

Spring prompts coast like a local campaign to protect wildlife

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Coastal communities are bracing for a busy spring and summer, and with it, a heightened concern for the region's diverse wildlife.

Local land and resource management partners have launched the “Coast Like a Local” campaign, urging visitors to prioritize wildlife safety amidst the seasonal surge in beach and trail traffic.

The campaign comes as snowy plovers begin nesting, shorebirds embark on their migrations, seal pups appear on beaches and elk roam near roadways, all during a critical period for these animals.

Officials are emphasizing the importance of respecting wildlife boundaries, advocating for a minimum 50-yard distance and strict leash laws for dogs.

Oregon Coastal areas are seeing a significant increase in visitors and it's important that everyone understands how to coexist with coastal wildlife.

The goal of the campaign is to equip visitors with the knowledge to navigate the coast responsibly and ensure the safety of both humans and animals.

A key component of the campaign is an ad initiative disseminating crucial tips for wildlife protection that includes strategies that help improve the experience for everybody and every living thing.

The best practice is to ‘Leave Wildlife Alone’: Marine mammals, including seals and sea lions, require undisturbed space. Visitors are advised to maintain a fifty-yard distance, ensuring both their safety and the animals.

Also ‘Know Before You Go’: Snowy plovers are particularly vulnerable during nesting season. Visitors should adhere to designated walking areas, typically below the high tide line and on hard-packed sand. Signage indicates areas where dogs, drones, vehicles, bikes, e-bikes and kites are prohibited.

In addition, ‘Leash-Up’: Dogs should be kept on leashes to prevent them from chasing shorebirds, which depletes the birds’ vital energy reserves. This precaution also protects seals and sea lions.

Most importantly, ‘Leave No Trace’: Visitors are reminded to pack out all trash and food scraps, eliminating potential hazards to wildlife and marine habitats.

The Coast Like a Local initiative aims to foster a sense of stewardship among visitors, encouraging them to appreciate and protect the delicate coastal ecosystems. The campaign is supported by a Strategic Advisory Group, comprising resource agencies dedicated to safeguarding the coast’s natural resources and public safety. This group plays a key role in developing and reviewing the campaign’s messages.