided an opportunity to identify replica skulls using images of marine mammals while teaching about salmon predators in the marine environment. Students especially enjoyed trying to guess which skull belonged to which local marine mammal, and most thought the orca skull was a giant crocodile or alligator, which did not stop them from sticking their head inside the jaws! The festival focused on the connection of a healthy environment for healthy communities. Nature walks, presentations, entertainment, food, activities, and informational booths were also available to visitors.



Ocean Acidification Enrichment

Education specialist Nicole Harris gave a brown bag lunch presentation to several of you on interactive ocean acidification demonstrations and games to use with public audiences. Thanks to those of who attended and practiced your skills before the

Dungeness Crab & Seafood Festival!

Next season we will add ocean acidification activities to Olympic Coast Discovery Center, so this will become part of the 2015 spring training.



Dungeness Crab & Seafood Festival

This year Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary’s education booth at the 13th annual Dungeness Crab and Seafood Festival in Port Angeles focused on ocean acidification. Volunteers Leslee C., Sue G., Brian H. and Jim J. helped lead interactive demonstrations on pH and the effects of increased carbon dioxide in water. We also played interactive games to demonstrate the effects of ocean acidification on marine organisms and the marine food web, particularly for our cherished shelled animals (including crabs, mussels, oysters and other seafood favorites). Ocean acidification has and will continue to impact local and regional shellfish and related organisms that use calcium carbonate to build their shells,



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impacting not only our marine ecosystems but also our state economy. The annual festival took place on October 10-12th (www.crabfestival.org) and OCNMS was happy to be return as an informational vendor after a hiatus last year due to the 2013 government furlough. The event drew between 10,000-15,000 people from the area as well as other parts of the U.S. and Canada.



Lake Ozette Sockeye Salmon Event

Have you been out to Lake Ozette yet? If not, you should definitely make the trip! Popularly known and used for its access to coastal trails leading to stunning Cape Alava and Sand Point beaches, Lake Ozette is also home to a unique species of sockeye salmon comprised of a single genetic population (unlike other salmon species with broader geographic ranges). These beautiful fish were listed under the Endangered Species Act in 1999, with an estimated 2,679 wild sockeye spawners remaining. Lake Ozette sockeye salmon spawn annually on beaches in tributaries. On Saturday, November 1st Nicole represented OCNMS along with numerous



partners with an outreach activity and information table. Other outreach vendors included Olympic National Park, NOAA Fisheries, and the Makah Tribe Fisheries.

Hourly visits to the weir at Umbrella Creek were offered to demonstrate tagging of live fish used to estimate the population size.



Nicole focused on the importance of healthy marine environments to sockeye salmon and provided information and activities on marine plankton and the marine food web, where sockeye salmon play the role of both predator and prey. The annual outreach event was intended to showcase restoration needs and efforts for a healthy Lake Ozette sockeye salmon population to the local community.

Seattle Aquarium's Annual Family Discover Science Weekend

Sanctuary educators Nicole and Danny participated in Seattle Aquarium's "Discover Science" weekend on November 8-9th, which offered families an opportunity to meet with regional marine scientists, researchers and educators to learn about ocean and marine science and conservation. Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary provided outreach to visitors with an interactive plankton identification (ID) table and discussions of marine food web



systems, their importance and impacts. Visitors engaged in viewing plankton samples under both dissecting microscopes

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and compound microscopes, along with a phytoplankton and zooplankton ID key. A teach cam was hooked up to a video screen for larger plankton images and ID opportunities. Adults and children alike enjoyed trying to identify the different phytoplankton and zooplankton under the microscopes and were surprised that samples were obtained from just outside the aquarium. Many of the kids drew colorful pictures of the organisms they saw. Throughout the event, over 5,000 visitors took advantage of the opportunity to explore ocean and marine research. Outreach activities were also available from NOAA Fisheries, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, United States Coast Guard, University of Washington, King County, and Aquarium scientists.

