

A miraculous journey across continents



WENDI AZALOFF

As the summer fades into fall, thousands of migratory seabirds are using the 500 miles of Pacific Coast rocky islands, sandy beaches, estuaries, and mudflats in their flight south for the winter.

Migrating seabirds alike utilize these coastal areas to rest and forage on their incredible journeys between breeding and non-breeding habitats extending from Northern Alaska into the Southern hemisphere.

Birds that migrate in the spring and fall along this extensive Pacific Flyway corridor keep close to the Pacific Coastal habitats, but migratory seabirds utilizing the same migration route are in a class of their own. Seabirds spend the majority of their lives in the water and have adapted to thrive in the extreme cold and wet environment.

Characteristics of seabirds include waterproof feathers, webbed feet, specialized eye glands to remove excess salt from their bodies, and other adaptations that enable life at sea.

Bird watching enthusiasts may



Tiffany Boothe/Seaside Aquarium

Brown pelicans can spot small fish and quickly plunge from over 60 feet into the ocean to fill 3-gallon throat pouches with water and prey.

be able to spot the below-listed species during their fall migrations along our diverse coast:

Sooty shearwaters (*Ardenna grisea*): This open-ocean dwelling migratory seabird prefers to forage by plunging beak first from a few feet above the water's surface and utilizing strong silvery wings to swim underwater after prey or floating atop the water and using its quick beak to capture marine invertebrates. While visiting the Pacific Northwest the shearwater's diet consists of primarily small fish, but can include squid, shrimp and jellyfish. These incredible birds create burrow and crevice nests in Australia, New Zealand, and Southern South America from

September to May then travel to northern feeding grounds for our Northwest spring and summer. Mating begins at five years old and mating pairs work together to incubate a single egg for seven to eight weeks before it hatches then take turns feeding the hatchling for another fourteen weeks.

Brown pelicans (*Pelecanus occidentalis*): It is hard to miss the 8-pound brown pelican in flight as they extend their six foot wingspans as they migrate from British Columbia to South America. Utilizing keen eyesight and specially adapted air pouches beneath their skin, Brown pelicans can spot small fish and quickly plunge from over 60 feet into the ocean



Tiffany Boothe/Seaside Aquarium

While visiting the Pacific Northwest the sooty shearwater's diet consists of primarily small fish, but can include squid, shrimp and jellyfish.

to fill 3-gallon throat pouches with water and prey. Needing up to four pounds of fish per day, Brown pelicans rely on smaller fish such as smelt and sardines in the Pacific Northwest. Breeding season in southern climates entails both parents of the mating pair helping to incubate the two-four clutch of eggs for approximately 28 days by covering the eggs with their webbed feet. Adults continue to feed growing pelicans for up to one year. According to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, the brown pelican is a long lived bird and have been recorded to reach up to 31 years!

Caspian terns (*Hydroprogne caspia*): In North America, the

Caspian tern is common along both coasts and found on both fresh and salt water. Western colonies of terns prefer protected waters like bays, rivers, or lakes from Mexico to Alaska and have established the largest colony in North America within the lower Columbia River Estuary. For the last two decades 12,000- 20,000 Caspian terns have taken season residence on East Sand Island in the Columbia River which represents 50% to 65% of the Caspian tern breeding populations within the Pacific Flyway corridor. These birds are large as a gull, easily identifiable by their black-capped head and large orange bill and are common in bays and estuaries along the coast during spring and fall migrations. Smaller numbers of Caspian terns have even been found inland waters during migration including the mid-Columbia River, Willamette River and Snake Rivers. When feeding on small fish such as shiner perch, birds fly over the water, hover and plunge to catch prey at the waters surface, but have been known to steal fish or eggs from other birds for food. Once they reach reproductive maturity at five years, mating pairs incubate one-to-three pale brown/black spotted eggs for approximately 22 days. Young terns stay with parents up to eight months and as a species are able to live past 20 years.



Tiffany Boothe/Seaside Aquarium

Sooty shearwaters fly along the Pacific Coast in flocks of hundreds of thousands.

Honest and tough conversations can save lives

GUEST COLUMN

PATTI ATKINS
Columbia Pacific CCO

One of the top 10 causes of death for Oregonians is suicide. Oregon has more deaths each year from suicide than motor vehicle accidents.

There are more than 600 deaths by suicide and more than 1,800 hospitalizations due to suicide in Oregon each year. The friends and family members (suicide loss survivors) left behind are forced to navigate the tragedy of loss. In many cases, suicide loss survivors are left in the dark. Too often the feelings of shame and stigma prevent them from talking openly.

