



# Flattery Rocks, Copalis, and Quillayute Needles National Wildlife Refuges

June 2007 - Planning Update 4

## Greetings!

The Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for Flattery Rocks, Copalis, and Quillayute Needles National Wildlife Refuges is now completed and available. We sincerely appreciate the people, organizations, Tribes, and government agencies who contributed thoughtful comments during the CCP planning process.

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Cormorants on a Copalis Refuge island. Photo: USFWS.

**The CCP is available at:**  
 Washington Maritime National Wildlife Refuge Complex  
 33 S. Barr Road  
 Port Angeles, WA 98362  
 phone (360) 457-8451  
 fax (360) 452-5086  
<http://pacific.fws.gov/planning>

Printed documents are also available at the following libraries:  
 Aberdeen, Hoquiam, Jefferson County, Montesano Timberland, North Olympic (Clallam Bay, Port Angeles, Forks, and Sequim), Ocean Shores, Westport Timberland, Seattle Public, and University of Washington Suzallo.

## The Comprehensive Conservation Plan is Complete!

Now that the CCP has been completed, the next step is putting it to work. Over the next 15 years we will implement the strategies in the CCP and continue to preserve and protect these critical areas for marine wildlife.

### Wildlife and Habitat Protection and Management Priorities

In the CCP the policy of restricted public access to the Refuges is continued to protect particularly vulnerable nesting seabirds and marine mammals. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) will also pursue tideland leases with the State, emphasize 200-yard

voluntary buffers around the islands, enforce trespass and wildlife regulations, and support the Federal Aviation Administration's existing 2,000-foot minimum flight altitude advisory over Refuge islands.

Specific projects for Destruction Island include facilitating contaminant clean-up and conducting an environmental assessment for removal of invasive European rabbits.

### Cooperative Programs

The CCP identifies many opportunities to increase *continued on page 2*

coordination and cooperation with other agencies, organizations, and Tribes to promote conservation efforts; such as oil spill preparation, fire protection, law enforcement, and research. To facilitate communication between interested groups, the Service will produce an annual summary report highlighting Refuge actions.

### **Wilderness Protection**

Under the Wilderness Area designation, all islands, except Destruction Island, will maintain their wilderness character and value. Whenever possible, debris will be removed from islands and all work on Refuges will minimize any human imprint leaving them pristine and natural for future generations.

### **Research and Monitoring Activity Management**

Effective long-range monitoring of wildlife populations will be increased by cooperative

partnerships to develop compatible and comparable research methods and disseminate findings using GIS, species reports, and publication in science journals. Inventories of seabird species will continue with targets to determine population estimates for select species, such as the Black Oystercatcher and Tufted Puffin.

### **Public Education Management**

Since the Refuges will remain closed to public access, increasing public knowledge of and appreciation for the Refuges is a challenge. Developing a web site and off-site interpretive facilities are two of the strategies that will bring the Refuges closer to the public. The Service will also seek opportunities to coordinate with other agencies, organizations, and Tribes to promote Refuge conservation and educate people about wildlife and cultural resources.



*Left: Tufted puffins are strong swimmers with powerful wings that propel them through the ocean, above and beneath the water in pursuit of fish, squid, or other prey.*

*Lower left: Peregrine falcon chicks. Peregrine falcons use the Refuge islands for foraging.*

*Below: Most of the State's sea otters are within or near the Washington Islands Refuges.*

*Photos: USFWS.*



## Summary of Public Comments

The Service carefully reviewed and considered the 24 comment letters received on the Draft CCP and Environmental Assessment. These were incorporated or otherwise responded to in the final CCP. The majority of commentors were supportive of the management changes reflected in Alternative B, the preferred alternative. A brief summary of the comments we received follows. For more complete information, see Appendix H of the CCP.

Commentors agreed that oil spill prevention and preparedness are critical to the protection of wildlife resources. The Service was encouraged to expand cooperation efforts, develop specific plans for the Refuge Complex, and explore alternative methods of protecting resources from contamination.

The Service's efforts to control invasive species was strongly supported, but commentors suggested adding implementation strategies and extending the area of concern to the intertidal zone.

