COASST

COASTAL OBSERVATION AND SEABIRD SURVEY TEAM

Reports 00–01

Breaking News

THIS YEAR has been a big one for COASST. We've trained over 50 new volunteers, monitoring 45 beaches, in five regions throughout Washington State. We've even expanded into Oregon! Altogether, COASST volunteers have logged just over 600 hours; that's 25 days of walking the beaches. Has it been worth it? You bet. We've collected data on 286 carcasses, of at least 12 Foot Type Families, and 31 species. We've seen both common species, like northern fulmars and common murres, and rare species, like a mottled petrel. We've even logged some threatened and endangered species, such as the marbled murrelets from Makah Bay and Dungeness Spit. Here are some highlights from the year.

South Coast (*outer coast and estuary*)

Once again, the South Coast was the place to be for beachcast birds: 220 carcasses were found, 207 of which were positively identified. This appeared to be a harsh winter for northern fulmars and black-legged kittiwakes. In May, a smattering of black-footed albatrosses appeared on beaches spanning the entire outer coast from Long Beach to Neah Bay. Although the cause is a mystery, tissue samples sent by COASSTers Charles Blight and Nancy Houtzel to geneticists at the University of Washington (UW) may help determine whether the bird(s) came from the sizeable Hawaiian population, or elsewhere.

Charles and Nancy also found a juvenile Baird's beaked whale in April 2001 that was of considerable interest to marine mammal researchers. Because they notified the ranger at Fort Canby State Park (as well as COASST), the marine mammal stranding network was mobilized and researchers were able to get to the site to collect the whale for further study. In fact, investigators discovered that the animal suffered massive hemorrhaging and a crushed rib cage—the likely result of a ship collision. A mount of the animal will be on display at the Portland State Museum.

As happened last year on the Grays Harbor estuary beach (Damon Point)…nothing much happened. That is, only two beached birds were found in 23 kilometers of searching. Although COASSTer Diane Beers' surveys might have lacked in seabird carcass quantity, she did

Charles Blight

COASSTer Nancy Houtzel with Baird's beaked whale that she and Charles Blight found at South Surfside in April 2001.

August 2001

Breaking News continued

Mary Sue Brancato hit pay dirt in December—digging up and dusting off this wayward mottled petrel. Rare but regular in Washington's offshore waters, mottled petrels cross the equator annually as they migrate from New Zealand to the North Pacific. This gadfly petrel's stubby black bill, gray belly, and prominent black underwing bars are distinctive.

find a 7 ft leatherback sea turtle at the jetty in January! After going through the proper chain of custody, the turtle's skull is now on display at the Ocean Shores Environmental Interpretive Center.

On a sad note, we extend our sympathies to Kathleen Wolgemuth, whose husband Bruce passed away this year. Bruce was one of our first COASSTers—recruited by his wife—who logged 8 surveys and 18 hours between January and June 2000 before becoming ill. Kathleen reported his spirits were always high. Even when seriously ill, Bruce was able to find the energy to purchase a Sibley field guide and walking sticks for Kathleen (to assist her in clambering over beach rocks safely). Despite her loss, Kathleen still manages to send us emails about what's washed in on her beach. "It's something I enjoy, and being on the beach helps heal me."

North Coast

On the North Coast our most exciting find was a mottled petrel (see photos above), found by Mary Sue Brancato on the Hobuck Beach portion of Makah Bay located on the Makah tribal lands. Hobuck Beach is our highest deposition site in the region. Not all of our North Coast beaches are so lucky. In particular, the three beach segments being surveyed from Mora to Hole-in-the-Wall are low deposition sites, with few birds found over the six months of monitoring so far. COASST appreciates these volunteers for continuing to survey their beaches. *Remember that zeroes are good data!*

Also very exciting is the growing number of beaches (9 at last count) that are now part of COASST—quite an achievement considering how remote these locations are. Thanks go to the Quinault Nation, in particular Chip McBride (who has taken on two beach segments per month—go Chip!), the Olympic National Park, and COASSTers such as Elena and Peter Kuo-Harrison. Surveys began on several beaches in February, after January training sessions.

Strait of Juan de Fuca

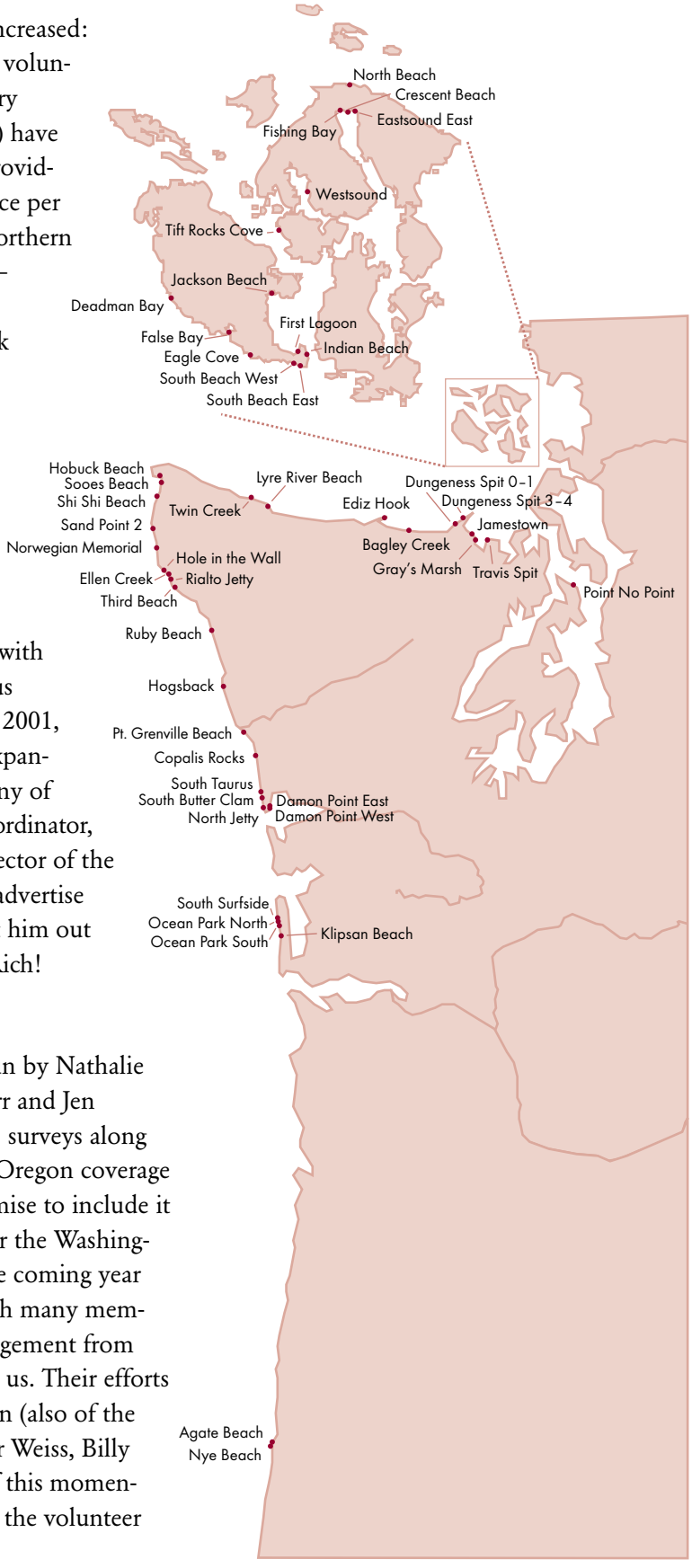
Bill and Barbara Vanderwerf just found a marbled murrelet in July 2001 washed up on the Dungeness Spit near Sequim, part of the Washington Maritime National Wildlife Refuge Complex—an interesting find of this endangered species. Dungeness Spit is near the old growth forests of Olympic National Park, where some of the densest nesting areas for marbled murrelets are found. We have also found our first hazardous waste in this region—a barrel of petroleum products found on Travis Spit by Rick and Kathy Bush.

