



**NATIONAL  
CONSERVATION  
LANDS**

**Oregon/Washington**  
2024: Annual Manager's Report

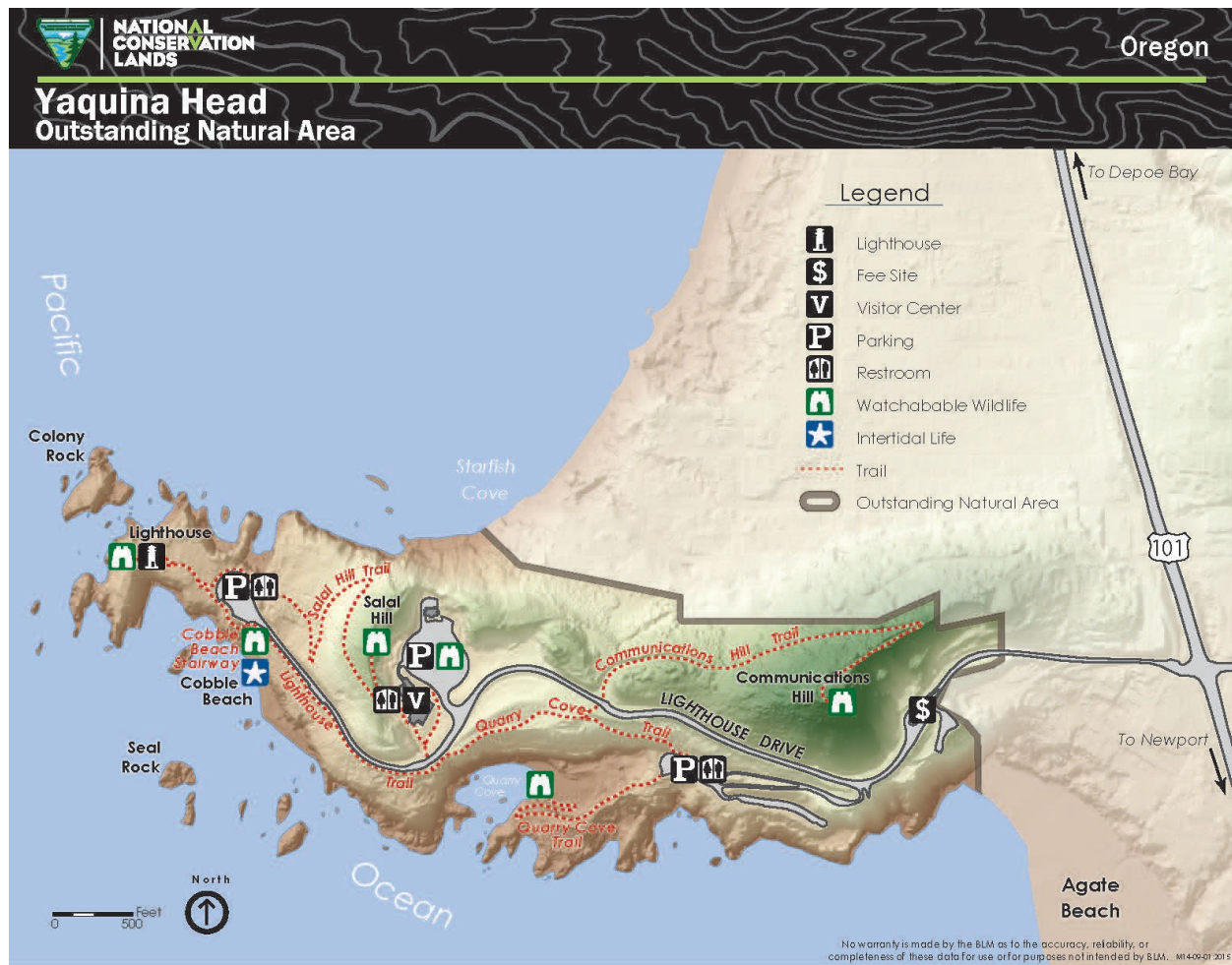
# Yaquina Head

Outstanding Natural Area





# Map



# Accomplishments

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In fiscal year 2024 (FY24), the Yaquina Head Outstanding Natural Area (Yaquina Head) staff delivered 89 school programs to over 2,700 students, facilitated 677 interpretive programs to over 6,500 visitors, and swore in more than 1,200 junior rangers. Additionally, the BARK ranger program—which is growing in popularity across dog-friendly federal public lands—was established at Yaquina Head in the summer of 2024 and saw over 90 pets sworn in.

On September 20, 2024, supervisory park ranger Kath Fuller received the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) inaugural Interpretation Legacy Award. This award is the highest honor bestowed by the BLM to recognize lifetime achievement and leadership in the field of interpretation. Kath Fuller has been instrumental in building Yaquina Head's national reputation in interpretation and education, such that in October 2023, the BLM Oregon/Washington Recreation Program training took place in Newport, OR, and included a field trip to Yaquina Head to experience interpretive programming at the site.



**BLM Interpretation Legacy Award recipient Kath Fuller addresses BLM OR/WA recreation staff during a visit to Yaquina Head as part of a state-wide recreation summit**



# Challenges

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Yaquina Head remains a top destination for summer tourists traveling along the Oregon Coast. As in previous years, Yaquina Head experienced episodes of traffic congestion at the entrance station, popular overlooks, and parking areas. Seasonal hiring remained a significant challenge at Yaquina Head. The site generally recruits 9-10 seasonal employees; in FY24, only five seasonal employees were hired, with one seasonal employee departing midway through the season. Housing availability on the Oregon Coast is slim and costs are very high. This poses challenges for new seasonal staff and results in a high turnover rate for seasonal positions. With such staffing shortages, Yaquina Head summer operating hours were much more limited in FY24 than in previous years. Despite this, the site still received nearly half a million visitors in FY24.

