



A Birder's Guide to: Yaquina Head Outstanding Natural Area & The Oregon Islands National Wildlife Refuge



Photo by Kraig Anderson

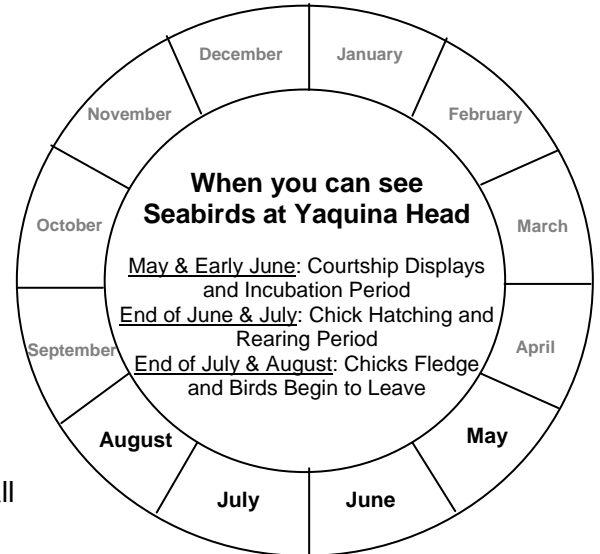


Western Gull

© Ram Papish

A Rare View

The Bureau of Land Management's Yaquina Head Outstanding Natural Area offers a rare, close-up look into seabird breeding colonies. These colonies are typically remotely located and inaccessible to the public. The seabirds breeding at Yaquina Head, however, are close enough to observe in detail with a pair of binoculars and are a real viewing treat to all bird enthusiasts.



What to See

There are five seabird species and one shorebird species that breed on the coastal rocks, cliffs and headlands at Yaquina Head. Brandt's and Pelagic Cormorants nest on the rock tops and cliff faces respectively. Pigeon Guillemots can be seen on the water and on cliff ledges outside of their nest cavities, Western Gulls stake out shallow ledges and Black Oystercatchers can be seen perusing the intertidal for a tasty morsel. On the nearshore sea stacks Common Murres cover almost every inch of exposed flat rock. Standing on the observation deck visitors can see at least 50,000 Common Murres packed tightly together on Colony Rock alone. In mid- to late May visitors also have the rare opportunity to see the courtship displays of Brandt's Cormorants, conducted on the headland a mere stone's throw away.



Common Murre

© Ram Papish

Action Throughout the Summer

While the breeding seabirds certainly steal the show there are other sights to see at Yaquina Head. Grey Whales often pass just off the outer rocks and Harbor Seals can be seen sunning themselves and resting with their pups nearby. Flocks of California Brown Pelicans pass overhead throughout the summer, traveling from their breeding grounds in California and Mexico to their summering areas on the Oregon and Washington coast. Bald Eagles also frequent the area and often put on stunning displays of disturbance when they dive into the Common Murre colony in search of a weak or slow moving bird. From Fall to Spring Harlequin Ducks, Surfbirds and Black Turnstones can be seen resting and foraging in the intertidal zone.

Oregon Islands National Wildlife Refuge

The coastal rocks at Yaquina Head are part of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service's Oregon Islands National Wildlife Refuge. These areas are managed as sanctuaries for seabirds and harbor seals that use these habitats to rest and reproduce and are closed to public access at all times.

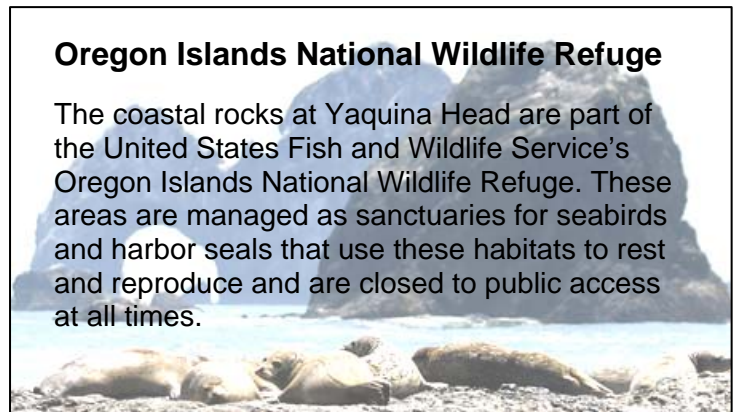








Photo by David Ledig



Where to Find the Birds of Yaquina Head

Legend

-  Lighthouse
-  Seabirds
-  Shorebirds
-  Bald Eagles
-  Harbor Seals
-  Marine Garden