Thanks to Pam Sanguinetti of the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and COASSTer Pat Miller, the first miles of the Dungeness Spit and Jamestown Beach have been monitored almost continuously since August 2000. In

2001, the Strait of Juan de Fuca regional coverage increased: we now have ten beaches covered, with several new volunteers joining us this summer. Four COASSTers (Mary Marsh, Pam Dick, and Barbara and Bill Vanderwerf) have jointly taken on the first mile of Dungeness Spit, providing our first site in this region that is monitored twice per month! The three longest beach segments for the northern Olympic Peninsula are also included in this region—Lyre River (2.6 km) by Ron Frisch, Twin Creek (4 km!!) by Josey Paul, and Travis Spit (2.9 km) by Rick and Kathy Bush.

San Juan Islands

Although he found no birds, COASSTer Ken Arzarian of the San Juans National Historic Park still surveyed South Beach East on a monthly basis. Imagine his surprise, when he finally found an adult gull in July 2001 and it was already banded! Ed and Carol Strum, who share the beach with Ken, had found and banded the gull on the previous survey. After two training sessions in May and June 2001, the San Juans region now has 21 volunteers. This expansion will allow us to get bimonthly coverage on many of our beaches. Most recently, Todd Hass, Program Coordinator, has been working with Rich Osborne, Research Director of the Whale Museum in Friday Harbor, who has helped advertise for and facilitate training sessions. We may even get him out on a beach, if he ever stops for a breather. Thanks Rich!



Oregon

Building upon the extensive COASST surveys begun by Nathalie Hamel and Colin French in spring 2000, Bryant Tarr and Jen Gamber of the Oregon Coast Aquarium re-initiated surveys along Agate and Nye beaches late last Fall. Although the Oregon coverage was too spotty to be assessed in this report, we promise to include it next year. In general, the trends were the same as for the Washington coast—high deposition of northern fulmars. The coming year promises to be fruitful for COASST in Oregon, with many members of Oregon's *CoastWatch* program, with encouragement from Coordinator Phillip Johnson, also pledging to assist us. Their efforts will augment the contributions of Elaine McCracken (also of the Aquarium), Brad Bennett, David Adamson, Jennifer Weiss, Billy Pinnix, Ernest Wheeler and Cathy Potts. With all of this momentum, we could really use an Oregonian to step up as the volunteer coordinator for that state! ■

What's Washed In?

Species	Number	Percent
Northern Fulmar	92	32.2
Total Gulls*	78	27.3
Glaucous-winged/ Western Gull complex	*61*	*21.3*
Black-legged Kittiwake	*14*	*4.9*
California Gull	*3*	*1.1*
Common Murre	26	9.1
Sooty Shearwater	12	4.2
Black-footed Albatross	6	2.1
Tubenose spp.	6	2.1
Fork-tailed Storm Petrel	5	1.8
Rhinoceros Auklet	4	1.4
Western Grebe	4	1.4
American Coot	2	0.7
Brandt's Cormorant	2	0.7
Brown Pelican	2	0.7
Double-crested Cormorant	2	0.7
Mallard	2	0.7
Marbled Murrelet	2	0.7
Pelagic Cormorant	2	0.7
Waterfowl spp.	2	0.7
American Crow	1	0.4
Ancient Murrelet	1	0.4
Bufflehead	1	0.4
Cassin's Auklet	1	0.4
Horned Grebe	1	0.4
House Finch	1	0.4
Mottled Petrel	1	0.4
Pintail	1	0.4
Red Phalarope	1	0.4
Red-necked Grebe	1	0.4
Red-necked Pheasant	1	0.4
Scoter spp.	1	0.4
Shearwater spp.	1	0.4
Shorebird spp.	1	0.4
Snow Goose	1	0.4
Surf Scoter	1	0.4
Unknown	21	7.3
Total	**286**	