Establishing a boat-free zone 200-yards around the islands was supported by commentors wanting to reduce wildlife disturbance and promote the "pristine wilderness aspect of the islands" and opposed by commentors concerned that the zone could reduce fishing and tourism opportunities. We were encouraged to pursue tideland leases with the Washington Department of Natural Resources around islands with the highest wildlife values, and coordinate with fisheries managers to provide education about the buffer zone to the fishing public.

Response to the 2,000-foot minimum flight altitude was conflicting. Some commentors were concerned that they would be restricted from flying lower in bad weather conditions or disagreed that wildlife were impacted by low-flying aircraft. Commentors responsible for aerial surveys noted that they need to fly lower than the 2,000-foot elevation. Other commentors stated that promoting the flight altitude restriction was one of the most important components of the CCP.

Cooperation and coordination between the Service and Tribes, State and Federal agencies,



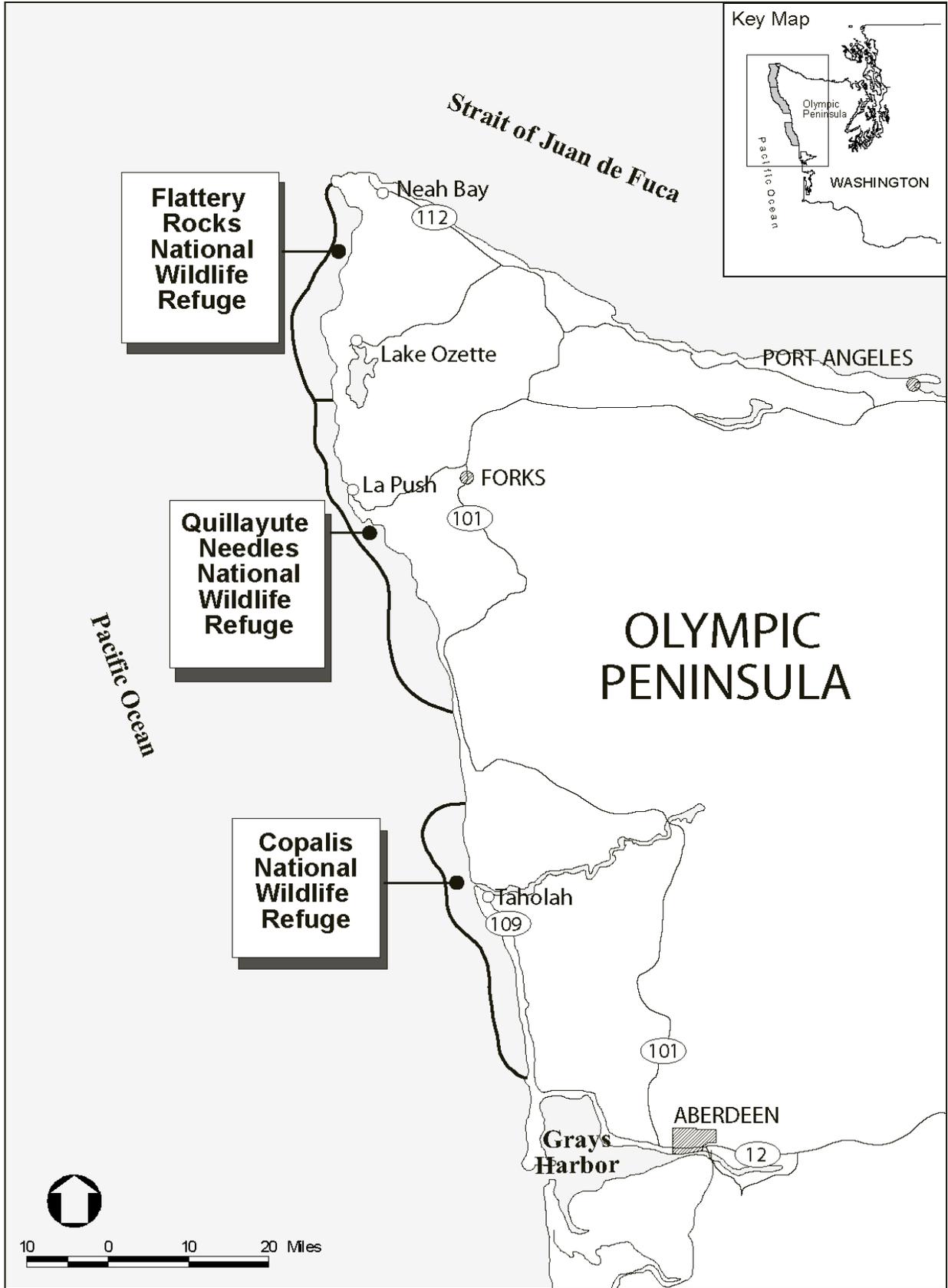
*Common murre. Photo: Robert Angel, USFWS.*

organizations, and citizens were characterized as critical components of refuge management with one reviewer identifying it as the area needing the most improvement. Several commentors encouraged the Service to extend our conservation efforts to the marine environment surrounding the Refuges.

