

LIFE ON THE EDGE

A newsletter concerning all inhabitants of the south coast of Oregon

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

JULY 26, 2022

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Due to poor salmon returns, Coquille River will be closed to all salmon angling from July 1-Dec. 31. Siuslaw river and FlorasCreek/ New River closed to all salmon angling from Aug. 1-Dec. 31.

Native Plant Society of Oregon -

A new effort to restart a south coast of Oregon chapter of the NPS of Oregon is being spearheaded by Coquille resident Charmane Mitchell. Charmane asks that you join the NPSO membership (on-line) or print a form on-line to mail in. Here is the NPSO website:

<https://www.npsoregon.orgmembership.html>
or reach them by mail:

NPSO Membership P.O. Box 902 Eugene,OR 97440.

Then let Charmane know your contact info and she will inform members of meetings.& events to come!

NPSO Memberships &

Subscriptions

Regular	\$25
Student	\$12
Family	\$35
Sustaining	\$60
Patron	\$125
Life Membership	\$500
Subscription Only	\$25

Court Blocks Logging of Forest That Shelters Endangered Birds

A lawsuit was filed in August of 2016, by Cascadia Wildlands, the Center for Biological Diversity and the Portland Audubon Society, seeking to block Scott Timber from clearcutting 49 acres of a 355-acre parcel of land. The proposed clearcut directly threatened the marbled murrelet birds that had been identified as using the site for nesting. In 2021, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife changed the murrelet's state status from threatened to endangered; designating that the bird species is "in danger of extinction in any portion of its range", according to the Oregon Endangered Species Act.

The land named in the lawsuit was formerly part of the Elliott State Forest and had been sold by the State of Oregon for its timber value. The Elliott State Forest lies south of the Umpqua River and north of the Coos Bay area, covering about 91,000 acres of forest. Small groves of unlogged old growth trees remain within its boundaries. Marbled murrelets were documented in this forest's nesting habitat over 200 times by both Coast Range Forest Watch and the logging company's own contractors.

Marbled murrelets are small seabirds that live mostly on the ocean, diving to forage for fish but need old growth forests in order to nest and raise chicks. Old growth are very old trees of huge diameters and with large, moss-covered upper branches. Nests~ are created on a flat padding made up of moss, lichen and/or debris that has collected on one of the wider branches. It is fortunate that these birds are very strong fliers as few of these forest stands remain along our heavily logged and human impacted coast. This loss of nesting habitat requires the murrelets to make daily flights of up to 40 miles, from their nest sites to the ocean, to feed. Regarding marbled murrelet studies, "All nest trees in the Pacific Northwest were recorded in stands characterized as old-growth and mature forest." ¹

The Oregon Board of Forestry responded to the 2016 lawsuit by starting a process to develop rules to protect murrelet sites on state and private timber lands. Over five years later they have yet to put forward any final rules. The federal Fish and Wildlife Service declined to take up the case of this lawsuit.



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Court Blocks Logging (con't)

Earlier this month, on July 5th, a U.S. District Court judge issued a ruling preventing Scott Timber from its proposed clearcutting in this old growth forest. The court found that the logging of the "Benson Ridge" parcel by the subsidiary of Roseburg Forest Products would harm and harass these threatened marbled murrelets, a violation of the federal Endangered Species Act. The court's ruling permanently prohibits logging of this occupied murrelet habitat.

"Today's ruling is groundbreaking because it holds a private timber company accountable for plans to destroy habitat essential for imperiled wildlife in Oregon," said Nick Cady, legal director at Cascadia Wildlands. "This ruling establishes that private timber companies can no longer violate the Endangered Species Act with abandon."

1. <https://www.fs.fed.us/psw/publications/documents/wild/gtr152/chap6.pdf>

Of Blueberries and Pigeons

Get your blueberries soon! This year the blueberry patches of our south coast farmers have been under siege by a local native bird called the band-tailed pigeon. Farmers have been challenged to keep the birds from devouring berries just as they are ripening for harvest or u-pick customers. Shooting off a shotgun will scare the flocks away but it is only a temporary measure. These farmers only get one crop a year from their plants so it is quite a hardship to lose berries to the birds. This is not a problems every year, why this year?

Here near our coast range forests where these birds take shelter, band-tailed pigeons typically would be feasting on red elderberries this time of year. Unfortunately, this year we had a warm period that encouraged shrubs to bloom followed by a long cold period that kept the pollinators from showing up resulting in fewer blooms pollinated thus less fruit.. "The red berries on our elderberry plants are usually loaded with fruit. Now, either berries are not there or on some plants they have just a few. Normally the whole branch tip looks red as there are so many berries", said Bandon resident Vicki Affatati.

Also, red elderberries are thought to compete with newly planted trees after a forest is harvested by clearcutting. Local forests are usually sprayed with herbicides either by backpack sprayer or aerially, after they have been replanted. Elderberry, Serviceberry, native Crabapple, Salmonberry, Thimbleberry, Osoberry, and Huckleberry are some of the species that are eliminated in a tree plantation by the culture of clearcutting. These are mainstay foods for birds and other wildlife.

Birds are indicators of the environment. If they are in trouble, we know we'll soon be in trouble.

- Roger Tory Peterson - artist, naturalist, and inventor of the modern field guide

WESTERN MONARCHS - numbers have plummeted
Here are ways that you can help prevent total collapse of this iconic species.

Five key steps to recovering the western monarch population

1. Protect and manage California overwintering sites
2. Restore breeding and migratory habitat in California
3. Protect monarchs and their habitat from pesticides
4. Protect, manage, and restore *summer breeding and fall migration* monarch habitat outside of California
5. Answer key research questions about how to best aid western monarch recovery

- info from Xerces Society

"Life on the Edge" is a monthly newsletter, written by local people and hosted by STILLWATER NATIVES NURSERY Bandon, Oregon

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We accept submissions of news that relates to our natural local world - cite sources as we are only dealing with real events and factual information.

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