** Total Gulls includes all gull categories indented under total gulls.*

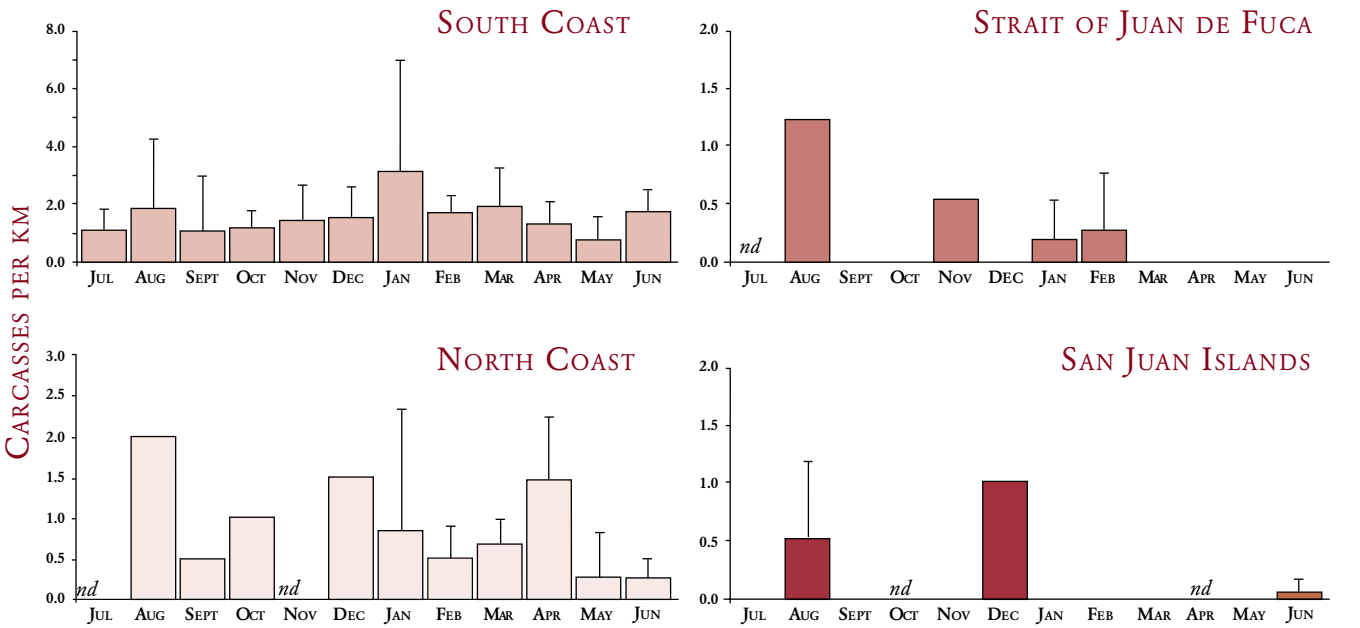
Species totals for all carcasses found, excluding refinds

As of last year's Annual Report, we had logged 119 carcasses, mostly gulls. Quite a different story this year. Northern Fulmars made up the majority of the "catch" at 32%, while the Glaucous-winged/ Western Gull complex came in second at just over 20%, and Common Murres were a distant third at 9%. Because we have more data this year, from more locations, we can see patterns in the carcass deposition rates in both time and space.

Like last year, we present the COASST deposition data by region, by month. Each beach within a region counts as a single sample, whether it was surveyed once or more than once. For instance, North Jetty in the South Coast region was surveyed three times in June 2001. COASSTers Dan Nelson, Kathleen Wolgemuth, and Dianna Moore found 5 new carcasses on the 7th, 5 new carcasses and 3 refinds on the 13th, and 9 new carcasses and 2 refinds on the 25th. Deposition rates only count the new carcasses (the finds); as refinds have already been deposited in earlier surveys. Total finds per survey are divided by beach length (in this case 2.5 km) to obtain deposition rate, or 2, 2, and 3.6 carcasses/km respectively for the North Jetty in June.

We average deposition rates within a month to create a single monthly value— on the North Jetty there were an average of 2.5 carcasses/km in June—to create

Deposition Rates by Region



Beaching rates varied widely among regions. Note the difference in y-axis scales.
nd= no data

the basic monthly sample per beach. If a beach has just been sampled once, no averaging is necessary.

Then, we take all of the monthly deposition rate samples from all South outer Coast beaches surveyed in June (Copalis Rocks, North Jetty, Ocean Park South, Ocean Park North, South Butter Clam, and South Surfside) and average these six values to come up with a monthly average and variation (known as the standard error) for the region. If a beach has been missed, we don't include it in the regional average for that month. This process (which really sounds more complicated than it is) was repeated for each region for all 12 months to produce the four graphs you see above.

There appear to be two peaks in deposition: one in late summer (August) which probably corresponds to mortality associated with fledging events and the stress of the post-reproductive season, and a second broader peak in the winter (November through January), when storms and other extreme temperature and weather events affect marine birds. Peak deposition rates are also more variable than at other times of year. Compare the size of the error bars for August and January in the South Coast region (where we have lots of samples per month), versus all other months. In the coming year, when sample sizes in our other regions increase, we may start to see more subtle differences in annual deposition cycles across the state.

We can also clearly see regional patterns of deposition—our South Coast COASSTers can barely keep up with what's washing in. The two beaches with the highest numbers of carcasses found per month are both in this region: North Jetty and South Butter Clam. North Jetty had 16 carcasses (15 finds and 1 refind) on January 6th, 12 new carcasses on April 11th, and 11 birds (9 and 2) on June 25th. South Butter Clam had 10 carcasses, all finds, on March 15th. Because North Jetty is longer (2.5 km as opposed to only 1.2 km), South Butter Clam actually had this year's highest deposition rate in March, at 8.3 birds/km.

North Coast beaches have slightly lower deposition rates, although the numbers are still high. By contrast, our Strait and San Juans

