

Snowy plover nesting season has begun on beaches

Springtime sun and warmer March temperatures can bring visitors in droves to Oregon's inviting shoreline.

For the western snowy plover, March means nesting. This tiny shorebird, protected under state law and under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), usually begins nesting along west coast beaches in mid-March.

The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department

(OPRD) is responsible for managing recreation on Oregon's ocean shore, overseeing snowy plover management areas and the recreation restrictions that come with the legal agreement between OPRD and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

Plovers nest in dry open sand, in tiny, shallow scrapes that are very well camouflaged.

Not only are nests easy to miss (or step on), but the bird will

abandon its eggs if repeatedly disturbed by activities it considers a threat. OPRD manages two kinds of beach areas to help plovers survive: sites where they actively nest, and sites where they don't, but where the habitat has been designated as conducive.

Based on this, recreation restrictions vary. Riding bicycles or driving any kind of vehicle is not allowed during nesting season on any stretch of

beach managed for plovers.

Where plovers actively nest, the dry sand around the nesting area is signed to keep people from accidentally crushing the well-camouflaged eggs.

Recreation is limited to the wet sand portion of the beach. Kites and dogs (leashed or unleashed) are not allowed anywhere in active nesting areas until the end of the nesting season, Sept. 15.

Most plover breeding areas

in Oregon range from Florence south to Bandon. In recent years, though, a smattering of nests have popped up at some north coast beaches, a sign that holds promise for Oregon's and Washington's plover population overall.

The two-mile Nehalem Spit, just south of the entrance to Nehalem Bay State Park, will restrict vehicles, dogs and kites from March 15 through Sept. 15.

The northern 3 miles of beach in the park are open to kites, dogs, bikes, horses and all other recreation.

Recently, OPRD spokesperson Chris Havel thanked visitors for their understanding and support of the bird.

"Recreation management is a balancing act," said Havel. "The vast majority of visitors want to protect wildlife and understand that plovers need our help to survive."

Volunteers needed for annual SOLVE Spring Beach Cleanup

On Saturday, March 26, SOLVE welcomes volunteers of all ages to join together in clearing the entire Oregon coast of litter and marine debris.

Presented by AAA Oregon,

the 31st annual SOLVE Spring Oregon Beach Cleanup will take place from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Register at one of 45 beach cleanup locations from Astoria to Brookings at solveoregon.org or by calling 503-844-9571 x332.

Last year, more than 5,100 Spring Oregon Beach Cleanup volunteers removed nearly 68,000 pounds of debris from the coast, contributing to the 3.3 million pounds that have been picked up since the first fall cleanup in 1984.

Started by local citizens Judie Hansen and Eleanor Dye, this coastwide volunteer cleanup model was the first in the nation, inspiring similar cleanups across the world. Locally, the cleanup has grown

into an iconic Oregon tradition, uniting multiple generations of volunteers and keeping our beaches healthy for humans and wildlife alike.

"Oregon's public beaches are unique to our state, providing the basis for many of the beloved cultural and recreational activities that contribute to our identity as Oregonians," said Tim Morgan, president and CEO of AAA Oregon. "The coast is shared by all of us, and the Spring Oregon Beach Cleanup gives citizens the opportunity to join together to keep it clean and healthy."

From the 1,000-pound fishing net to the tiniest piece of plastic in the sand, litter and marine debris on Oregon's coast is an issue that affects

everyone, threatening the health of the environment and impacting the economy.

Every year, fish, shorebirds and other wildlife ingest and become entangled in discarded debris. It's a problem that is preventable. Everyone has a role they can play in helping to reduce the impact of wayward trash.

"The chance to walk in a quiet place and make it cleaner, safer and more pristine is priceless," said John Andersen, SOLVE Beach Captain in Netarts. "We have a duty to be stewards for all creatures that exist now or will exist in the future, and these annual cleanups are a big part of the solution."

Volunteers at this year's

event are encouraged to bring old colanders or kitty litter scoops to sift the tide lines for tiny plastic pieces, harmful to local wildlife. Bags and gloves are provided, but bringing reusable gloves and buckets is encouraged to reduce the amount of plastic waste.

Safety is the top priority, and volunteers are urged to keep an eye out for sneaker waves, stay off logs near the water, steer clear of sea lions, look out for signs and ropes limiting beach access around snowy plover nesting areas, and refrain from touching hazardous items like oil drums.

The Spring Oregon Beach Cleanup is presented by AAA Oregon. Additional sponsors include major sponsors Fred

Meyer and The Standard; coordinating sponsors Local Coast Haulers and the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department; media sponsors K103fm and KOIN 6.

SOLVE is a statewide nonprofit organization that brings people together to improve the environment and build a legacy of stewardship.

Over four decades, the organization has grown from a small, grassroots group to a national model for volunteer environmental action.

Today, SOLVE mobilizes and trains tens of thousands of volunteers across Oregon to cleanup beaches and rivers and restore watersheds.

For more information, visit solveoregon.org.



Carissa Oliver

Siuslaw H.S. Vikings Track & Field

The junior thrower matched her personal best throw of 93'6" winning the Javelin at last week's Siuslaw Ice Breaker meet. She also won the discus with a throw of 120'3" and finished second in the shot put with a throw of 33'7".

Honorable Mention Annmarie Precht

Honorable mention is given to junior Annmarie Precht who won the 200 meters in 28.21seconds and the long jump at 15'2.5". Precht also ran a leg in each of the winning relay teams.

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Fishing from 1B

pick up quickly as spring nears and fish move to the shallows for spawning. There are numerous lakes in the Florence area that can provide good opportunity and have both boat and bank access.

