

Ospreys return to Seaside

By CARA MICO
For Seaside Signal

Oregon coast naturalist Neal Maine still gets a thrill after many years of watching the osprey return to their nests in Seaside. **S** Maine has found nine nests so far and estimates that there are about 20 osprey locally, but he admits that there are likely some he's missing.

"When nature keeps on marching, you get excited. When the osprey return, somethings still right, they flew all the way from South America," said Maine.

The annual return of the osprey not only marks the coming of summer, it is a sign of the progress being made in conservation. Osprey, along with other raptors, suffered a population decimation from the use of DDT which caused egg shell thinning. Once the pesticide was banned the bird of prey made a sharp recovery.

But they aren't out of the woods yet. There is a growing trend of osprey nesting on man-made objects. Osprey typically nest near rivers on the top of dead trees, but as forest composition changed and old growth snags disappeared, they started relying on utility poles and other tall objects to rear their young.

And their choice location isn't always convenient. When osprey in Seaside decided to nest on a pole near the Broadway baseball field the raptors didn't consider that the power line may one day need replacement. The nest was relocated on a 60 foot high pole installed off of Neawanna Creek. Fortunately the birds were fine with the move and have continued to nest at the new location since 2012. Maine, who oversaw the project, has watched the same birds come back to the same nests since 2009.

Osprey that summer in Oregon typically winter off the islands and coast of Mexico, Central and South America, segregating into male and female territories.

Osprey typically live to 25 in the wild and will continue to use the same nest with their monogamous partner, unless something tragic happens. The juveniles also come back to the area where they were reared so the birds on the coast have been here for many, many generations.

While their numbers rebounded significantly in most of the world after the banning of DDT, osprey are still threatened or endangered globally, including in many states nationally. In Oregon they are not considered legally endangered, although aren't as abundant as they once were. Currently, the biggest threat to osprey is aquaculture which causes habitat loss as a result of damming. The raptors are often shot while hunting fish at aquaculture facilities in their southern territory.

But here in Oregon the birds are increasingly overwintering locally rather than migrating and it's not clear as to why. The birds rely on an abundant source of fish which may be harder for the birds to find as more rivers are dammed for agriculture, flood control, aquaculture and hydro power. It's also possible that they are finding the Willamette Valley's maritime climate more amenable than in year's past and have moved north, like many birds, as a result of climate change. And it could be a slough of other variables not yet identified. There aren't many resources on the coast dedicated to the study of osprey.

"We didn't even know where the nests were, it



Neal Maine
Osprey sits atop camera at Broadway Park.

wasn't on anyone's agenda. ODFW was budgeted back to survival level, there's not even an ODFW office in Clatsop County," said Maine.

Since the osprey aren't a priority species, answering these questions might fall on the shoulders of people like Maine, who engages regularly in citizen science.

"More and more are staying every winter in the valley, and last year I found one here in January," he said.

Nature certainly does find a way and osprey are a testament to that. They are resilient birds and can make themselves at home in the busiest of human environments.

"It seems like they watch the baseball games," Maine said about the birds at the Broadway field.

Check out the osprey cam at seasideosprey.org or better yet, go find them in person in Seaside.

HISTORY AND HOPS

How women played a key role in exploration of the West

By KATHERINE LACAZE
For Seaside Signal

Ask anyone to name a woman who was pivotal to the Corps of Discovery's expedition out west, and one answer will be provided at a higher rate than any other: Sacagawea.

While an integral part of the group, however, the Lemhi Shoshone woman was far from the only female contributor to the exploration led by captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, as park ranger Sally Freeman explored during her presentation for History and Hops held April 25 at Seaside Brewery.

"There were a lot of women who were important in this chapter of American history," said Freeman, who works for the Lewis and Clark National Historical Park.

From the start of the journey to its completion, their various contributions enabled and enriched the expedition. Some of the women had somewhat indirect influence, including Lewis' mother Lucy Marks, a couple members' wives and daughters, and Philadelphia seamstress Matilda Chapman, who sewed 93 shirts for the explorers. Others played pivotal roles.

