

# For everyone's safety, enjoy seal pups from afar

NEWPORT — It's that time of year when seal pups begin appearing on beaches along the Oregon coast. Beachgoers are asked to stifle their desire to assist these animals and, instead, give them space.

For those familiar with the exquisite cuteness of a newborn pup, the advice can be hard to swallow. But it's for the best, for people and wildlife alike.

Every spring, harbor seals give birth to pups on secluded beaches or reefs up and down the Pacific coast. The pups are born ready to swim but cannot tread water for long; they need ample time on shore to rest and

stay warm, and can remain there for days while their mothers forage at sea.

Concerned observers often report "abandoned" seal pups on the beach, not realizing that the mother might be foraging nearby, or swimming just offshore to maintain distance from curious humans and their dogs.

"This is a perennial spring-time issue for us all," said Jim Rice, Stranding Coordinator at the Oregon Marine Mammal Stranding Network. "It's helpful to remind people that it's normal for pups to come ashore to rest, that their mothers often leave them unattended while

they forage for food, and that interfering with this natural process is not only illegal but will likely be very detrimental to the pup."

In other words, humans approaching or otherwise trying to "help" these unattended pups may inadvertently cause them harm, as the presence of people may deter mother seals from coming ashore to nurse.

Seal pups are vulnerable and they may yank at our heartstrings, but we often jeopardize matters further by intervening in their affairs.

Rice also pointed out that, being wild animals, harbor

seals face myriad challenges to reaching maturity, and pup mortality is a natural check on robust seal populations in our region.

Studies estimate that as much as 50 percent of harbor seal pups born in a given year do not reach their first birthday.

Another reason to give seals a wide berth is the possible threat of disease, said Laura Todd, Field Supervisor for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service office in Newport.

"Seals and sea lions can harbor the bacteria responsible for leptospirosis, a disease that affects humans and dogs and

causes damage to the liver, kidneys and other organs."

The bacteria are present in the infected animal's fluids, including urine, and can easily pass into surrounding water or wet sand.

In general, the Oregon Coast Aquarium is committed to the rescue and rehabilitation of indigenous wildlife when they are deemed injured by human interference. But in the case of harbor seal pups, humans should not be approaching these animals in the first place, and the aquarium advises the public to obey marine mammal protection laws and let nature

take its course.

"Concerned observers itching to help can call the Oregon Marine Mammal Stranding Network Hotline at 541-270-6830 if a pup is spotted," said Jim Burke, Director of Animal Husbandry at the Oregon Coast Aquarium. "Their staff can post courtesy signs near the seal to inform other beachgoers of the situation."

Finding a harbor seal pup on the beach can be an enchanting and poignant experience. To keep these creatures safe, watch with binoculars or take pictures from afar — and let the seals take care of themselves.

## Spring cycling season is here; motorists asked to be aware

There are many bicycles on today's roads. More people are using bicycles as a means to commute for entertainment and for exercise. Some of the more common reasons include low cost to operate, reducing the consumption of fossil fuels, and exercise.

Motorists should remember these tips when sharing the road with a cyclist:

- A bicycle is considered by law to be a vehicle. When a cyclist has stopped and remains astride their bicycle at an intersection and/or for a traffic signal, they are to be treated as a vehicle waiting for their turn to proceed.

- Many children riding bicycles on the street may lack the

necessary training and skills for safe cycling. They may not be aware of all dangers.

- Be alert for small children on oversized bicycles. This may increase the likelihood for loss of control.

- When passing a cyclist, go around them like you would any other vehicle. Leave lots of room.

- When you are preparing to make a right turn, watch for cyclists who may pull up alongside your vehicle.

Remember to shoulder-check your blind spots.

- When you are about to make a right turn, do not pull up beside a cyclist and then turn directly in front of them and cut them off.

- When pulling away from the curb, always check for cyclists who may be trying to pass you.

- When parked at the curb, always check for cyclists before you open your vehicle door. It's the driver's responsibility not to open the vehicle door into traffic.

- Do not follow too close behind cyclists. They do not have brake lights to warn you when they are stopping.

- Cyclists are entitled to make left turns in the same manner as motorists. Since they are more exposed to traffic on left turns, they will need extra consideration, especially on multi-lane roads.

- Cyclists are required to ride

as close as practicable to the curb, however they may need to ride further out when they have to steer away from drainage grates, pot holes, debris, loose gravel or sand, wet or slippery surfaces, rutted or grooved pavement and even dogs. Be aware of the roadway conditions that may affect a cyclist.

- Do not sound your horn unnecessarily when you are overtaking a cyclist. It may startle them and cause them to lose control.

If you feel that you must use your horn, tap it quickly and lightly while you are still some distance away from the cyclist.

Cyclists should also remember that, when they are riding

their bicycles on streets and highways, they are considered by law to be a vehicle.

Therefore they are required to obey all the rules of the road, which apply to other (motorized) vehicles, plus those that apply only to bicycle operators.

Cyclists using the streets and highways should:

- Never ride against traffic. It is one of the leading causes of crashes, accounting for 15 percent to 20 percent of all crashes with cars.

- Keep both hands on the handlebars except when making a hand signal.

- Keep both feet on the pedals.

- Not carry more people at one time than the bicycle was

designed for.

- Not hold onto, attach themselves, or attach the bicycle to any other moving vehicle.

- Only ride side by side on the road with another cyclist when it does not impede other traffic.

If traffic doesn't have enough room to pass you safely, ride single file.

- Ensure the bicycle is equipped with at least one white light to the front and a red light and or red reflector mounted on the rear of the bicycle when riding between sunset and sunrise.

