

Oregon Coast NWR Complex
2127 SE Marine Science Drive
Newport, OR 97365
541-867-4550
www.fws.gov/oregoncoast



Oregon Coast Refuge Review



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A Goose Is Just a Goose, Or Is It?

Everyone is familiar with the ubiquitous Canada goose, whether in wildlife refuges, city parks or on golf courses. But did you know there are different types, or subspecies, of geese that all resemble one another? They are collectively known as white-cheeked geese. Six different subspecies spend the winter in and around Nestucca Bay NWR which was established in part to provide protected winter pasture for these geese.



Aleutian Canada Geese-note the Semidi Islands bird with a green collar.
Photo: Roy W. Lowe/USFWS

Every winter Refuge Biologist, Shawn Stephensen, conducts a weekly census to document goose numbers and distribution. The data is used to manage habitat, track population trends, and contribute to the larger effort of data collection on white-cheeked geese. The subspecies found at Nestucca Bay include Western, Lesser, Dusky, Cackling, Taverner's, and Aleutian Canada geese. A comparison of the average number of white-cheeked geese counted each year shows a steady overall increase since 2002. The number of geese wintering in the Nestucca Valley from 2010-11 ranged from 263 to 6,143 with a daily average of 3,530 birds.

A special monitoring effort to document the presence of previously marked Semidi Islands Aleutian Canada geese also occurs. This goose is genetically different from other Aleutian Canada geese. They nest in the Semidi Islands of Alaska and winter in Pacific City. It is estimated that only 150 birds exist, though the species is not listed as endangered or threatened. In winter of 2010-11 51 of 78 Semidi Islands geese, tagged with green neck collars during the summer of 2008 in Alaska, were sighted along with two birds tagged with red leg bands. An additional 12 Semidi Islands geese with red collars or leg bands, affixed prior to 2008, were also observed. So far this winter only 36 birds have been seen. Recently a 76 acre parcel, traditionally used by the Semidi geese, was purchased and added to the refuge.

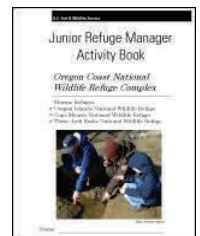
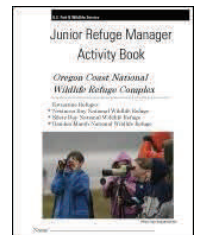
Continued cooperative efforts between private landowners, state and federal agencies will aid in the management of the white-cheeked geese and their habitat in Tillamook County. Now is your chance to get out to Nestucca this winter and see all the different geese for yourself.

Become a Junior Refuge Manager

In November 2011 the new Junior Refuge Manager Activity Books became available. The books were created by Interpretive Ranger, Jennifer Winston, following the Service's Junior Refuge Manager Program, as an innovative way to reach youth. Kids can earn a badge and certificate while they learn about the six National Wildlife Refuges along the Oregon coast. The booklet contains

pages about refuge wildlife and habitats in the form of fun puzzles and games.

To keep them warm in their cold ocean habitat, seals and sea lions have a thick layer of _____. Did you guess correctly? If you said blubber you are right. Download the books today from our website at <http://www.fws.gov/oregoncoast/education.htm> or pick one up from our main office in Newport to discover more!



The 2012 Shorebird Program Interns

This winter, two talented people will join our team through a partnership with Shoreline Education for Awareness, as environmental education interns, to lead the Shorebird Sister Schools Program (SSSP).

SSSP is a science-based environmental education program that teaches students about shorebirds and their conservation. The program originated in Alaska in 1994 and was started on the Oregon coast in 2003. Since then, the Oregon Coast NWR Complex has shared the program with over 7,500 4th and 5th graders from Astoria in the north to Bandon in the south. The curriculum is correlated with National Education Standards. Ben, an SSSP student, states, "Thank you for all you've done to help me help shorebirds. Shorebirds are important to the ecosystem and to my heart. Thanks to your assistance I can build a future for these adorable creatures called shorebirds."



Photo: USFWS

Octavia Solá, Wildlife Education Coordinator, is based out of Newport. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Studies with her concentration in conservation biology from Warren Wilson College. She received an award for her undergraduate research study titled "Human activity and shorebird behavior on Onslow Beach, Camp Lejeune." She will bring her passion for environmental education and knowledge of shorebirds to the Shorebird Sister Schools Program and the popular Siletz Bay Canoe/Kayak tours.

Erin Griffin will serve as a Wildlife Education Specialist stationed in Bandon. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Environmental Studies from St. Lawrence University in New York. During her education, she received leadership awards and was the recipient of a travel grant to study abroad in India. Erin has over four years of experience leading recreation, trail work, and backcountry expeditions for elementary, high school, and college students. Erin will help teach the Shorebird Sister School Program from February through May.

Upcoming Events

April 13-15
9th Annual Birding and
Blues Festival in Pacific
City

April 14
Marine Science Day at
Hatfield Marine
Science Center in
Newport



Photo: Patrick
Alexander/News
Guard

High Water Commotion

The day after Thanksgiving, the Oregon Coast NWR Complex went viral! On November 25, this photo of a salmon crossing East Devil's Lake Road in Lincoln City was posted on Facebook; it caused quite the stir. The first heavy rains of the season put a run of threatened Coho salmon in a quandary. How to cross the road without getting run over! Volunteers from the Salmon/Drift Creek Watershed Council helped the fish out.

The post was shared 99 times including USFWS Refuge System, Friends of Balcones Canyonlands NWR, Coast Explorer Magazine and McKenzie River Trust. From all the shares the highest total for people reached in one day was 8,639! Our page now has over 335 likes; we encourage you to "like" us on Facebook too at www.facebook.com/usfwsoregoncoast.

*Update: Last Friday the Siletz Bay high water photo was posted and then linked to by the regional Facebook page. Over four days our likes have doubled to 699! The salmon photo has now been shared 1,605 times.



Photo: Roy W.
Lowe/USFWS