SUSLAW RIVER: Steelhead

The winter steelhead fishery is fair for both the Siuslaw and Lake Creek systems. River conditions will vary through the week as more rain is predicted. Casting lures, bobber fishing or pulling plugs are good options.

ALSEA RIVER: Steelhead

Winter steelhead fishing is slow to fair. Forecasted rain this week should move in some new fish and improve the bite. During lower clear flows, it's better to focus efforts in the mid to lower river sections. Casting spinners / spoons, or floating bait or a jig are good options.

SALMON RIVER: Steelhead

Winter steelhead fishing is

fair and fish can be found throughout the mainstem as river conditions allow. Casting lures, bouncing the bottom or drifting jigs or bait under a bobber are good techniques to consider.

SILETZ RIVER: Steelhead

Winter steelhead fishing fair for both bank and boat anglers. Forecasted rains this week should help to move in some new fish and spread out the run. Side drifting, bouncing bottom or bobber fishing can be productive.

WILSON RIVER: Steelhead

Steelhead angling should be good when conditions are favorable. Fish are spread out through the system. The river should be fishable by mid-week. Fish larger, brighter offerings slowly in areas where flows are softer while the water is high.

YAQUINA RIVER: Steelhead

The winter steelhead fishery is slow in the Big Elk. Casting lures or bobbers fishing are the best techniques for this river.

COOS COUNTY LAKES

AND PONDS: Trout

Empire Lakes is scheduled for stocking this week with legal size rainbow trout. Empire Lakes has already been stocked with legal size trout this month along with Johnson Mill Pond, Powers Pond, Bradley Lake, and Saunders Lakes.

The daily trout bag limit in these lakes is five trout per day with only one trout over 20 inches. Anglers are catching trout on spinners or by fishing Powerbait.

COOS RIVER BASIN:

Dungeness crab, steelhead, bay clams

Steelhead angling is open in the Coos Basin until April 30. Currently the water levels in the Coos Basin steelhead rivers are up and muddy. There are still a few steelhead around but most anglers have put away their gear for the season. Anglers are catching steelhead drift fishing corkies or eggs. Jigs fished under a bobber area also catching several steelhead. Anglers fishing the South Fork Coos River above Dellwood will need a permit from Weyerhaeuser, which they can pick up at the Dellwood office.

TENMILE BASIN: Trout, steelhead

Streams in the Tenmile Basin are now closed for trout fishing until May 22. Tenmile Lakes is open all year for trout but trout fishing has been slow.

Steelhead angling is open in the Tenmile Basin until April 30. Steelhead fishing has been slow in Tenmile Creek and Eel Creek.

The best fishing has been

near the mouth of Saunders Creek and Eel Creek. In the Tenmile Basin 1 additional hatchery steelhead may be retained per day for a total aggregate of 3 adult fish harvested daily.

UMPQUA RIVER, SOUTH: Steelhead

The South Umpqua is currently open to adipose fin-clipped steelhead harvest, and winter steelhead fishing will improve as water levels recede. There are still excellent hatchery steelhead harvest opportunities on the South Umpqua especially around Stanton Park in Canyonville.

WINCHESTER BAY: Bottomfish, perch

Fishing for bottomfish in the Triangle and South jetty has been successful.

PACIFIC OCEAN AND BEACHES: Bottomfish,

Dungeness crab, surf perch
Recreational harvest of crab is open along the entire Oregon Coast. It is still recommended you discard the crab viscera (guts/butter) before cooking.

A few anglers fishing the beaches near Coos Bay have been catching redbait surf perch. The ocean has been very rough lately so picking days with lower swells is key to catching fish. Sand shrimp or Berkley Gulp sand worms have been working the best for bait.

Recreational ocean salmon fishing from Cape Falcon to Humbug Mt. runs through April 30.

The season is open for all salmon except coho salmon. Anglers are allowed two salmon per day with a minimum size for Chinook at 24 inches or larger.

Fishing for bottom fish is open to fishing at all-depths. Fishing for black rockfish and lingcod continues to be very

good from Charleston to Bandon when the ocean is calm enough for anglers to get out on the water.

The marine fish daily bag limit is seven fish and a separate daily limit for lingcod (two).

Anglers can only keep 3 blue rockfish and 1 canary rockfish as part of their daily limit and there will be no harvest of China, quillback, or copper rockfish.

Retention of cabezon is prohibited through June 30.

• PACIFIC HALIBUT

Recommended dates for the sport halibut fishery are available on the ODFW sport halibut webpage. Dates will be finalized by the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission dates at its meeting on April 22.

• SURFPERCH

This is a diverse group of fish that provides a variety of angling opportunities. Spring is traditionally the time when marine perch species like Pile Perch and Walleye Perch are found in numbers in Oregon estuaries; Striped Seaperch are found year-round in rocky areas like jetties; and ocean surf is the place to find Redtail Surfperch and Silver Perch. For details on how to catch these guys, see Surfperch Fishing (pdf).

The bag limit for surfperch is generous at 15 per day.

However, a lot remains unknown about the status of surfperch populations off the Oregon Coast, so, as usual, take only what you will use.

• SHELLFISH

A couple of regulations were inadvertently left out of the 2016 Oregon Sport Fishing Regulation booklet.

1) The daily bag limit for shrimp (edible) is 20 lb. in the shell; may be taken by traps, pots or rings.

2) Each digger of razor clams (as with all clams) must have his or her own container, must dig his or her own clams, and may not possess more than one limit of clams while in the digging area (except under an Oregon Disabilities Hunting and Fishing Permit).

Current shellfish harvest closures in the ocean and bays due to elevated levels of domoic acid as of Mar. 7:

- Razor clams: Closed south of Tillamook Head
- Bay clams: Open coast-wide
- Crabs: Open coastwide
- Mussels: Open coastwide.

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