



Oregon Sea Grant Extension
Sustainable Tourism &
Outdoor Recreation Program

Interpretative Fact Sheet

Black Oystercatcher (*Haematopus bachmani*)



The following short article is from the [Oregon Coast 101 Species](#) collection used by the Guide and Outfitter Recognized Professional (GORP) training program. These articles are intended to provide interesting facts you can share with your clientele and add value to your services.

An Interpretive Fact Sheet has been written about each species. We are currently uploading these blogs and creating the links.

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Black Oystercatcher (*Haematopus bachmani*)



tourism.oregonstate.edu/black-oystercatcher-haematopus-bachmani/

By
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You probably have a loud, outgoing friend or two that can be trusted to make their presence known whenever they walk into a room. If you're a resident of the intertidal community between Alaska, and Baja, California the Black Oystercatcher could be that friend. The Black Oystercatcher is a keystone species in this region and is believed to be a particularly sensitive indicator of the overall health of the rocky intertidal community. This large, long-lived shorebird measures approximately 15 inches in length with a long, thick, reddish-orange bill, a yellow eye encircled by an orange ring, and pink legs. These colors stick out against the bird's black and dark brown plumage. In addition to its eye-catching appearance, black oystercatchers are gregarious and noisy birds, making several different types of noises to call to each other loudly and to scold other birds that may get too close to where it is feeding.



Black Oystercatcher (*Haematopus bachmani*)

Oystercatchers inhabit marine shorelines, making their nests above the high tide line on offshore rocks, rocky shores, and sand or gravel beaches. If disturbed, they take flight with loud, ringing whistles easily heard above the sound of the waves. Despite its name, this shorebird seldom eats oysters. Instead, it feeds on a variety of intertidal invertebrates including mussels, limpets, chitons, crabs, barnacles, and other small creatures.

Black oystercatchers are highly vulnerable to natural and human disturbances. Major threats include predation of eggs and young by native and non-native predators; coastal development; human disturbance; shoreline contamination including oil spills; and global climate change. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the entire world population of black oystercatchers is estimated at about 11,000 individuals. More than 50 percent of that population lives in Alaska. If you have the chance to see a Black Oystercatcher next time you visit the beach in Oregon take a moment to appreciate this interesting bird, but keep your distance and help preserve this unique species.