Dolly Madison, the wife of James Madison, and other wives of then-President Thomas Jefferson's cabinet members were captivated by the "grand, daring quest into the unexplored wilderness" and concerned for the welfare of the expeditionary force, Freeman said. When Jefferson's congressional appropriation for the expedition fell short, Dolly Madison and the other women stepped up and "did everything possible to raise funds for the journey," Freeman said.

Sacagawea

As the trip got underway and the company moved west during the winter of 1804, they ran into the Hidatsa tribe and Lewis and Clark hired French-Canadian explorer Toussaint Charbonneau and his wife Sacagawea as interpreters.

The expedition also survived the winter by trading with the women farmers of the agricultural Mandan tribe, a neighbor of the Hidatsas. Private John Shields, a blacksmith, sharpened the farmers'



Katherine Lacaze

Ranger Sally Freeman, of the Lewis and Clark National Historical Park, discusses the many women who contributed to the Corps of Discovery's western exploration during History and Hops at Seaside Brewery.

tools and crafted knives in exchange for produce. The Mandan also warned the group there were "big mountains" out west, making travel by boat infeasible, and encouraged them to get horses.

In August of 1805, Lewis went out with three other explores in search of the Shoshone Bannock people, who were bison hunters on the plains of what is now Montana. Sacagawea, a member of the Agaidaka band of the Shoshone, shared with Lewis ways of communicating that he was Caucasian and possessed peaceful intentions.

In mid-August, one of these excursions was at last successful when Lewis ran into three Shoshone women. The men bestowed gifts of paint, beads, and powder looking-glasses upon the women, who then were instrumental in leading the explorers to the tribe's camp and peacefully introducing them to the warriors and chief — incidentally, Sacagawea's older brother Cameahwait.

The situation likely would not have resulted in such a positive outcome

without getting "these women on their side and Sacagawea helping in the background," Freeman said.

Do them no harm

Another remarkable woman who made a significant contribution to the Lewis and Clark story was Watkuweis, of the Nez Perce nation. Although she receives only a small mention in Lewis' journal, her story is captured in a book titled "Do Them No Harm!: Lewis and Clark Among the Nez Perce," by Zoa L. Swayne.

In her youth, Watkuweis was the victim of a raid and kidnapped by Black-foot people. The following years were full of abuse and atrocities as she was traded further and further east and eventually lived next to "a big water," which historians believe could refer to the Hudson Bay or Great Lakes, Freeman said. Watkuweis met and was married to a white man, gave birth to a boy, and lived in a white community. One day, a friend told Watkuweis that her husband was planning a journey across "the really big water," Freeman

said, adding, "She loves her husband, these people have been nice to her, but her dream has been to come back home and be with her



National Park Service

Sacagawea acted as an interpreter for the expedition.

people the Nimii-puu, or Nez Perce, in future Idaho."

Watkuweis set off with her son to go back west, a journey that proved treacherous. The boy fell ill and died, and she eventually ran out of food, water and energy in the wilderness. She had collapsed and was dying when two hunters of an unidentified tribe came upon her. They nursed her back to health and assisted her on the next leg of her journey until she made it home.

As it turns out, Watkuweis "was in the right place at the right time when the Corps of Discovery comes straggling out of the mountains" and into Nimii-puu country, Freeman said. Inside the village, the men watched the soldiers emerging from the mountains and debated whether to be good hosts or overcome the

strangers and take their guns and other goods.

Watkuweis, overhearing the villagers talking about "strangers arriving," asked to see them. Identifying them as white men, similar to those who had treated her kindly, she commanded, "Do them no harm." News traveled through the community and the Corps of Discovery met what Lewis considered "the most hospitable, honest and sincere people that we have met with in our voyage."

Along with Watkuweis, the Mandan farmers, and Dolly Madison, several other white and Native American women took part in the Corps of Discovery's journey in various ways.

"Even though most of the movies and books and statues and such that we see about the expedition tell us about one person, one woman who became famous, I think we can agree many women were a crucial part of this chapter in history," Freeman said.

History and Hops is a local presentation series hosted by the Seaside Museum and Historical Society on the last Thursday of each month from September to May. The final presentation of this season will be held at 6 p.m. May 30 and Robert Moberg, who was born and raised in Astoria, will present on "Gillnetting: A Way of Life, All but Gone."

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