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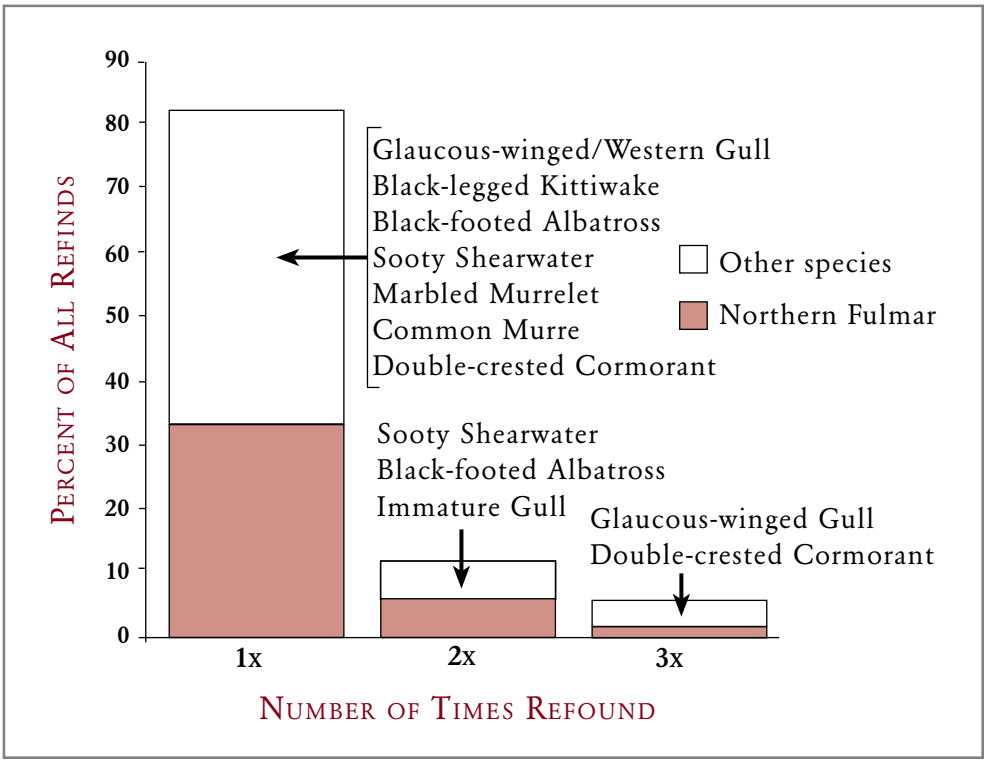
What's Washed In continued

volunteers have to persist through hours of fruitless searching. Don't read these blank graphs as no surveys (that is indicated by a small *nd* for no data), but as no birds. These regions are both more sheltered—so that winterkill might be a less evident signal—and more developed—so that marine bird usage and especially nesting is probably lower. Our compliments to both the data "haves" and the "have nots." Although you may not think so (particularly if you are a have not), low deposition rate data in highly people-ized places like the San Juans is extremely important. Remember that a single oil spill or other catastrophic event will be measured against our data!

This year we've added a new data analysis to the report—persistence rates. All of those cable tie tags have allowed us to take a look at how long carcasses remain on the beaches. Most carcasses are only seen once (84% of all birds found). However, some carcasses persist on the beaches, occasionally over several surveys. We've looked at persistence in two ways. First, we simply asked the question: how many times is a carcass refound? The answer is not too surprising: 82% of all refinds are only found once, 12% are found twice, and only 6% are found three times. What's slightly more interesting is which species are refound. Of course, Northern Fulmars make up a large part of the signal. This is not surprising as they also constitute the majority of carcasses deposited on our beaches. The remaining species are a mixed bag of mostly large species (*Beached Birds* would classify them—according to our Wing Table—as large, extra large, and huge). Only three refinds: two Marbled Murrelets and a single Common Murre, are smaller (tiny and medium, respectively). Therefore, refinds (literally) stick out—they are large enough to be seen again. It may also be that smaller carcasses, for instance most of the alcids, storm-petrels, and shorebirds, quickly become meals for scavengers. Stay tuned next year for a scavenging analysis. ▪

Who Persists?

51 total refinds for July 2000 through June 2001



Quiz: Can you i.d. these birds?

easy one

Mary Sue Brancato

vital stats

found 2/21/01
North Coast
Hobuck Beach
Bill: 38 mm
Wing: 32.5 cm
Tarsus: 36 mm

tougher one

Courtesy of Rudy & Winona Shaver

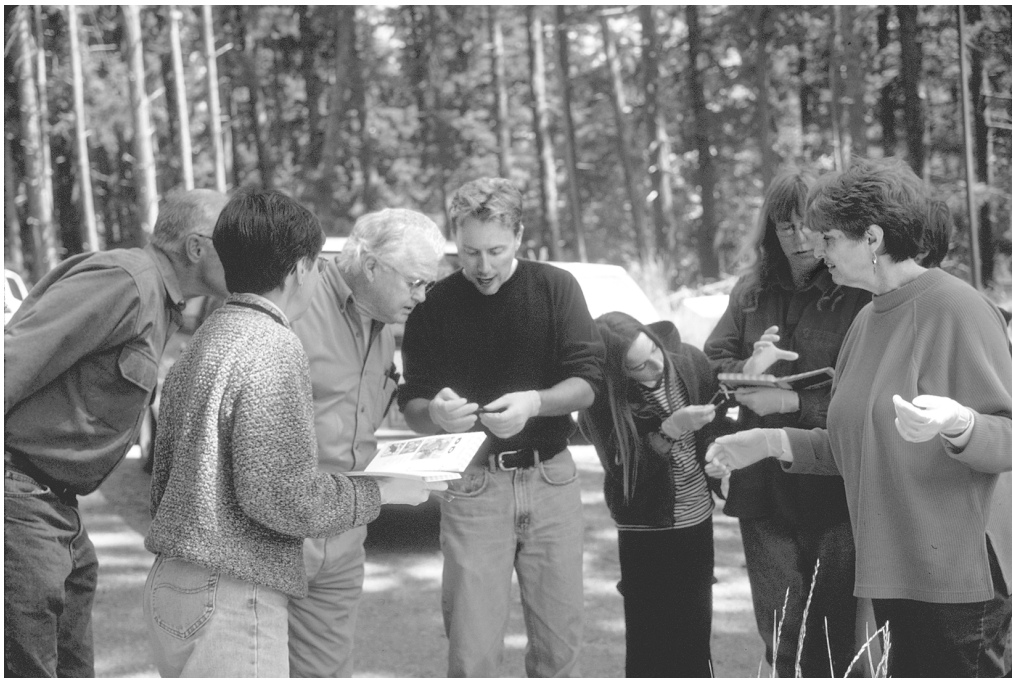
vital stats

found 8/8/00
South Coast
Klipsan Beach
Bill: 44 mm
Wing: 29.5 cm
Tarsus: 56 mm

answers on page 11

Training Sessions (aka DEAD BIRDS 101)

All COASST volunteers attend special training sessions, to learn how to identify dead birds. Think this is easy? Without training and *Beached Birds*, the COASST Field Guide, you might have more trouble than you think. Most birders will tell you that live bird identification is a combination of plumage, behavior, flight, and song characteristics. Of course, only plumage remains once a bird has died, and even that can be quite different from the bird in life. Our initial quizzes—started this year at COASST training sessions—clearly show that whereas many incipient COASSTers can identify live seabirds from slides (77% correct to family level—gull, duck, etc.), they have trouble with the same species shown dead (only 64% correct). Both dark and light morph northern fulmars proved especially difficult to identify, mistaken for shearwaters and gulls, respectively (see photos at right).



