

Feeling 'blue' at Falcon Cove Marine Reserve



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Sunset at Short Sand Beach in Oswald West State Park, the gateway to the Cape Falcon Marine Reserve.

During a late February presentation, Jane Lubchenco, a distinguished professor in the Oregon State University College of Science, shared lessons about ways “to use the ocean without using it up.”

In her presentation, the OSU professor pointed out that achieving the long-term potential of blue growth — sustainable management of our oceans — will require aligning short- and long-term economic incentives to achieve a diverse mix of benefits. “Blue growth refers to long-term strategies for supporting sustainable growth in the marine and maritime sectors as a whole,” she said.

That philosophy is to be seen in the designation of the Cape Falcon Marine Preserve, which celebrated its first birthday a little over one year ago.

At 12.4 square miles, Cape Falcon, along the coast from Manzanita to Falcon Cove, is the second largest of Oregon’s five marine reserves, where ocean development and removal of sea life are prohibited.

“They mean no take, no development, no ocean animal or plant can be removed, and nothing can be developed there without a scientific permit,” Friends of Cape Falcon Reserve Coordinator Chrissy Smith said this month. “Cape Falcon unites land and marine conservation.”

The reserve is located in the ocean just off the northern coast between Falcon Cove and Manzanita. Cape Falcon is one of five marine reserves in the state — Cascade Head, Otter Rock, Cape Perpetua and Redfish Rock are the others.

A tide change?

A month after its debut, Cape Falcon played host to a statewide summit, with experts weighing in on our changing ocean habitat. More than 80 state agencies, wildlife and conservation groups, professors, volunteers and civic leaders joined in “A Tide Change: Inspiring Engagement in Oregon’s Marine Reserves.”

As director of the Science of Marine Reserves Project at Oregon State University, Kirsten Grorud-Colvert presented evidence that within 124 marine reserves the mass of animals and plants increased 446 percent on average after protections, the number of animals and plants in an area increased 166 percent, animals’ body sizes increased 28 percent and the number of species increased 21 percent. Heavily fished species increased

CANNON SHOTS

R.J. MARX



most dramatically.

Anne Nelson, of the Marine Protected Areas Center, a partnership with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and U.S. Department of the Interior, encouraged the growth of “sustainable tourism.”

“We have this unbelievably beautiful resource that people want to see,” Nelson said. “How can we let people in, but still make sure areas are protected?”

Avian Conservation Manager Joe Liebezert of the Audubon Society of Portland heralded the diverse bird population which could benefit from marine protections.

A community volunteer at Newport’s Otter Rock, Karen Driscoll, said Cape Falcon was “outstanding” because of its diversity, with “something of everything: grasslands, forest, rocky headwater.”

Could Cape Falcon fulfill its goals without compromising an economy dedicated to tourism?

Fishing impact

Ten years ago, fishermen were concerned about the impact of placing land off-limits to fishing in protected areas.

“There are areas there that haven’t been touched with any kind of gear,” a commercial trawler said at a hearing reported in *The Daily Astorian* in 2008. “For them to say we need more area to study seems like a back door approach to adding more restrictions.”

Today, Cape Falcon Marine Reserve is off-limits to fishing up to the low tide line and all rocky intertidal areas in the marine reserve are protected. “Fishermen are respecting that rule,” Smith said.

Tamara Mautner, owner of Garibaldi Deep Sea Fishing, brings deep-sea fishing enthusiasts up the North Coast.

Cape Falcon Marine Reserve has “not really had a whole lot of a lot of effect in terms of taking away our fishing grounds,” Mautner said. Fishermen were more impacted by restrictions at reserves along the central and southern coasts, Mautner said. Cape Falcon’s designation did take away “a couple of places we like to fish sometimes, but nothing that’s our main bread and butter.”



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Garibaldi Charters leads environmental and whale-watching tours along the North Coast.

“If it helps people feel they’re doing something good, that’s great,” Mautner said. “We all want there to be a lot of fish out there — us maybe more than anybody, because we depend on it. The main thing that’s happening right now is we’re trying to make sure our fishing grounds don’t get taken away any further than they have been.”

Connected to the reserve are two 7.6-mile marine protected areas, where some fishing activities are allowed.

Cannon Beach Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Court Carrier said he had seen “no pushback” from visitors seeking to fish North Coast waters.

“If we had more of a diversified economy, and we had a lot of fishing boats or a marina, we’d hear about it a lot,” Carrier said. “I don’t think it’s impacting people’s ability to make a living out there on the ocean.”

Tourist attraction

As early as 2009, then chamber director Jeffrey Jewel labeled ecotourism “one of the big boom businesses of the future.”

In a spring 2015 presentation to the Cannon Beach City Council, Friends of the Cape Falcon Reserve volunteer chairwoman Nadia Gardner called ecotourism a “burgeoning market.”

“We’ll see if we will get charter boats or ecotourism,” Gardner said. “I’d love that.”