Other challenges that arose at Yaquina Head in FY24 were damages to site infrastructure that required extensive repairs, including replacing stringers on the Cobble Beach stairway, repairing and replacing water lines across the site, and clearing up downed and damaged trees from winter ice storm damage.



**Ice-damaged trees and fallen debris block access to Yaquina Head ONA after a severe winter storm**



# Visitors

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Visitors to Yaquina Head have a plenitude of options for engaging with site resources, such as exploring tidepools rich with marine life, seeing Oregon's tallest lighthouse, hiking scenic coastal trails, and immersing themselves in exhibits at the interpretive center. Yaquina Head received 428,422 visitors in FY24, a slight drop from FY23, which is likely due to reduced staffing capability and limited summer hours. Despite the reduction in many visitor services, there was an increase in the number of visitors to the interpretive center, and participation in the Junior Ranger program nearly doubled compared to FY23.

In the summer of 2024, accessibility at Yaquina Head received an upgrade with the seasonal installation of Mobi-Mats® at Quarry Cove. Though Quarry Cove has always provided visitors with mobility limitations a close-up beach experience at an overlook, the Mobi-Mats® now provide access to the sandy beach. At the end of FY24, staff replaced outdated traffic counters with new ones and installed counters in new locations. Future statistics will provide more accurate data and include visitation numbers for Quarry Cove and the Salal Hill trail.



**A visitor uses their knee scooter on the Mobi-Mats® at Quarry Cove to experience the beach**

# Partnerships

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For the third year in a row, Yaquina Head hosted its Artist-in-Residence Program, which featured local multimedia artist Rena Ekmanis. As part of her residency project, Rena facilitated beach cleanups at Cobble Beach and hosted a community art project where participants utilized plastic debris collected at Yaquina Head and other local beaches to create their own marine plastic debris mosaics. The Artist-in-Residence Program at Yaquina Head is a partnership between the BLM, the Friends of Yaquina Lighthouses, and the Oregon Coast Council for the Arts.

After a long hiatus, the Rocky Shores Workshop was revived in FY24 and hosted at Yaquina Head. The workshop is a partnership effort between the BLM, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and Friends of Otter Rock that provides local interpreters with a robust interpretive training opportunity. In total, 45 interns, volunteers, rangers, and educators participated in the workshop.

The volunteer program at Yaquina Head continues to be a stronghold and in FY24, 14 volunteers dedicated over 1,500 hours to support the site.



**Artist-in-Residence Rena Ekmanis engages with visitors as they admire her marine plastic debris mosaic project**



# Science

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Yaquina Head is an ideal outdoor research laboratory along the Oregon coast. Science research permits help carry out part of the site's enabling legislation by providing "for the continued use of the area for purposes of education and scientific study." In FY24, the BLM issued six science research permits for activities ranging from seed collection to harbor seal studies. Bat Conservation International received a first-time permit to install an ultrasonic sound detector for acoustic sampling of bats in the offshore environment. Data collected from this project will assist in identifying offshore areas along the Pacific Coast where offshore wind energy developments could pose a potential risk to bats.

The BLM continued its long-term seabird monitoring project with Oregon State University (OSU), which includes a community science initiative that enriches the visitor experience. OSU's nearly two decades of seabird monitoring at Yaquina Head show that while the productivity of Brandt's and pelagic cormorants has increased overall, common murre productivity has decreased, and chick hatching dates are occurring increasingly later in the season.



**Bat Conservation International and BLM staff install an ultrasonic acoustic detector on Yaquina Head**

# Outreach and Special Events

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Despite low staffing levels in FY24, Yaquina Head staff participated in outreach efforts in the local community and hosted special events on site. In December 2023, Yaquina Head hosted its annual Victorian Holiday celebration with crafts, live music, and interpretive programs made available to the public on a fee-free day. Pollinator Week in June saw BLM park rangers participate in the Waldport Public Library's Pollinator Day celebration and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service rangers stationed at an information table at Yaquina Head during the week to inform visitors about the importance of pollinator species on the Oregon Coast. National Public Lands Day continues to be a well-attended event at Yaquina Head; in FY24 participants assisted BLM staff in planting blue violet plugs in coastal meadows that are actively being restored.



**A BLM ranger instructs volunteers on how to plant blue violet plugs during National Public Lands Day**



# Feather Friendly Facilities

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Yaquina Head was established in part to “provide for the conservation of the natural values of the area,” and the site is widely known for its avian species richness and abundance. Although seabirds are the main attraction for bird enthusiasts visiting Yaquina Head, passerine birds and raptors also frequent the site and have captivated visitors in recent years. Yaquina Head serves as a key stopping point for migratory birds along the Pacific Flyway, a major avian flyway of the Americas. Along these stopover sites, migratory birds often succumb to window collisions, which is one of the leading causes of death for birds worldwide. In the summer of 2024, Yaquina Head staff installed a U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service recommended window treatment to reduce bird-window collisions at the site. Yaquina Head facility windows are now fully treated with an exterior white-dot pattern that alerts birds to a physical barrier they would otherwise perceive as an extension of their habitat.



**BLM maintenance staff install window film that leaves a white-dot pattern designed to minimize bird-window collisions**





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## **Yaquina Head Outstanding Natural Area**

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