Michelle Wainstein

Todd Hass, center, conducting training session at Friday Harbor Labs, San Juan Island

Northern Fulmar, dark morph. Unlike shearwaters, fulmars have pale beaks

Winona Shaver

Northern Fulmar, light morph. Unlike gulls, fulmars have a tube on the nose

This is why attending a COASST training session is so important. Our training sessions are geared especially for the non-science public (in other words, the real world!). Rich Osborne at the Whale Museum in Friday Harbor became a convert after helping facilitate a San Juans training session: "One of the biggest problems with citizen science is the lack of data consistency, but your guide and trainings have changed my mind about whether this can be accomplished." In only a few short hours (6–8 at most), you will have learned the COASST method of beached bird identification, tried your hand at a few examples, and even tested your new searching and identification skills on a nearby beach.

Todd Hass, our Program Coordinator, and Mary Sue Brancato, our North Coast and Strait of Juan de Fuca Volunteer Coordinator, have been extremely busy this year getting new volunteers on the beaches. Since June 2000, Todd has done nine training sessions, three in the San Juan Islands, two in Newport, Oregon, two in Grays Harbor, and one each on the

Kitsap and Long Beach Peninsulas. Attendance has ranged from a single person to a baker's dozen. Regardless of group size, the highlight of all of the sessions is the "graduation" of students to critical thinkers, willing and able to use *Beached Birds* and their newly learned skills in the field!

Mary Sue has been no slouch either, training 65 people, with sessions in Taholah, Mora, Forks, Port Angeles and Sequim from January to July 2001, with more sessions planned in the fall in Sequim and Pt. Townsend. Her training sessions have ranged from six to 25 people! In addition to training new volunteers, Mary Sue has been teaching teachers about the COASST program. Pat Willets from the Peninsula College adult education program, more than 15 high school science teachers, and five technicians and one wildlife biologist from the Quinault Nation are now ready to spread the word about COASST. Mary Sue stresses that although our goal is to get beaches surveyed, there is a huge public education/outreach component to COASST. "These people are teaching our youth."

You're probably thinking by now: "Yuck! Who wants to spend the day learning to identify *Beached Birds*?" Although COASST is certainly not for everyone, our volunteers are an enthusiastic bunch of folks who have found that solving the species identification riddle can be fun.

Stuart MacRobbie, a brand new COASSTer in the Strait of Juan de Fuca region summed up his training session: "It is truly the most exciting learning experience I have had since I discovered anatomy in med school! We're with the program 100%." And of course, COASST data are forming the baseline against which all future mortality events—both natural and human-induced—will be measured. COASSTers are performing an essential natural resource conservation and management service.

If you think COASST might be for you, send Todd or Mary Sue an email or give them a call. For more information about beaches and upcoming training sessions in your area, you can also visit our website at *http://depts.washington.edu/coasst* ■

Todd Hass

Oregon COASSTers discover a newly beached murre during training

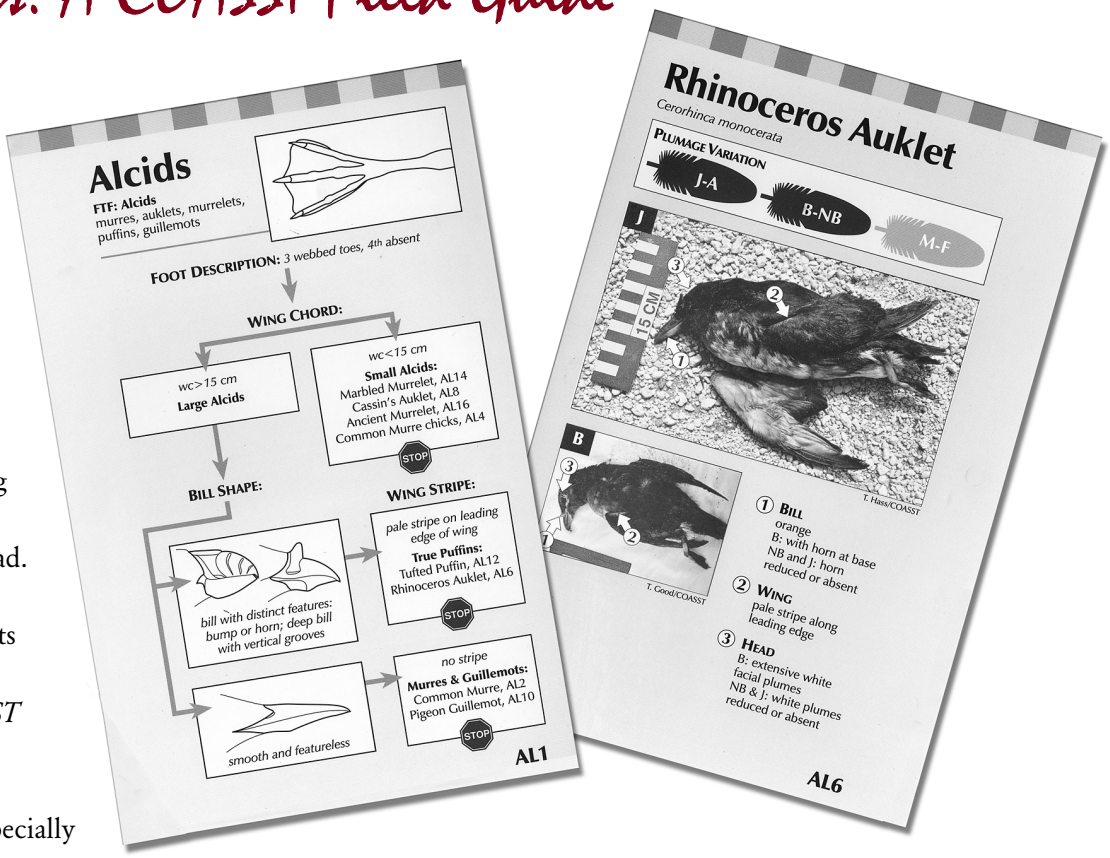
Winona Shuver

Sunny! spring training on the Long Beach Peninsula

"The COASST program has the best training system and data collection protocol for volunteers I have ever run across. The volunteers truly walk away with something they have accomplished."