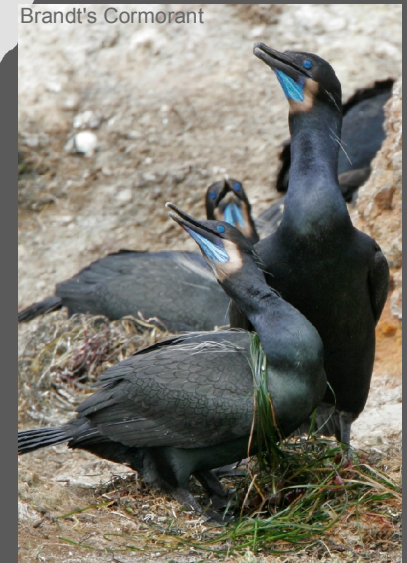
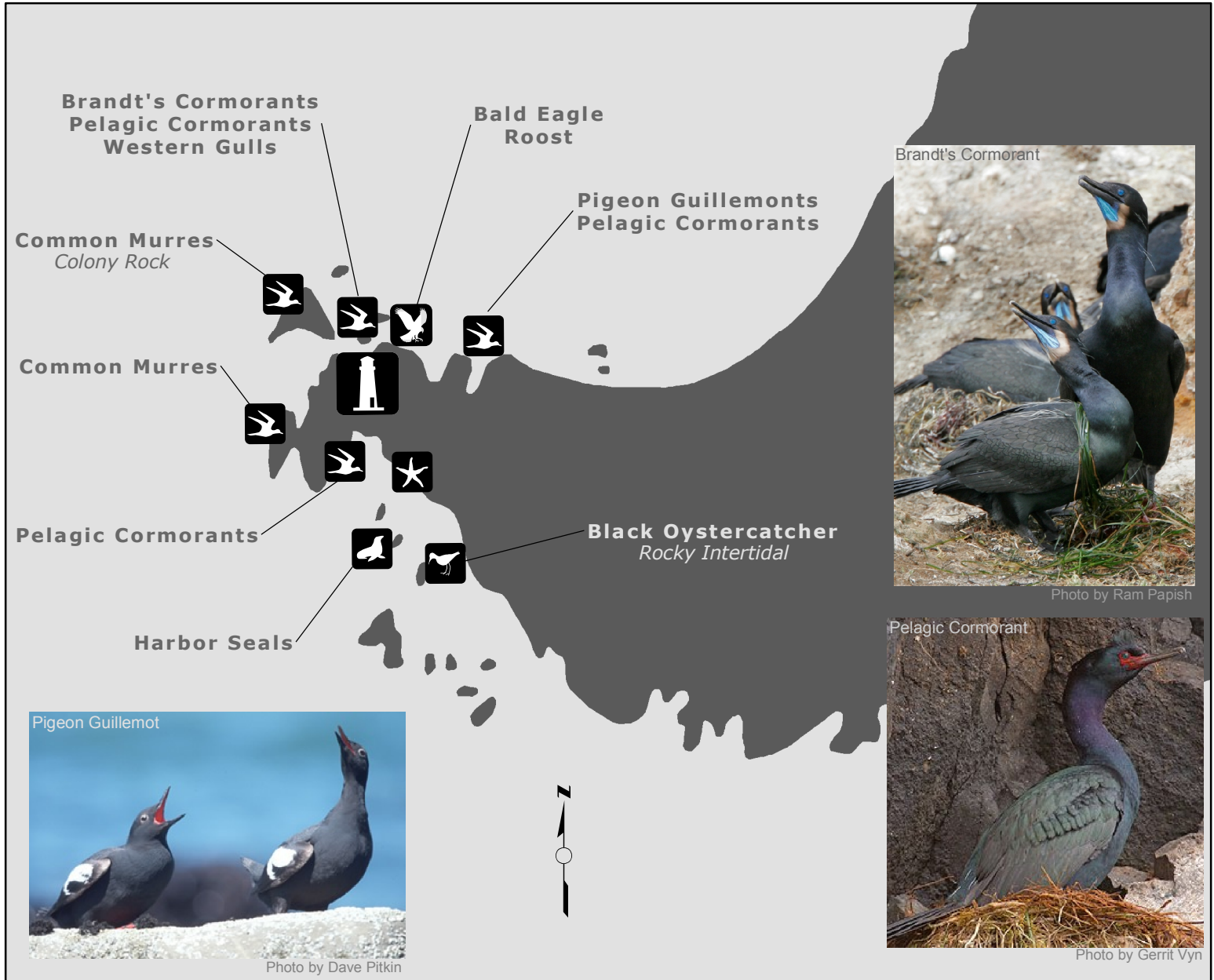


Photo by Ram Papish



Photo by Gerrit Vyn



Photo by Dave Pitkin



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