- Ensure the bicycle has effective brakes.

—Lincoln County Sheriff's Office

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## Siuslaw Watershed offering summer camps

The Siuslaw Watershed Council has announced it will again offer summer camps for students entering fourth grade through high school.

These camps are the perfect way to get the most out of summer.

Come be a part of exploring the Siuslaw watershed's many rivers, streams and lakes.

Camp dates are:

- Introductory Camp: June 27-30, for students entering

grades 4-6

- Intermediate Camp: July 11-14, for students entering grades 6-8

- Advanced Camp: July 18-22, for students entering grades 8-12 with previous watershed experience

During the camps, attendees travel throughout the Siuslaw watershed learning about plants, animals, water and land.

The camps focus on the restoration work that is being

done to keep the watershed healthy. Campers will get a chance to make a difference by doing hands-on restoration work, as well as canoeing, kayaking, snorkelling, hiking and more.

Introductory and intermediate camps are day camps.

Advanced camp includes one overnight camping trip.

Each camp is \$75 for the whole session and scholarships are available.

Registration packets are available at [www.siuslaw.org/camps](http://www.siuslaw.org/camps), call the SWC office at 541-268-3044 to request a packet or email [camp@siuslaw.org](mailto:camp@siuslaw.org).

Siuslaw Watershed Camps are made possible with funding from OWEB, WCLF, in partnership with Siuslaw School District, and through private donations.

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## Dry weather means wildfire season can heat up

May is Oregon Wildfire Awareness Month. Oregon experiences its heaviest wildfire activity during the summer, but fires occur all seasons of the year including spring.

During May, federal, state, tribal and local fire agencies will be spreading the word about wildfire prevention and the steps Oregonians can take to stop most fires before they start.

When it comes to preventing wildfires, there's a lot at stake: lives, personal property and the many values provided by

Oregon's forests and rangelands. During the 2015 wildfire season, about 1.6 million acres were consumed by wildfire across the Pacific Northwest, including 630,000 acres in Oregon.

Some 675 structures were lost — many of them permanent residences. And tragically, three firefighters were killed.

Key wildlife habitats, including those of the beleaguered greater sage grouse, went up in smoke. In Oregon alone, some 850 human-caused fires ravaged the landscape. And on just the forest and rangelands protected by the Oregon Department of Forestry, these "people" fires burned nearly 87,000 acres.

But wildfire prevention educators are not pointing fingers.

In the extreme weather conditions of last summer nearly any fire start, whether human or lightning caused, had potential to spread into a raging wildfire.

Wildfires that occur in the wildland-urban interface often are started by human activity and then spread to the forest.

Once underway a fire follows the fuel, whether it is trees or houses.

Fortunately, this grave threat to lives and property can be dramatically reduced.

"Simple prevention strategies will make the strongest impact on your home, family and community safety," said Kristin Babbs, president of the Keep Oregon Green Association.

Spring is the perfect time, she said, to remove dead, flam-

mable vegetation and limb up trees around the yard.

"When clearing brush and vegetation from around the home, property owners should also keep in mind the access needed by larger fire trucks," said State Fire Marshal Jim Walker. "Long driveways should be at least 12 feet wide, have 10 feet of vegetation clearance from the centerline to the edge of the driveway, and about 14 feet of overhead clearance.

"Having an adequate turnaround area is critical for firefighters."

To get an early start on Wildfire Awareness Month, join neighbors in reducing your community's wildfire risk by taking part in National Wildfire Community Preparedness Day on Saturday, May 7.

The National Fire Protection Association has teamed up with State Farm Insurance to encourage residents to commit a couple of hours, or the entire day, to help raise wildfire awareness and work together on projects that can help protect homes and entire communities from the threat of fire.

## Siuslaw News

### Garage Sale GUIDE

Fri 4/29-Sat 4/30  
8am-2pm  
4976 Lake Dr  
Multi-Family Sale. Furniture, Antiques, Garden Equipment.

Early Birds welcome!  
Sat 4/30  
8am - 3pm  
5050 Heceta Parkway  
Lots of cool items, little bit of everything!

Sale!  
Sat Only! 4/30  
8am - 4pm  
128 Park Village Loop  
Clothing, bedding, household items, books, collectibles, and more.

Sat 4/30-Sun 5/1  
9am  
5236 Hilltop Dr  
Multi Houses on Hill sale!  
4/30/2016

#### PLANT SALE

Florence Garden Club  
Saturday, May 7th,  
9 AM to 1 PM,  
Disabled American  
Veterans,  
1715 21st St.  
(across Hwy. 101  
from McDonalds)

Many varieties,  
great selections.  
No sales prior to 9AM.  
Proceeds for local  
Scholarships  
Also Giant Raffle, Lots of  
Prizes to give away!

Fri 4/27-Sat 4/30  
8am - 5pm  
5156 Versant Drive  
Spruce Village off Munsell  
Lake Rd.

#### Living Estate Sale

1722 Coosah  
April 29 8am-4pm  
April 30 8am-2pm

Electric Wheelchair and lift, Oak Dinet  
Tabl and 8 chairs. Lighted buffet, lazy  
boy hideabed, full size bed, extra long  
twin, kenmore washer and dryer. Hot-  
point side by side fridge, Electric lawnmower,  
yard tools, ornaments and plants. Lots of  
crafts and picture frames. Vintage records and 8-tracks  
and lots more

Sale!

Sale!

Sat 4/30  
10am-3pm  
First driveway North of Bi-Mart.  
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