

PUFFIN, MURRE CHICKS CAPTURE HEARTS AT AQUARIUM

NEWPORT — Four pint-sized puffballs are shaking things up in the Oregon Coast Aquarium's Seabird Aviary.

The new arrivals, a common murre nicknamed Alice and tufted puffins nicknamed "Stanley," "Stewart" and "Stella," hatched between July 21 and Aug. 1.

"They just fill the palm of your hand right now, no bigger than a lemon, and most of that is feathers," said aviculturist Heather Olson.

The baby birds' diminutive size is temporary, and they are already packing on grams by the day.

Each set of proud parents spend their time snuggling with their young chick to keep it warm and deliver it tiny whole fish to eat.

Aquarium staff perform daily visual examinations of each chick and weigh them to ensure they are growing at a healthy rate. No word on the new additions' genders yet; that requires a blood test and the little birds need to grow a



COURTESY PHOTO

A puffin chick receives a check-up by Newport Aquarium aviculturists.

bit more first.

Common murre nest in the open on top of rocks, just like penguins, their famous doppel-gangers from the southern hemisphere.

Parents take turns tucking the tiny 2 1/2-ounce chick under their wings to keep it warm and shielded from curious members of the aquarium's flock.

Keen-eyed visitors may spot one of these baby birds nestled up against their parents' bellies in the Seabird Aviary exhibit.

The young tufted puffins will stay nestled in their burrows, which mimic the deep burrows puffins use in the wild, for the next six to eight weeks.

The aquarium's aviculturists check on chicks during this time by lifting covers that are fitted above the end of

each burrow.

When each puffin chick's parents feel their offspring is ready, they will leave the little bird to its own devices, encouraging it to explore life outside their burrow.

Baby birds are exciting arrivals at the aquarium. Aviculturists carefully assess the existing population, the genetic compatibility of each breeding pair and requests for birds from other facilities accredited by Association of Zoos and Aquariums.

If there is no place for a chick from a certain breeding pair, the keepers will replace the couples' egg with a similar looking plaster-filled dummy egg. This allows the birds to practice natural breeding behaviors without overpopulating the aviary.

The Oregon Coast Aquarium is open every day through the summer from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

For more information and to buy tickets, visit www.aquarium.org or call 541-867-3474.

Campfires, open flames prohibited in parks GEM WALKERS ANNOUNCE SEPTEMBER JAUNTS

Due to extreme fire danger conditions, the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) has prohibited all campfires in Oregon State Parks and other properties owned and managed by the department.

The ban includes but is not limited to designated fire pits, tiki torches and candles. The

ban also extends to fires on ocean beaches.

"Our goal is to avoid any accidental fires on OPRD property that would further tax limited firefighting resources," said MG Devereux, OPRD deputy director. "Most communities have sent local firefighters and equipment to help with wildfires throughout the state.

An unintentional fire in a state park would add an unnecessary burden to firefighting efforts."

The state park ban doesn't apply to propane stoves and/or charcoal briquettes for cooking, but there may be local fire restrictions that do limit propane stoves and briquettes.

Visitors planning a trip should check with park staff for

the most current information, call the state park information line at 1-800-551-6949 or visit www.oregonstateparks.org.

This ban will remain in effect for at least one week and will be re-evaluated based on fire status, weather and guidance from state and local fire officials.

On Tuesday, Sept. 1, the Coastal Gem Walkers will be walking the 10K Amanda Statue route in Yachats. This trail is rated 1b for the 5K option with some uneven footing; the 10K is rated 2C for uneven footing and some steep inclines. Walkers will meet at the Overleaf Lodge and 9 a.m. to register. This route is not appropriate for wheelchairs or strollers.

Leashed pets are welcome on these walks. Use a six-foot

leash and carry water and clean up materials for your pet.

On Wednesday, Sept. 2, the Gems' monthly club meeting will be held at the picnic shelter behind the Commons in Yachats. This will be a potluck picnic. There will have a leg-stretcher walk at 4 p.m., followed by the picnic at 5 p.m. and club meeting at 6 p.m.

