

Tillamook County Pioneer

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Tuesday, December 22nd, 2020

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Smiley Brothe...



Local Audubon Society Proposes Rocky Habitat Designation for Cape Lookout; Learn More at Webinar Dec. 9th



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By James Billstine

From hiking to crabbing, and from fishing to whale and bird watching, Cape Lookout's natural resources offer Oregonians and tourists a key opportunity for prime outdoor recreation.



And in direct relation to these human activities, the 1.5 mile long Cape offers diverse ecosystems (specifically the rocky habitat) for the plants and animals who enhance those recreational opportunities- from the subtidal bull kelp fields on the south side of the cape, to the nesting sites for marine birds, and the submerged rocky reefs which offer nurseries for crustaceans and fish.

For these reasons, Cape Lookout's rocky habitat is being proposed as a Marine Conservation Area by the Lincoln City Audubon Society, which services both Lincoln and Tillamook counties.

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This proposal of a Marine Conservation Area designation is a part of the Oregon Territorial Sea Plan, a plan which is overseen by the OPAC (Ocean Policy Advisory Council). The OPAC is made up from representatives from coastal community interests, state agencies, conservation interests, and the general public.

The Oregon Territorial Sea Plan is updating their Rocky Habitat Management Strategy for the first time in 25 years, and the Audubon Society's proposal to

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designate Cape Lookout's Rocky Habitat as a marine protection area is a response to OPAC's request for community proposals asking for these protective designations.

Audubon Society President Dawn Villaescusa stated that, "One of the strengths of the designation is that it offers a unique level of flexibility in management."



Photo by Steve Griffiths

As part of the proposal, the designation would:

1. Create a 200 meter protection zone on the Cape Lookout north and south seashore
2. Protect migrating and nesting seabirds
3. Protect seal haul-outs
4. Create educational opportunities for visitors on the importance of protecting the habitat
5. Educate recreationalists such as boaters, paragliders, and drone operators about the importance of keeping an appropriate distance

from seabirds during nesting season.

Villaescusa adds that, "While the goal of the Marine Conservation Area designation is to conserve the natural ecosystem by limiting adverse impacts to habitat and wildlife, Audubon's proposed designations call for no change in coastwide regulations for recreational or commercial fishing."

"Our investment in the Rocky Habitat Management process will reap benefits for not only the birds and other wildlife, but also for future generations of Oregonians," she said.

You can learn more about the work being done by joining a webinar; information below:

The Tillamook Coast Rocks: Cape Lookout

Wednesday, December 9, 6:00pm Join us for this live information exchange as we discuss our plans to promote Cape Lookout as a Marine Conservation Area under Oregon's Rocky Habitat Management Strategy. The Strategy is being updated for the first time in 25 years. Many protected sites were re-approved, but some were not, and there are many others with little to no protection in place. Audubon Society of Lincoln City has selected Cape Lookout as one of the sites we are going to seek to have added to the Rocky Habitat Management inventory.

Learn about Cape Lookout and our efforts during this 45 minute public workshop. Contact us at info@lincolncityaudubon.org for more information and to get the Zoom link.

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