“It’s one of our missions for the chamber of commerce and our marketing committee to implement sustainable travel as part of our mantra,” Carrier said last week. “How do we make that connection to the visitor? I think it’s a good thing, but as far as a direct connect

Ecotour, anyone?

Ecotours of Oregon, based in Portland, offers the Northern Oregon Coast Tour. Along with wine-tasting and gallery visits, tourists “stop at Ecola State Park for world-class views of the of rocky cliffs, gorgeous beaches, and enormous offshore volcanic rocks including the famous Haystack Rock.”

“EcoTours carries 45-power wildlife spotting scopes on all tours, in order to view wildlife such as the harbor seals and pelagic birds which sun and nest on these offshore wildlife refuges,” they write; for more information, visit ecotours-of-oregon.com.

In addition to their deep-sea fishing traffic, Garibaldi Deep Sea Fishing offers two-hour whale-watching and ecotours are offered for \$40 per person, with a minimum of 10 per tour; garibaldicharters.com.

right now, it remains to be seen.”

More than 700,000 visitors visited Short Sands Beach last year, Cape Falcon coordinator Smith said.

“The ocean’s big and when you parcel off a portion, without much effort, a marine reserve will become a destination location,” she said. “Our stance is to encourage it, but to encourage people to be conservation-minded while they’re here. We’re trying to take the stance: ‘Please come visit, but let’s talk about the consequences of our choices and actions.’”

Smith said she foresees speakers’ programs, interpretative guides, hikes and even a boat tour.

“We really just want people to be aware it’s there,” Smith said. “It’s such a new marine reserve. A lot of people come and they’re not aware it’s there. We want them to understand know it’s something Oregon is doing.”

For more on this topic, the *Haystack Rock Awareness program* presents Tommy Swearingen, Ph.D., of Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Marine Resources Program, at the Cannon Beach Library on Wednesday, March 8, at 7 p.m. He will speak on “Oregon Marine Reserves: An Overview of the Human Dimensions Research Program.”

Finding birding opportunities all around town

I have been staring at my computer screen for about an hour trying to come up with a snappy bird note for you! I was starting to think that my memory is just shot, because I couldn’t think of any recent birding adventures. Where’s the passion, the drive and love of birds!

As I more deeply pondered the many recesses of my mind, I thought about my days. Then it hit me! Although it’s rapidly changing, I often go to work in the dark and come home in the dark. That does not leave a lot of time for this working girl to get out and bird.

Oh sure, I’ll drive down a certain street (such as 11th in Seaside where a northern mockingbird has

BIRD NOTES

SUSAN PETERSON



been visiting a feeder all winter) or spend a couple more minutes in front of my picture window on the weekends (I can usually tally about 15 species in 15 minutes), but I like to tell you about my adventures with people and birding. It just hasn’t worked out like that lately.

But spring is swiftly coming and that means more daylight and hopefully some dryer weather.

The Great Backyard Bird Count was President’s Day weekend. It

is always a highlight in my birding year. This year I have been challenged to do motorless birding. So my backyard will be covered as well as my neighborhood. If weather and time are smiling on me, I may venture out to the beach for a little ocean action.

This is a good warm up for the Necanicum Bird Day on April 1 at the Bob Chisholm Center in Seaside and then the 5th Annual Birdathon Fundraiser for the Wildlife Center of the North Coast. We are opening it up to a 24-hour period as a celebration. Starting at noon on April 8 and wrapping up noon on April 9. Find all the details at the Wildlife Center’s website at coastwildlife.org.

Right after that, we’ll be celebrating more outdoor adventures with Cannon Beach’s unique 12 Days of Earth Day, including lectures, plantings, clean-ups and a parade and street fair. Watch for details coming soon!

And don’t forget the First Sunday Cannon Beach Bird Walk. The next one will be on March 5, join a small group at 9 a.m. at the Lagoon Trail on Second Street. Bring binoculars and wear appropriate clothing. Everyone is welcome!

Lots of birding in my future, how about yours?

Susan has spent her life enjoying the great outdoors. Her residence on Neawanna Creek in Seaside where her backyard is a birder’s paradise.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Friday, Feb. 24

Cannon Beach Emergency Preparedness Committee, 10 a.m., City Hall, 163 E. Gower St.

Tuesday, March 7

Cannon Beach City Council, 7 p.m., City Hall, 163 E. Gower St.

Tuesday, March 14

Cannon Beach City Council, 5:30 p.m., work session, City Hall, 163 E. Gower St.

Thursday, March 16

Cannon Beach Parks and Community Services Committee, 9 a.m., 163 E. Gower St.

Cannon Beach Design Review Board, 6 p.m., City Hall, 163 E. Gower St.

Tuesday, March 21

Cannon Beach Public Works Committee, 9 a.m., City Hall, 163 E. Gower St.

Seaside School District, 6 p.m., 1810 S. Franklin, Seaside.

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