OREGON BLACK OYSTERCATCHER PROJECT

Community Science at work!

Photo: D. Robinson

The striking **Black Oystercatcher** is a unique shorebird that spends its entire life on marine shorelines. As a top predatory species in the **intertidal zone** they are an indicator of ecosystem health. Because of their small global population size (<11,000), low reproductive rate, and dependence on rocky shorelines, they are listed as a **"species of high concern"** in several conservation plans including the **Oregon Nearshore Strategy**.

Project Objectives:

- Estimate nesting success and disturbance to nests
- Estimate breeding population size and distribution along Oregon's coastline (**completed!**)
- Use findings to inform best management practices
- Promote community engagement & awareness

Photo: A. O'Connor

EFFORTS FROM 2015 - 2020

~900 abundance surveys conducted from 2015-19

Over 300 nests monitored

Over 90 community scientists

>2000 people engaged on-site

Survey Methods:

- Since 2020 we have focused solely on nest monitoring
- We estimate nest productivity based on proportion of nests that fledged at least one chick
- Disturbance at nest sites is quantified so we can understand how predators, humans, and pets may impact nesting success

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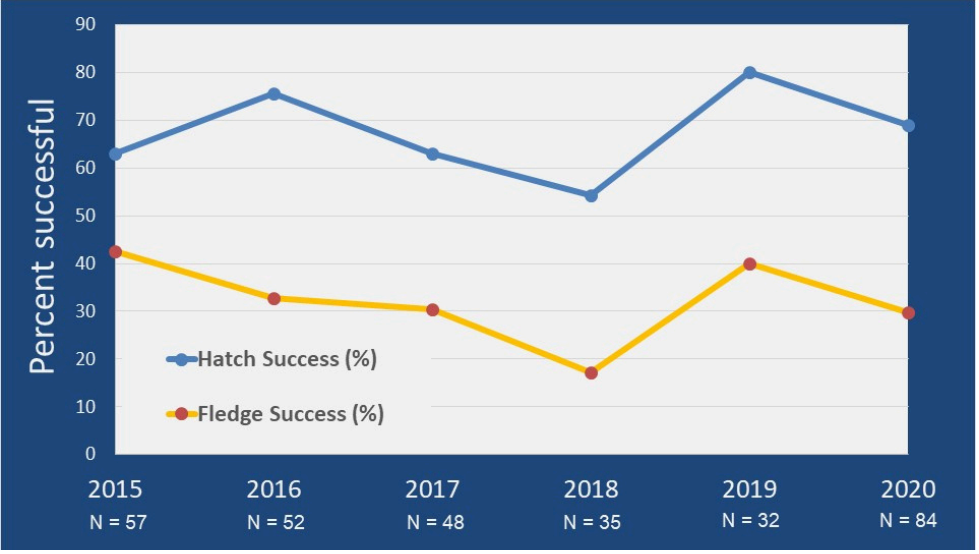

In 2020, despite challenges with Covid-19, 84 nests were monitored - most since the project began!

Photo: Terri Neal

Conservation impact of this project:

- Publishing findings and contributing data to conservation planning efforts (e.g. Rocky Habitat Management Strategy in Oregon)
- Better understanding of intertidal ecology (e.g. data is contributed to the Multi-agency Rocky Intertidal Network)
- Minimizing human disturbance through targeted signage and outreach
- Building support for coastal conservation

What are we learning?

- 500-600 oystercatchers make their home in Oregon during the breeding season (spring and summer)
- The highest density of oystercatchers is on the South Coast
- On average about 1 chick per nest hatches and 0.5 chicks per nest make it to fledging (able to fly). Demographic studies suggest this productivity is likely enough to sustain the population.
- Chicks are more likely to survive on nests on offshore islands
- Human disturbance of nesting sites appears highest on the North and Central coasts
- Most common documented nest disturbances in 2020: other bird species (28), rival oystercatchers (18), humans (5), river otter (2), drones (1)

Photo: K. Driscoll

Get involved! Contact Joe Liebezeit (jliebezeit@audubonportland.org)
To **learn more** about about the Oregon Black Oystercatcher Project
visit: https://audubonportland.org/issues/community-science