



LEFT: Mussels sit on rocks in the Haystack Rock tide pools.

BELOW: Oystercatchers are among the birds often spotted in the spring at Haystack Rock.

Photos by
Carolyn Hoard

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eagles and peregrine falcons also nest in nearby trees. One may see them swoop above the giant rock, stirring the other seabirds into flight.

Binoculars are a helpful tool for birdwatchers. Thankfully, volunteers and staff with the Haystack Rock Awareness Program supply binoculars and viewing scopes for the public. The program's dedicated staff monitor the rock at low tide daily between February and October to answer questions, share their knowledge and encourage protection of the beautiful and fragile intertidal areas of Haystack Rock. Program staff members love to interact with the public and enjoy meeting visitors from all over the globe who come to explore the 235 foot sea stack.

But the program's conservation efforts require diligence and community education. "Everything at Haystack Rock below high tide line is a state protected marine garden and everything above high tide line is protected by the Oregon Islands National Wildlife Refuge system," said Angela Whitlock, a staff member of the Haystack Rock Awareness Program. "All day, every day

we have to remind folks not to walk on the rocks themselves because that's where the creatures live. Ninety nine percent of the time people just don't know they are walking on living creatures and are very interested to learn and cooperate," Whitlock added. As for those who ignore the educators, Cannon Beach Police are supportive of the program's efforts and are willing to step in when necessary.

In addition to the coast's famous puffins, the intertidal ecosystems of Cannon Beach are home to an incredible variety of sea life, including barnacles, snails, sea anemones, limpets, sea stars, mussels and nudibranchs, commonly known as sea slugs. "Children especially love discovering the hermit crabs hiding in shells," Whitlock said.

Head out to Cannon Beach over the course of the next few weeks to spot puffins along with other creatures. Bring a pair of binoculars or look for the Haystack Rock Awareness Program's bright red truck and volunteer staff in red jackets. These volunteers are happy to share information about the amazing birds and sea life in the marine gardens, including a tufted puffin sighting or two, sitting on a calm afternoon at low tide with bright plumage on the grassy ledges of Haystack Rock.