For more information or directions, call Jean White in Florence at 541-997-8577.

ODOT, OSP begin national DUI campaign

SALEM — Over the next two weeks, the Oregon Department of Transportation, Oregon State Police and law enforcement agencies around the state will join the nationwide effort to keep impaired drivers off the roads as the summer travel season winds down.

The "Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over" campaign concludes after the Labor Day weekend. Last year in Oregon, five people died over the holiday and one of those fatalities resulted from an alcohol-involved crash.

The campaign uses funds from ODOT's Transportation Safety Division to pay for overtime enforcement, with a goal of keeping those driving, riding or walking on the transportation system safe.

Like the rest of the country, Oregon is experiencing a spike in traffic fatalities with a 33 percent increase so far in 2015. Preliminary numbers show that as of Aug. 14, 261 traffic deaths were reported statewide

compared with 197 over the same period in 2014.

Pedestrian fatalities have also increased: 47 so far this year compared to 25 last year.

There are a variety of reasons for the increase, but preventing impaired drivers, riders and pedestrians from taking to the transportation system could help keep that number from growing.

Recent reports have noted that traffic counts are also up across the country, and Oregon is no different. August is also a busy time for vacation travel, with people out and about not only in cars but on motorcycles, on bicycles and on foot.

No matter which mode, it is vital that people stay alert and focused on safety. ODOT's safety message this summer has been focused on taking personal responsibility and getting 'back to the basics' to protect yourself and your loved ones.

ODOT and OSP, along with local and county law enforcement and safety advocates

across the state, offer the following safety reminders for holiday travel:

- Know before you go. Visit TripCheck.com or call 511 for the latest in road conditions and incidents.

- Follow the rules of the road. Watch out for bicyclists, pedestrians and motorcyclists — and bicyclists, pedestrians and motorcyclists should watch out for drivers who don't 'see' you. Wear reflective clothing, signal your intentions, help make yourself be seen.

- Drive sober. Plan ahead so if you are drinking or become impaired, you will have plans in place for alternate transportation.

- Be watchful for emergency vehicles. If you can do so safely, move over when you are approaching any type of emergency vehicle, tow truck or roadside assistance vehicle stopped on the roadside with emergency lights activated.

- Get rested before you are tested. Fatigued drivers are

more frequent during holiday weekends because of increased travel and activity. Allow plenty of time to reach your destination.

- Be alert for work zones. In work zones, even when workers are not present, all speed limits still apply and fines double. Inactive work zones still have equipment, detours, and incomplete changes in the roadway so drivers need to slow down and be alert.

- Buckle up every trip, every time. Be sure to use child safety seats correctly.

- Turn off your mobile phone and focus on the task at hand. Whether you are walking, riding or driving, you should be alert and you should avoid distractions — they can be deadly.

Everyone is urged to play a role in keeping our roadways safe by immediately reporting aggressive, dangerous, and intoxicated drivers to the Oregon State Police at 1-800-243-7865 or call 9-1-1.



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Jim Hoberg is a Florence native, and has been working in Real Estate since 1989. He has served as a Principal Broker for 20 years, and is the "founding father" of West Coast Real Estate Services, Inc. He has obtained several designations that require continuing education, which keeps him on the cutting edge of the industry and he is constantly looking for ways to expand his areas of expertise. Jim enjoys helping people find solutions to their real estate needs and discovering why Florence is such a great place to live.

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County seeks public input on parks plan

Lane County invites public comment on its draft of the 20-year Parks Master Plan, which will guide the management of county parks from 2016 to 2036. This is the first comprehensive update to the original 1980 master plan.

The draft plan identifies strategic investments in parks and open space throughout Lane County that is consistent with identified recreation needs and public input.

The drafted master plan is available online at www.bit.ly/1h3GVtW. Copies of the draft master plan are also available at the Siuslaw Public Library, 1460 Ninth St. in Florence.

There are five open house meetings scheduled this fall.

The first will be Thursday, Sept. 10, in the Council Chambers at Florence City Hall, 250 Highway 101, from 6 to 8 p.m.

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