

SCRATCHPAD

Low tide at Haystack Rock

By **LISSA BREWER**
COAST WEEKEND EDITOR

One afternoon in Cannon Beach, I took a long walk as I waited on the negative tide. I wandered through stairways and neighborhood streets and stopped for a coffee and açai bowl in Tolovana Park. When I found myself again at Haystack Rock, it was in the tide pools, surrounded in the late afternoon by bright green sea anemones, walls of blue mussels and colorful, clinging starfish.

Between boulders and sandbars on the sides of the rock lie beautiful ponds, reflecting sunlight and teeming with life. It's not difficult to see why this area is both a

National Wildlife Refuge and one of seven Marine Gardens along the Oregon Coast. These are beautiful places to observe and learn about life in the intertidal zone, but they also require special care from visitors.

The rocks, covered in barnacles and soft anemones, are best observed before taking a step. Try not to disturb the delicate creatures that live on them. Climbing on Haystack Rock itself isn't allowed for good reason. A wildlife refuge protected to an altitude of 500 feet, many nesting seabirds call the rock home, and it's a hazardous place for falling debris. Disturbing or collecting sea life also isn't allowed within 300 yards, because, well, don't harass the locals.

More importantly, these are delicate ecosystems, and to preserve them, we have

a responsibility as visitors to take care of them. To help, the Haystack Rock Awareness Program offers interpretive programs throughout the year at the base of Haystack Rock. The program's guides also help visitors identify the shellfish, shorebirds and more that call the rock home. The program also offers Beach Wheelchairs, available for checkout at Bahama Boards on Hemlock Street.

While exploring, always observe safety



Sea anemones are a common sight in Oregon Coast tide pools.

tips. Stay aware of rip currents, drifting logs and incoming tides. I decided to visit an hour before low tide, an optimal time to avoid incoming waves.

Exploring the tide pools is one of my favorite pastimes on the Oregon Coast and a great way to connect with the sea.

our coast weekend

ON THE COVER

"Finally," Oscar de'Masi, 18 x 24 Oil on Canvas Board, Oscar de'Masi Art Studio/Gallery



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