Richard Osborne, Research Director, The Whale Museum, Friday Harbor.

Beached Birds: A COASST Field Guide



Bob Loeffel, an Oregon beached bird veteran of 30 years (his beach is opposite the *New Carissa* grounding) wrote to tell us how impressed he was: "You shot high and hit the target. You wanted to develop a tool to enable a serious lay person to bring a beached seabird to hand and determine what they had. You've achieved that and more." Are we proud parents or what?!

Beached Birds: A COASST Field Guide hit the streets in January after two years of development. Printed on specially laminated paper for outdoor use, *Beached Birds* features 51 accounts of 48 species (the most common species have separate accounts for juveniles and adults). Each account covers a full two-page spread complete with color photographs, key characteristics and measurements, information on beaching rates in Washington and Oregon, and a handy comparison to other similar species. Of course, the photographs are of carcasses—no live birds in this field guide! And jargon? not in *Beached Birds*. Although some birders might wince occasionally (axillaries becomes wingpits), we're betting most readers will get our terminology right away.

Why create a guide to *Beached Birds*? Bob said it all, but actually, we aren't the first. David Ainley and coauthors wrote *Beached Marine Birds and Mammals of the North American West Coast* in 1980. A highly technical publication, the "Ainley guide" served beached bird programs throughout the West Coast for years. Unfortunately, that book relies on a carcass to be largely intact—a condition rarely encountered in the Pacific Northwest—for identification. So far, COASST surveys have shown that nearly one quarter of our carcasses are missing some essential body part. And although many more species are treated in the Ainley guide, there are no comprehensive individual species accounts and no photographs.

Beached Birds is our attempt to tackle these issues, and provide the beach-going public with a fun and easy way to identify beachcast birds. How does it work? It's simple really: *Beached Birds* starts with the feet. Why feet? Our initial surveys, conducted in the years before COASST started, showed us that although the breast is often missing (what predator or scavenger wouldn't go for all that flight muscle?), and the head may be removed as well, the feet are almost always there. Think about it—would you eat chicken's feet given a choice?

Although Roger Tory Peterson may roll over in his grave, we've reclassified birds according to their feet into what we call "Foot Type Families" or FTF for short. In fact, *Beached Birds* contains 16 FTFs. Getting from an FTF to species is a cinch—we've included a foot key complete with illustrations of each foot type at the beginning of *Beached Birds*. With foot in hand, answer the questions and follow the directions until you arrive at a stop sign. Mary Sue Brancato, our North Coast and Strait of Juan de Fuca volunteer coordinator says she actually gets

excited when she gets to the foot key in her training sessions. "It's just so simple and straightforward. I love watching the volunteers when they try it. You see this look of comprehension "Wow! This really does work!"

But why stop there? *Beached Birds* also contains information about the differences in plumage and other characters for juvenile versus adult birds, breeders versus non-breeders, and males versus females. Although not every species shows all of these differences, most do.

COASST planned and published *Beached Birds* for our volunteers—who have, by the way—been extremely patient with the pace of publication. However, since it came out, *Beached Birds* has been attracting lots of attention. Other beached bird programs have requested our guide, including the Otter Watch Program in Marina, California; Beach Watch, of the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary, and the Bird Studies Program in New Brunswick. Dr. Alan Burger, from the University of Victoria in British Columbia was so impressed, he is inspired to restart his own flagging program. "Having this guide will be an added incentive!" We've even been testing *Beached Birds* as a potential field guide for fisheries observer programs along the west coast of the US and Canada. Leroy Hop Wo from the Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans called *Beached Birds* excellent: "The photos depict birds in a state that fishers and observers are likely to encounter. We strongly suggest this be part of observer equipment." Turns out that a bycaught seabird looks a lot like a beachcast one!

Want a copy? Of course, all COASST volunteer pairs who spend more than one year collecting data get their own copy of *Beached Birds*. If you don't want to join COASST (we understand there are a few holdouts out there) but you do want to know more about what's on your beach, contact David Hutchinson at Flora and Fauna books in Seattle at (206) 623-4727 (or via email, *ffbooks@blarg.net*). If you represent a non-profit organization, a beach-oriented citizen-science group, or a natural resource agency, and wish to secure a large order, contact COASST directly. ▪

Volunteer Opportunities

Substitutes

Sometimes one person of a pair doing a beach segment just can't make it for the survey. We need a pool of COASSTers willing to substitute to help us avoid gaps in our monthly data. Are you willing to be on a substitute list? If so, please contact Todd or Mary Sue soon.

Contribute to our website

Want to make a contribution to the website? Tell us something unique or interesting about your COASST experiences. Let us know your most interesting beached bird find or observations on another element of your survey. We'll highlight new volunteer experiences each month.

Office help

As our volunteer base grows, so do our office needs. Got some extra hours and an interest in seabirds and citizen science? Volunteering or interning with COASST could be for you. In the coming year, we'll need people to assist with data entry, website maintenance, volunteer check-ins, inventory, and training. We're also interested in some specialized help in designing additional training manuals for our volunteers. Students interning with COASST can set up projects in conjunction with the Burke Museum at the University of Washington, and the Slater Museum at the University of Puget Sound, or choose a project of their own. The list is practically endless.

Answers to the Quiz

Easy one: First you might notice that the bird is a gull, and a short-winged one at that. Then you might notice that it has a plain bill, solid black wing tips, and lastly black feet. *It's a Black-legged Kittiwake!*

Tougher one: Notice the dark body with the whitish underwing. The bill is long, thin, and hooked with a nail at the tip. What's wrong with this picture ...?

The nasal tubes and black bill sheath are missing, but it's still a Sooty Shearwater.