The Service was encouraged to support additional research opportunities, such as the disturbance effects or food requirements related to refuge seabird and marine mammal populations. Commentors also suggested that the Service distribute research results more timely, standardize data collection, and establish a process for multiagency coordination of research and monitoring efforts. Commentors noted that the Service lacked complete cultural resource data and suggested that an ethnographic study be completed for the Refuges.

Environmental education and interpretation were also mentioned as areas where opportunities exist to coordinate with others to promote refuge conservation awareness. Several commentors encouraged us to look at feasible locations other than Kalaloch for an off-refuge interpretive center on the outer coast.

The CCP was revised based on public comments and additional Service analyses. The table on page 5 summarizes these changes.



## Summary of the Changes in the Final CCP

Issues	Proposed Actions in the Preferred Alternative of the Draft CCP	What Changed in the Final CCP
Contaminants	<p>Enhance oil spill readiness efforts and increase agency cooperation to implement oil spill preparation measures.</p> <p>Coordinate with State and Federal agencies to clean-up pollution, derelict fishing gear and other debris on and around refuge islands.</p>	<p>We included a strategy supporting additional oil spill readiness efforts, such as improving Vessel Traffic Service.</p>
Invasive Species Management	<p>Initiate monitoring for invasive species and develop control measures as appropriate.</p>	<p>We added an achievement strategy to complete an assessment for the removal of European rabbits from Destruction Island.</p>
Disturbance	<p>Increase efforts to establish a 200-yard boat-free zone and a 2,000-foot minimum flight altitude around Refuge islands.</p> <p>Reduce trespassing events by enhancing cooperation with the National Park Service, Tribes, and others.</p>	<p>This was changed to promote a “voluntary” 200-yard buffer around Refuge islands. We also agreed to enforce existing trespassing regulations and educate boaters and pilots about wildlife disturbance impacts.</p>
Interagency and Tribal Coordination	<p>Develop or update MOUs with Tribes, Olympic National Park, Olympic National Marine Sanctuary, and the U.S. Coast Guard to address mutual concerns and enhance Refuge management.</p> <p>Provide annual activity updates to increase coordination and cooperation.</p>	<p>We expanded on our cooperative programs with Olympic National Park, such as fire protection, education, and law enforcement.</p> <p>We added an objective and strategies to expand cooperation with interested nongovernmental organizations to assist in implementing the CCP.</p>
Monitoring and Research	<p>Assist in implementation of the regional seabird conservation plan.</p> <p>Encourage compatible research and long-term monitoring to enhance Refuge management.</p> <p>Develop library and spatial data (GIS) that would effectively increase resource management.</p>	<p>We added a strategy to include nongovernmental organizations in monitoring and research efforts and incorporate local knowledge in monitoring activities..</p> <p>We added a strategy to conduct an ethnographic study.</p>
Public Awareness of the Refuges and Wildlife Resources	<p>Develop an interagency interpretive center at Kalaloch.</p> <p>Develop a website to provide public information on breeding seabirds and marine mammals.</p> <p>Seek funding for a staff position to implement an off-site education program to include boating and aircraft impact awareness.</p>	<p>We will consider additional locations for the interpretive center.</p> <p>We added a new strategy, to educate people about cultural resources.</p> <p>We added a strategy to partner with other groups and agencies to provide environmental education.</p>

***For More Information***

Questions regarding the CCP may be directed to Kevin Ryan, Refuge Manager, at phone number (360) 457-8451, fax number (360) 452-5086, or address Washington Maritime NWR Complex  
33 S. Barr Road  
Port Angeles, WA 98362



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
Fish and Wildlife Service  
Washington Maritime NWR Complex  
33 S. Barr Road  
Port Angeles, WA 98362  
Address correction requested