

COUNTING ON THE SONG OF THE SEABIRDS



Photo by Amelia O'Connor

Volunteer citizen scientists

Volunteers key to conserving coastal bird populations

By **MARGARET MINNICK**
FOR COAST WEEKEND

Oregon's rocky shores aren't just stunning scenery and wonderful recreation areas. They are also important nesting areas for over 1 million seabirds, including cormorants, pelicans, black oystercatchers, tufted puffins and common murre. Many North Coast residents and visitors enjoy the sight of these seabirds, but fewer are aware that they can participate in science projects to help keep track of the birds' populations.

"Citizen science" or "community science" projects use volunteers, often without formal scientific education or training, to gather data needed for experiments conducted by scientists. These projects are also a fun way for participants to learn something new and contribute to the survival of our local seabirds while spending time outdoors.

"Community scientists have played a big role on the coast in recent years in helping us inform management efforts and conservation of vulnerable bird species and their habitats," says Joe Liebezeit, staff scientist and avian conservation manager with Audubon Society of Portland, which runs community science projects on the North Coast.

Coastal bird monitoring has been managed by Coastal Biologist and Volunteer Coordinator Amelia O'Connor for the past five summer seasons.

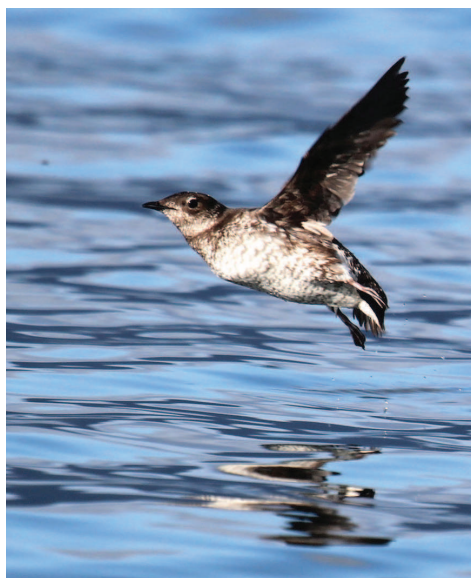


Photo by Robin Corcoran

Marbled murrelet



Photo by Molly Sultany

Black oystercatcher



Photo by Amelia O'Connor

Pelagic cormorants and chick



Photo by Mick Thompson

Brown pelican