COASST People

Volunteers

COASSTers are citizen scientists in every sense. Trained to deduce beached bird identification and collect essential data about their finds, COASST volunteers have already provided a high quality statewide database in Washington heretofore unavailable. Because COASST requires data entry including the Foot Type Family, measurements of the wing, beak, and leg *before* the identification is made, and a photograph, our staff can "check" the identifications in most cases. And the data look good! In the past year, COASSTers correctly identified 70% of all carcasses to species, and another 20% to broader taxon group (for instance, duck instead of bufflehead).

Without the work of our volunteers, COASST would not exist. Month after month, COASSTers hit the beaches searching for beached birds. Many brave cold, windy weather, long drives, incredulous stares from less savvy beach-goers (what would you think if you saw someone don a pair of plastic surgical gloves and pick up a beached bird?!), and worst of all—a paucity of finds. Maintaining enthusiasm is crucial. How do COASSTers do it? Most of our volunteers work with a partner. Many of our volunteers are retirees, and *avid* beach walkers. And let's face it, COASSTers are inquisitive people who *want to know* what's out there and why.

Not including our fledgling program in Oregon (watch for this in next year's report), 81 volunteers walked the beaches for a total of 187 surveys. COASSTers surveyed for 615 person-hours logging 354 survey kilometers (and that's one way!). Because many volunteers just recently started, our survey totals will be truly impressive by next year.

Staff

Like our volunteers, COASST staff have been working tirelessly. Todd Hass, our Program Coordinator, barely got a moment's rest after the publication of *Beached Birds*. Although he probably would have enjoyed a well-earned rest watching seabirds (live ones!) in some tropical location, instead he hit the pavement, traveling to training sessions

Volunteer Spotlight

One pair of volunteers deserves special attention this year, the Shuvers. Rudy and Winona Shuver have been with us from the start—when they drove the twisting two-lane highways from Long Beach to Ocean Shores to attend COASST's first training session. Perhaps their volunteer duties as duck counters (enumerating *dead* ducks bagged during hunting season) predisposed them to our program. Regardless, their dedication is obvious, and infectious. In addition to the 26 surveys they've done since COASST's inception, they've done a little recruiting too. Last March, they booked a conference room at the local library, coaxed Todd into coming down for a training session, and *voila*—five hours later—six new COASSTers on three new beaches!

Rudy and Winona have taken great care in photographing every dead bird that they've encountered. Although we haven't seen their log book, it must be a meticulous masterpiece. They have submitted over 100 photos, each packet of pictures arriving weeks after the corresponding data sheet(s), yet reconciling the two has been a piece of cake! After a February voyage to the Antarctic (note: they didn't miss a survey), Winona was quick to add a new beached bird to our photo collection—a Gentoo Penguin (see inset photo). Check out the bird's big feet—they are definitely in a different foot-type family! Unfortunately, while surveying for snowy plovers at Leadbetter Point last May, Winona fell into a hole and broke her ankle. We are relieved to report that she is on the mend, and expects to have the cast off by August. While she admits that "it will be a while before I'm doing a mile at one time" she assures us that "one of these times we'll make it (out) again." ▪

Photos: Courtesy of Rudy & Winona Shuver

COASSTers Rudy and Winona Shuver sizing up a carcass at Klipsan Beach

inset: COASSTers on vacation—a Gentoo penguin chick, Antarctica

throughout the Pacific Northwest. Todd has also been doing the speaking engagement circuit. In November, his discussion of *Beached Birds* drew a crowd of 40 to the monthly meeting of the Washington Ornithological Society—a tremendous turnout considering that David Sibley (of Audubon field guide fame) was in Seattle to promote his own book the very same night! In February, Todd presented a talk on citizen science featuring COASST at the annual meeting of the Pacific Seabird Group in Kauai, Hawaii (alright, so he did get a minor break in the tropics). The very next week, he presented the COASST program and data at the Puget Sound Research Conference in a special session on "Ecosystem Science and Stewardship." In April, Todd ventured to the Capitol to address various state agencies in the "Olympia Seminar Series." All three groups of scientists, educators, and natural resource managers were impressed with COASST and with Todd. With a dozen planned training sessions, talks to local bird groups, and presentations to agencies and scientific meetings, Todd will be on the go again this year. If you have a question about COASST, or just want to talk beached birds, Todd is never too busy to answer a phone call or an email.

Mary Sue Brancato and Barbara Blackie, both full-time staff at the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary (a COASST partner since its inception), manage to coordinate the North Coast and Strait of Juan de Fuca training and volunteers in between a myriad of research projects and other Sanctuary responsibilities. Mary Sue particularly enjoys conducting the training sessions and surveying Hobuck Beach. She has also promoted COASST at several festivals and has taken it upon herself to train teachers and other outreach professionals about COASST. Barb has developed the volunteer and equipment database management system, *a wonderful tool!* She also enjoys the survey efforts, a coveted task by all Sanctuary staff. Last but not least, Sanctuary staffer Steve Intelmann has provided terrific Geographic Information System (GIS)-generated maps for the website and for training purposes.

On loan from the Pacific Northwest Coastal Ecosystem Regional Study (PNCERS), Kate Litle is helping Todd organize the COASST office at the University of Washington (UW). Together with our summer intern, Kate is creating the office structure which will serve us for years.