Suicidal thoughts, much like other mental health conditions, can affect anyone regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation or background. In fact, suicide is often the result of pain from an untreated mental health condition. Suicidal thoughts, although common, should not be considered normal and often indicate more serious issues.

Crisis resources
• If you or someone you know is in an emergency, call 911 immediately.
• If you are in crisis or are

experiencing difficult or suicidal thoughts, you can call the National Suicide hotline/Lines for Life at 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

• If you are uncomfortable talking on the phone, you can text 273TALK to 839863 at Lines for Life in Oregon. They also have veteran's and teen peer support available.

Know the warning signs

Any person exhibiting these behaviors should get help immediately:

- Threats or comments about killing themselves, also known as suicidal ideation, can begin with seemingly harmless thoughts like "I wish I wasn't here" but can become more overt and dangerous
- Increased alcohol or drug use
- Aggressive behavior
- Social withdrawal from friends, family and the community
- Dramatic mood swings
- Talking, thinking or writing about death
- Impulsive or reckless behavior
- Putting their affairs in order and giving away their possessions
- Saying goodbye to friends and family
- Mood shifts from despair to calm
- Planning, possibly by looking to buy, steal or borrow the tools they need to commit suicide, such



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as a gun or prescription medication

If you are unsure, a licensed mental health professional or your primary care provider can help assess risk. These services are a covered benefit with many insurance plans, including Columbia Pacific CCO and Oregon Health Plan.

Risk factors for suicide
Research has found that about 90 percent of individuals who die by suicide are experiencing mental illness. A variety of things may put a person at risk of suicide, including:

- A family history of suicide.
- Substance abuse — drugs and alcohol can result in mental highs

and lows that exacerbate suicidal thoughts.

• Intoxication — more than one in three people who die from suicide are found to be currently under the influence.

- Access to guns.
- A serious or chronic illness.
- Gender — although more women than men attempt suicide, men are four times more likely to die by suicide.

- A history of trauma or abuse.
- Prolonged stress.
- Isolation.
- Age — people under age 24 or above age 65 are at a higher risk for suicide.
- A recent tragedy or loss.

- Agitation and sleep deprivation.

Can thoughts of suicide be prevented?

Mental health professionals are trained to help a person understand their feelings and can improve mental wellness and resiliency. Depending on their training, they may be able to provide additional ways to help including:

- Psychotherapy, such as cognitive behavioral therapy and dialectical behavior therapy, can help person with thoughts of suicide by recognizing unhealthy patterns of thinking and behavior, validate troubled feelings and learn coping skills.
- Medication may also be used if necessary to treat underlying depression and anxiety and can lower a person's risk of hurting themselves. Depending on the person's mental health diagnosis, other medications may be used to alleviate symptoms.

One difficult conversation can save a life
Have this crucial conversation with someone you love, you can talk with passion and strength around suicide prevention. The truth is, we can all benefit from honest conversations about mental health conditions and suicide, because just one conversation can save a life.

HAPPENINGS IN BRIEF

History and Hops returns with Ron Walker

Opening its fourth season of History and Hops, the Seaside Museum brings filmmaker, musician and artist Ron Walker to the Seaside Brewing Co. at 6 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 26, to share two films of by gone days in Astoria.

In "Astoria in the 1950s with Liisa Penner," the viewer sees Astoria through the eyewitness account of the young girl, Liisa Penner, who is now the archivist at the Clatsop Historical Society.

Shot in the late 1980s, "Astoria, The Last River-town" is a collage of Walker's filming and interviewing local residents who

share their impressions and memories.

More information can be found at www.seasideoregonmuseum.com

2020 cultural grant application workshops

Applications for the 2020 Clatsop Cultural Coalition grant are now available online at www.clatsopculturalcoalition.org. Applications are now being accepted and must be received by Oct. 31. The Coalition recommends potential applicants attend workshops about the application process.

The first workshop is at 7 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 20 at

The Art Loft located above Dots N' Doodles at 303 Marine Drive in Astoria, and the second workshop will be 9 a.m. on Saturday, Sept. 21,

at the Seaside Public Library, located at 1131 Broadway.

For more information, visit the coalition website, clatsopculturalcoalition.org,

email information@clatsopculturalcoalition.org,

or call Charlene Larsen at 503-325-0590.

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