

# Murres: Many have been rehabilitated, released

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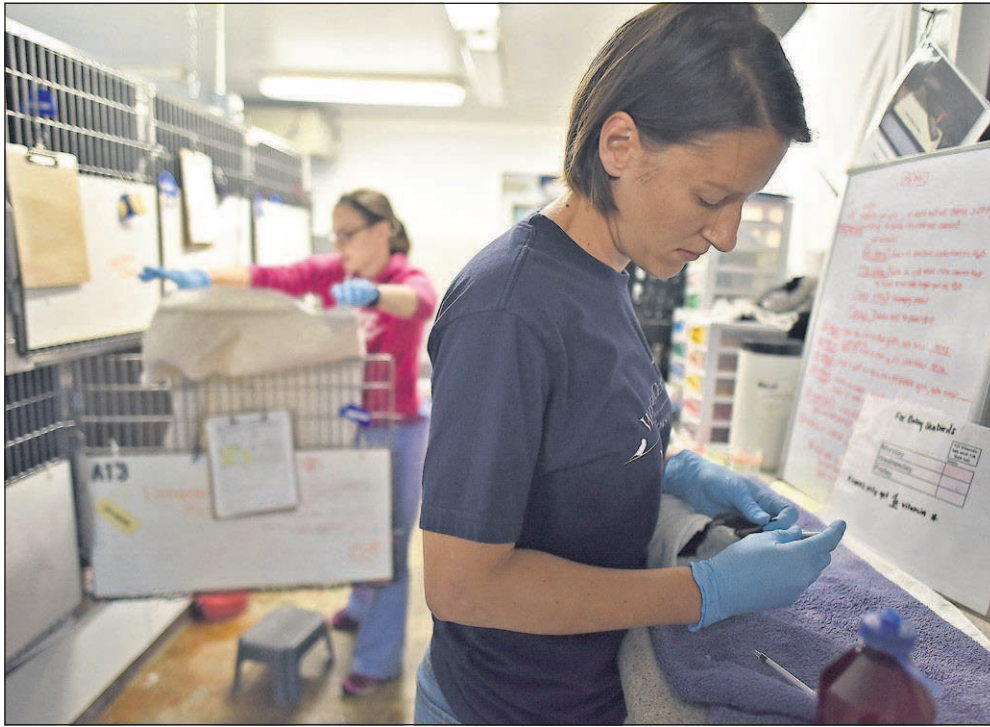
tugs on the heartstrings, having more stranded baby birds actually points to the area returning to a more typical year.

"I've worked through many die-offs, and I wouldn't consider it that yet, even though we are very busy," Saranpaa said. "This is considered a more normal, annual stranding event."

Lots of factors can contribute to a juvenile seabird die-off. Mortality can sometimes be high if food conditions are poor or if the presence of toxins is high. But those factors have not been thoroughly studied, thus no specific information has indicated that either is the case in Oregon, Corbett said.

"Observations of murres feeding chicks at Yaquina Head through early August suggested that while food conditions were not great this year, they weren't catastrophic, either," she said.

High numbers in Cannon Beach could be attributed to the fact Haystack Rock has



Melisa Colvin, right, helps out as a volunteer at the center.

a large colony close to the shore, making the problem more visible to the average beachgoer than other offshore colonies, Keyser said.

Seeing juvenile birds wash

ashore is normal starting in late summer, when the fledgling common murre jumps from nests to learn how to forage for fish. Through the process, some birds will always

Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

After a few weeks of intense care and feeding, many have already been rehabilitated and released, she said.

But the difference could be noticeable locally, because the number of stranded chicks has been unusually low for the past two years, Saranpaa said. On average, the wildlife center can expect about 200 common murre chicks from across the coast from late summer to early spring. In the past two years, the center has only seen between 80 to 90 birds.

The pattern is reflected in an ongoing study by Oregon State University, which has been monitoring nest success at Yaquina Head, that found very few chicks fledged in this time. This year, fledgling production was much higher, which means there were many more chicks out on the water to potentially run into problems and become stranded on the beach, Corbett said.