2014 Annual Volunteer Awards Ceremony

On Nov. 14th we hosted the annual Awards Ceremony to celebrate our OCDC volunteers along with volunteer friends/partners at Feiro Marine Life Center. Olympic National Park Coastal Interpretive Ranger Megan Juran presented on her 2014 field season based at Rialto Beach to an audience of nearly 30 attendees. We congratulated the following volunteers for their exceptional contributions to Olympic Coast Discovery Center this past season:



- Jim Jewell was awarded Top Volunteer for 2014 with almost 200 hours of service in his 11th season with OCDC!

- Carol Turner earned Top New Volunteer as a docent for 137 hours in her first year. Additionally, she used her professional writing skills to submit articles on marine issues and the sanctuary to local newspapers and continues to do so during the off-season.

Honorable Mentions were awarded to four additional volunteers who each contributed more than 100 hours of service in 2014.

- Sue Griffith contributed 122 hours in her 4th season and is a steady and energetic presence in the OCDC. She works hard to reel in each person who passes by and has the best success getting volunteers to sign the guest book.
- Bruce and Gerri Ferguson are a dynamic duo who bring humor and cheer to OCDC, contributing 131 and 104 hours each, respectively. Bruce was in his 8th season and Gerri reached a landmark of 5 seasons, commemorated with a 5 year ONMS volunteer pin.
- Pat Nachreiner returned for her 2nd season after taking a year off with her husband to explore most of North America in their RV. Pat served 119 hours and was a dedicated volunteer with education programs at Feiro Marine Life Center as well.

What's even more impressive is that several of our volunteers also volunteer for Feiro Marine Life Center and/or other community projects/organizations!



Other volunteers in attendance were Sarah de Leiris (also Feiro MLC volunteer), Elizabeth Clark, Leslee Crate, Cam Dhooge, and Tatiana Pednekar.

Thanks to all who were able to attend and **thank you all for a fantastic 2014!**

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Creature Feature

Migratory whales, our gentle giants

Fall marks the season when our migratory baleen whales travel southbound from Alaska to Baja California, Mexico and can be seen from shore or boat in our waters. Gray whales (*Eschrichtius robustus*) and Humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) make some of the longest annual migrations of any animal, traveling 10,000-14,000 miles roundtrip between their summer feeding grounds to their warmer winter calving waters.



Gray whales used to be found throughout the Northern Hemisphere but went extinct several centuries ago in the Atlantic Ocean. Gray whales are characterized by eponymous patches on their skin, spotted with white; they are also known for hosting barnacles. They lack a dorsal fin and tend to prefer shallow coastal waters where they feed on tiny crustaceans called amphipods after scooping through the water column or seafloor sediments and filtering through their 260-360 coarse baleen plates.

Humpback whales are found in all global waters, from polar seas to the tropics. They are named for their distinctive body shape with a knobby head and boast unusually

long pectoral fins. Individual humpback tail fluke patterns are unique like human fingerprints, making it possible to identify and recognize these whales. Humpback whales are also famous for their underwater “singing”. While both male and females vocalize, male humpbacks create complex songs that can last up to 20 minutes! Males on the same breeding ground will produce the same song. Sounds are also made during feeding to startle their prey.

Humpbacks feed on small fish and planktonic animals by charging through schools and trapping them in their system of 540-800 baleen plates. At times they form “bubble nets” by blowing air bubbles forcing their prey to the surface; they then lunge at them with dislodged jaws to inhale their food.

Both baleen whale species spy-hop and breach, while humpbacks also possess the ability to tail-slap and surface roll in their acrobatic repertoire. They both have similar gestation periods lasting 12-13 months with females calving at 2-3 year intervals. Grays and humpbacks are relatively slow swimmers (averaging 4-8 km/hr and 7-9 km/hr respectively) but can make bursts up to 18 km/hr and can dive for as long as 20 minutes. Whales are some of the most awe-inspiring animals on the planet and we are fortunate to have these gentle giants in our waters!

