

PUFFIN WATCH IS PART OF A FIREWORKS-FREE INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION IN CANNON BEACH

During the Independence Day holiday weekend, Cannon Beach, Oregon hosts a colorful aerial display unlike most communities. The Great Cannon Beach Puffin Watch July 1-4 is a seabird watching event on the beach that will offer visitors the opportunity to watch nesting puffins, tens of thousands of common murres and many other varieties of seabirds. The Great Cannon Beach Puffin Watch is part of a fireworks-free Independence Day celebration on Cannon Beach beaches.

While many communities don't enforce state laws that prohibit fireworks on the beach, the City of Cannon Beach has recognized its special enforcement needs related to its surrounding sensitive marine environments and nesting seabirds. Haystack Rock is protected as a state designated Marine Garden and it, along with other offshore rocks on Cannon Beach, are part of the Oregon Islands National Wildlife Refuge system.

During the holiday weekend, the City's Haystack Rock Awareness Program (HRAP) will present an expanded interpretive program on the beach with an emphasis on seabirds. Bird watching stations with spotting scopes staffed by trained volunteers will be positioned at four locations on the beach including the north and south side of Haystack Rock, the beach at Chapman Point and the Silver Point Wayside on Highway 101. Bird stations will be staffed from 9am to 3pm Saturday, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, July 1-4.

Visitors will be able to observe nesting puffins on Haystack Rock, the closest observation point to watch tufted puffins in their natural environment in the Northwest. Large colonies of approximately 30,000 common murres can also be seen on Bird Rocks, just offshore from Chapman Point in the north end of Cannon Beach. Black oystercatchers, cormorants and pigeon guillemots frequent the rocks at Silver Point. Many other varieties of birds are also common visitors to these areas, including brown pelicans and bald eagles. A free Puffin Watch Passport will be available at each bird watching station that provides identification information and a checklist of the birds that can be seen in the area.

The Haystack Rock Awareness Program will also present a series of interpretive presentations on the beach Saturday, Sunday and Monday at 10am and 11am. Interpretive presentations include displays of live intertidal creatures, rescued birds, a discussion of the geological history of Pacific sea stacks like Haystack

Rock and an intertidal area tour.

The complete schedule of events is available at the Haystack Rock Awareness Program beach station near Haystack Rock during its hours of operation and at Cannon Beach City Hall, 163 E Gower. The schedule will also be posted at www.ci.cannon-beach.or.us. For information on the program, contact HRAP coordinator Shelley Parker at (503) 436-1581, ext. 108.

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