Volunteer*	Hours	Kilometers
South Coast		
Diane Beers	40	39.5
John Beers	18	18.5
Charles Blight	12	9.0
Gordon Clark	9	6.8
Susan Clark	17	11.9
John Epler	8	11.2
Andy Gruse	6	9.2
Clem Hoerner	8	11.2
Nancy Holman	4	1.2
Nancy Houtzel	12	9.0
Dianna Moore	14	10.0
Dan Nelson	13	10.4
Toni Niemann	9	4.8
Rudy Schuver	18	26.0
Winona Schuver	18	26.0
Betty Smith	8	7.4
Carolyn Stone	8	5.1
Wolter van Doorninck	34	54.0
Anneka van Doorninck	34	54.0
Elone Weed	9	4.8
Walter Weed	9	4.8
Beth Wolgemuth	3	2.5
Kathleen Wolgemuth	28	18.6
North Coast		
Carol Bernthal	4	2.0
Barbara Blackie	12	8.0
Ed Bowlby	16	18.8
Mary Sue Brancato	39	32.4
John Bryson	4	3.6
Lisa Eschenbach	3	2.0
Natasha Filczer	1	0.4
Peter Harrion	4	1.4
Gay Hunter	2	1.5
Lillian Johnstone	16	12.4
Elena Kuo-Harrison	13	4.2
Linda May	10	4.5
Chip McBride	22	18.0
Josey Paul	11	11.8
John Pollock	1	0.4
Debbie Preston	1	1.4
Bill Ritchie	2	1.5
Tim Saskowsky	12	6.6
Joe Snell	2	2.0
Kathy Stone	6	2.7
Bonny Wong	3	1.5
Strait		
Donn Dancer	1	1.2
Mary Dancer	1	1.2
Pam Dick	1	1.6
Ron Frisch	7	7.8
Sondra Harold	2	3.0
Mary Marsh	3	3.2
John McFaul	1	1.6
Marty Miller	1	2.0
Pat Miller	10	16.0
Steve Muller	6	6.4
Sue Nattinger	2	1.2
Gwen Pleice	2	3.2
Pam Sanguinetti	10	14.4
Andy Schultz	1	2.0
San Juans		
Ken Arzarian	13	24.6
Lynn Bahrych	1	1.0
Debra Clausen	4	3.0
Bob Davison	2	3.6
Joan Fitzjarrald	2	3.6
Barbara Jensen	2	1.3
John Jensen	2	0.8
David Kaill	1	0.8
Mike Kaill	2	3.1
Larry Lehman	2	1.6
Robyn Lowe	2	1.6
Derek Lowe	2	1.6
Jill McKay	0	0.5
Cicely Muldoon	2	4.4
David Ridgway	1	0.5
Ginger Ridgway	1	0.5
Marilyn Ross	2	0.5
Valerie Sloane	1	0.5
Kimbal Sundberg	4	3.0
Bob Swartzberg	2	0.5
Darlene Wahl	4	6.8
Puget Sound		
Lesley Forbush	1	1.0
Vic Nelson	2	2.0

*Volunteer effort July 2000–June 2001

COASST People continued

When not assisting COASST, Kate spends time organizing our executive director, Julia Parrish's life. Like all COASST staff, Julia has had an extremely busy year teaching at the UW, continuing her field research programs on seabirds (mostly live ones!) on the coasts of Washington and Oregon, and managing the increasingly complex COASST budget and staff.

Student Interns

Two new students round out the program. Lesley Forbush is our new UW student intern and Elise Town is our summer intern. A Computer Science major at the UW, Lesley joined COASST in May 2001. She jumped right in, helping Todd with a training session at Point No Point her first week. Lesley is also helping with our website: expanding the COASST identification challenge, introducing a mystery beached bird of the month, and starting an online bulletin board for COASSTers. If her busy class schedule permits, Lesley will assist with local training sessions and supplements to *Beached Birds*.

Elise is our organizational expert. In her first week, Elise has revamped the data filing and volunteer tracking system. If you forget to send in your data, count on a reminder postcard thanks to Elise.

Brian Altman, although no longer officially a student intern, has been continuing to lend his time and expertise to improve the COASST website. Watch for a new look and feel by October. Soon thereafter, we will provide a graphical database for viewing beached bird patterns for specific locations, times, and species. Brian assures us the website upgrade would have been completed much sooner, but he took a break to get married and honeymoon in Italy and the UK this summer. Congratulations Brian! ▪

Staff Highlight

Todd Hass

James Kim

The unsung hero of our staff this year has been James Kim. James joined COASST as an undergraduate student intern in January 2000. A double major in Zoology and Psychology at the UW, James still devoted at least ten hours each week to COASST. During his first year, James tracked down an incredible amount of information on the range of wing, beak, and leg measurements reported in *Beached Birds*, a task he referred to as detective work. The librarians certainly knew him by name!

Soon after COASST volunteers hit the beaches in December 1999, James hit the computer. Our data entry and data checking guru, James is the "man behind the curtain" who makes sure that everyone's data have been entered (for those sending in datasheets) and that our website data entries get into our main database. He once remarked "I would finally like to someday be able to shake the hands of all the participating volunteers" although he admits this might not be possible with so many COASSTers out there. As if that was not enough, James has also been in charge of our inventory, keeping everyone in rulers, measuring tapes, and cable ties. He even managed to convince Cable Markers Co., Inc. to donate over 10,000 cable ties to us.

One of the things that's most amazing about James is his incredible modesty. Completing a double major and interning with COASST barely scratches the surface. James is also an active volunteer at the Children's Museum in Seattle, the Phinney Ridge Neighborhood Association Soup Kitchen, and at the Red Cross. His philosophy is to listen, to help, and to teach. To that end, James has been thinking about a medical career, and is leaving COASST to become a full-time first aid instructor for the Red Cross. When asked about his future, James is enigmatic: "I wish to get into medical school, but would also like to attend graduate school in Zoology and perhaps teach."

We wish James the best of luck, and can only hope he will stay in Seattle and continue to visit us with his prodigious volunteering skills. ▪

COASST Mission

The Coastal Observation And Seabird Survey Team (COASST) is a citizen science project dedicated to involvement and action. COASST believes that coastal residents know and care about their local resources. With a target of comprehensive beach coverage in Washington and Oregon, COASST volunteers will provide long-term baseline data on seabird beaching, and become an active voice in coastal marine conservation.

COASST Reports Team

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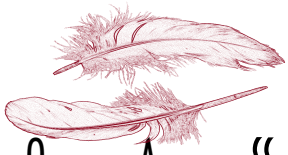
Cable Markers Co., Inc. of California donates all cable ties used by COASST. Dividers have been provided by Weems & Plath of Annapolis, Maryland. "Soft-slate" photo-id numbering cards were designed and donated by Tom Dinan.

Terrie Klinger and Dennis Paulson contributed to beach selection and photo identification, respectively. Rich Osborne, Bob Loeffel, Gene Woodwick and Barb Jensen assisted in the recruiting of volunteers. Michelle Wainstein helped train volunteers in the San Juans.

For supplying us with a home away from home, we thank—the Ocean Shores Environmental Interpretive Center, the Whale Museum, the Oregon State Aquarium, Friday Harbor Laboratories, Hatfield Marine Station, Skagit Valley Community College, and the Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture.

If you would like to make a donation to COASST, in any form, we'd be happy to hear from you.



COASST Reports 00–01

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