

Puffins: Students studied the birds prior to the trip

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Harter, 9; Ocean Jones, 9; Taylor Kahrs, 6; Sean Kerwin, 8; Adelia Lippold, 6; and Cosmo Simmons, 11 — through a series of educational activities designed to teach them all about the bird and marine life at the rock.

First came the HRAP bird scopes. One by one the students took turns viewing the puffin nests tucked into the rock through scopes and binoculars, priming themselves for the next activity: a game of tag meant to teach the students the perils of nesting season.

The students paired up into “puffin parents,” and while one “parent” stayed home at the “nest,” the other “flew” out over the “ocean” to grab as many “fish” (i.e., sticks ... get it?) as possible.

But there are dangers out on the open ocean, including bald eagles who try to swoop down and nab puffin parents before they returns to the nest with the fish in their beaks. Puffins, which have barbs on their tongue, can hold up to 30 fish in their mouth at any



The first of the tufted puffins began arriving on Haystack Rock in Cannon Beach in April. See more photos at www.dailyastorian.com

one time, HRAP coordinator Samantha Ferber said.

The only eagle in sight, though, was a hand-puppet worn by Fire Mountain teacher Mike McGlenn, who tagged the puffins as they squawked and scrambled back to their nests. Once tagged, the puffins had to drop their fish, and the one who ended up with the most

fish won (congratulations, Sean Kerwin!).

Before Earth Day, Keyser had visited Fire Mountain to teach the kids about puffins and, their local anthem, the “Welcome Back Tufted Puffins” song, which is crooned to “The Muffin Man” melody (“Have you seen the puffins dive, the puffins dive, the puffins dive?”).

When the time came for Keyser and the Fire Mountainers to welcome the puffins back for real, Adelia Lippold’s mother, Sarah Lippold, a Fire Mountain volunteer, accompanied them on the tenor recorder.

Finally, it was time for the children to venture into the rocky intertidal life around the



Photos by ERICK BENDEL — EO Media Group
Adelia Lippold, 6, uses a Haystack Rock Awareness Program’s bird scope to spy on the recently returned tufted puffin population. Enjoying the view beside Lippold is her Fire Mountain classmate Taylor Kahrs, 6, and, to his right, Melissa Keyser, the HRAP education coordinator.



The students and staff of Fire Mountain School take turns viewing tufted puffins through bird scopes April 22. The Welcome Back Tufted Puffins event is hosted annually by the Haystack Rock Awareness Program.

base of Haystack Rock, where sea snails and even more elusive sea slugs awaited them.

And, high above them all, the

tufted puffins of the rock made themselves comfortable in their lofty — hopefully predator-free — perch.



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