The study suggests that more juvenile common murres on the beach could

signal a healthier colony that produces more fledglings. In poorer years, fewer chicks would even reach fledging stage, and adults would likely be stressed and thinner, meaning surveyors could see relatively more adults washing ashore, according to a report from the Coastal Observation and Seabird Survey Team.

Despite what appears to be business as usual, Saranpaa and his team always are watching for another die-off. In 2014 and 2015, the wildlife center saw an influx of about 2,000 birds as part of a massive die-off on the West Coast related to "the Blob," a large mass of relatively warm water in the Pacific Ocean. Other regions, like Northern California, have already seen big die-offs this summer attributed to pollution and depleted fish stocks.

"Common murres, there are so many of them ... So you're going to have a die-off of some extent," Saranpaa said. "However, because we've had die-offs in the past, we are keeping a close eye."

# Barnett: 'How do you say sorry in this situation?'

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"How do I even begin to start?" said Diane Miles, his wife of 20 years.

She recalled the haunting day after the crash when police knocked on her front door to break the news.

"Robert always came back to say, 'I love you,' but now I'm never going to hear those words again," Miles said. "How am I going to do this without him? Who am I without him?"

Miles then addressed Barnett. She talked about how her husband enjoyed a good time, especially when listening to music. He also liked metal detecting, fishing, crabbing and clamming.

"Your decision that night to drive drunk took someone who was so loving and so funny," Miles said. "His laughter would make you tear up, his stories a little long-worded, but he told them in such a way that you would get into the story."

Robert Miles called his wife shortly before he was killed, but she didn't answer. He used to call every day, and she still checks her phone — just in case.

"Now, because of you, I'm left with such guilt of not answering the phone," Miles said. "What if I just answered it? Would he still be here? Why didn't I just go pick him up? All he wanted was to be with me. Your decision that night made me feel so guilty."

Jim Miles, Robert Miles' brother, asked Barnett to seek treatment for alcohol abuse. Travis Gosser, his nephew, wrote a statement describing Robert Miles as his best friend and confidant. Donna Gosser, his sister, talked about watching him walk away after a fight soon before he died.

"Driving by that bus stop, driving by any bus stop, is a memory that I'll never get out of my head," Donna Gosser said.

Diane Miles' last image of her husband is his lifeless body on a cold table, with his face bruised and scraped and shards of glass in his hair. He hated being cold, she said.

Now, Miles and her three children have been forever changed and are still living a nightmare, she said. She keeps an urn full of her husband's ashes beside her bed.

"It's not fair. Why didn't you just stop? You had the chance to stop so many times," Miles said to Barnett. "So many lives changed because of your decision. Even your family has to live with the shame and guilt knowing that you killed someone's husband and father, sibling

and friend.

"The only difference is that they'll be able to see you and hear you and touch you, unlike my family, who will never get that chance anymore."

Buzzard talked a bit about Mohamed, who was unable to attend the court hearing. She visited him nine months after the crash, the first day he was able to walk with a walker instead of a wheelchair. An immigrant to America who had fled persecution, Mohamed established a stable life as an apartment cleaner. It is unclear whether Mohamed will be able to continue the work or how he will be able to support himself.

"Frankly, he's a pretty generous man, and he was pretty forgiving," Buzzard said.

Buzzard described Officer Parkman, who took time off work for her injuries, as "shaken."

"This is a very, obviously, difficult day for everyone in this courtroom, and the real tragedy is that it absolutely, 100 percent could have been avoided," Buzzard said. "It should be a reminder not just to Ms. Barnett, who I think is paying a pretty big price for this, but for everybody who thinks that drinking and driving in a little town is, like, not a big deal."

Barnett's sister, Cassi, and her father, Steve, also spoke Thursday.

Corrissa Barnett's life changed more than a decade ago

more dependent," Cassi Barnett said.

Barnett's sister added that a head injury sustained in the altercation with Fulmer likely impaired her judgment before the crash.

Steve Barnett is a former lieutenant with the Seaside Police Department who unsuccessfully ran for county sheriff in 2012 and retired in 2016. He filed a federal lawsuit against District Attorney Josh Marquis, claiming his free speech and due process rights were violated when Marquis refused to use Barnett as a witness in prosecutions because of concerns about the officer's credibility. A federal appeals court ruled in 2016 that

ing Miles' family, though Buzzard at one point asked Judge Cindee Matyas to have him face the judge.

He said his daughter has never been a "problem child," save one drunken-driving arrest in 2014, when she recorded a blood alcohol content of 0.31 percent. The misdemeanor charge was dismissed after Barnett completed a DUI diversion program.

The veteran police officer noted that his work schedule may have left her feeling neglected as a child, possibly leading to substance abuse. He said Clatsop County encourages alcohol abuse more than most counties in the state, cit-

been taken by any of the court," Steve Barnett said.

He closed by turning to Buzzard, claiming his daughter had a drunken-driving incident months before the fatal crash that did not lead to an arrest. "One thing that is infuriating me as member of law enforcement — retired — and you as a member of law enforcement is that somebody has failed to do their job and that we would not even be here today if the Seaside Police Department would've taken action against her for her DUII about six months before this fatal crash," he claimed. "And if they would have done that, instead of being a lazy, irresponsible apathetic individual, we would not be here."

**'I TOOK A LIFE. I SHATTERED IT IN THE NIGHT. I BLEW OUT HIS CANDLE, AND I TOOK AWAY YOUR LIGHT. I'M ALSO SORRY FOR THE MESS I'VE MADE. IF I COULD TRADE MY LIFE, I WOULD MAKE THE TRADE.'**

Corrissa Barnett | she read aloud this poem she had written in jail

after she fell and hit her head, causing chronic pain, her family said. She became addicted to drugs prescribed for the pain, went to a rehabilitation facility and later developed an alcohol addiction in its place, her sister said.

"With the help of her prescribing doctor, here lies the beginning of Corrie's transformation from a strong, independent, organized mother, daughter, sister, auntie, niece and cousin, to a damaged, dependent, shattered, tiny shell of a human struggling each day with pain while growing more and

Marquis had absolute immunity from the lawsuit.

"And also, our family holds high regard and respect for the judicial system, and we do hope that Corrie's sentencing is, she is being sentenced as an individual — and not being held accountable for the reputation and relationship her father ... and the district attorney's office have had in the past," Cassi Barnett said.

Steve Barnett, who did not originally plan to speak in court, offered an unscripted statement that went on for more than 10 minutes. Sitting next to prosecutors, he spent much of it fac-

ing statements made by Ron Brown, Marquis' chief deputy, who will become district attorney in January.

"We drag our feet in our county," Steve Barnett said.

He then called the length of the court case "borderline cruelty" since his daughter's first lawyer — court-appointed attorney Temojai Inhofe — quit the case.

"I don't condone a thing that (my daughter) has done in reference to this incident. I don't condone any of the actions taken by the officers. I don't condone any of the actions taken that have

**'I took a life'**

After saying he loved her and that she is salvageable, Steve Barnett stepped down and Corrissa Barnett spoke. In her apologies to Miles and Mohamed, she read two poems she had written in jail.

"This is the way I chose to say sorry, because how do you say sorry in this situation?" Barnett said before reading.

"I took a life. I shattered it in the night. I blew out his candle, and I took away your light," read part of the poem to Miles' family. "I'm also sorry for the mess I've made. If I could trade my life, I would make the trade."

Before issuing the prison sentence, Matyas said trying to correlate the length with the cost of a death is "ridiculous."

"I don't have a lot to add to what's been said," the judge said. "This is incredibly sad on every level, and there's nothing that the court can do to even touch that sadness."

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