



MARINE RESERVES

BACKGROUND BRIEF

OVERVIEW

Marine reserves and protected areas have been designated around the world for different purposes including research, protection of unique habitat, rebuilding of fish stocks, and sightseeing/recreation. In Oregon, the goal in developing and sustaining a system of marine reserves, as described by Oregon’s Ocean Policy Advisory Council (**OPAC**), is to “conserve marine habitats and biodiversity; provide a framework for scientific research and effectiveness monitoring; and avoid significant adverse social and economic impacts on ocean users and coastal communities.” OPAC defines a marine reserve as “an area within Oregon’s Territorial Sea (0-3 nautical miles from shore) or adjacent rocky intertidal area that is protected from all extractive activities, including the removal or disturbance of living and nonliving marine resources, except as necessary for monitoring or research to evaluate reserve condition, effectiveness, or impact of stressors.” Marine reserves are distinguished from marine protected areas (**MPAs**), in general, because MPAs are intended to be less restrictive than marine reserves by allowing for certain uses that a reserve would prohibit.

TABLE OF CONTENTS
OVERVIEW
HISTORY
CURRENT STATUS
STAFF CONTACTS

All three western coastal states have engaged in public processes to designate MPAs and reserves. In 2012, Oregon completed designation of five marine reserve sites within the Territorial Sea. Each site consists of a “no-take” marine reserve and most also include one or more less-restrictive MPAs. The marine reserves prohibit all take of fish, invertebrates, wildlife, and seaweeds as well as ocean development, except as necessary for monitoring or research. The protected areas have varying levels of protection, allowing or prohibiting specific take and prohibiting all ocean development.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (**ODFW**) is responsible for overseeing the management and monitoring of Oregon’s five marine reserve sites. These responsibilities include scientific monitoring; outreach; public engagement; coordination on enforcement efforts with Oregon State Police; and site management plans and reviews every five years. This work is to culminate in a comprehensive evaluation and report to the legislature in 2023.

HISTORY

2008: Proposals. After several years of formal discussions at the state level, Governor Kulongoski issued Executive Order 08-07 in March 2008, directing OPAC to recommend not more than nine sites for possible designation as marine reserves. A public nomination process began, with local groups and individuals submitting 20 site proposals to OPAC in the summer of 2008. On November 29, 2008, OPAC recommended to the Governor the immediate designation of two pilot sites (Otter Rock and Redfish Rocks); further evaluation by local communities of three sites (Cape Falcon, Cascade Head, and Cape Perpetua); and for one area to undergo a local collaborative process to consider development of a new marine reserve proposal, to be led by the Oregon International Port of Coos Bay (Cape Arago/Seven Devils area).

2009: Marine Reserves Legislation. In 2009, the legislature passed House Bill 3013 directing state agencies to implement OPAC's recommendations. For the two pilot sites (Otter Rock and Redfish Rocks), the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (**ODFW**), the Department of State Lands, and the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department adopted administrative rules and harvest restrictions that took effect after the collection of two years of baseline data.

2010-2011: Community Teams and Recommendations. For the three areas of further evaluation (Cape Perpetua, Cascade Head, and Cape Falcon), pursuant to HB 3013 (2009), ODFW formed three community stakeholder teams which met to evaluate these sites over the course of a year, and in November 2010, community teams forwarded their recommendations to ODFW.

As directed in HB 3013, ODFW used the community teams' recommendations and information gathered throughout the community team process to forge marine reserve recommendations. ODFW consulted with OPAC in December 2010, and after deliberation and discussion, consensus was achieved in support of the ODFW package of site proposals, plus additional recommendations pertaining to implementation. ODFW then forwarded recommendations to coastal state legislators.

2012: Marine Reserves Legislation. In 2012, the legislature passed Senate Bill 1510 directing relevant state agencies to implement the OPAC site recommendations for Cape Perpetua, Cascade Head, and Cape Falcon. The measure also required a report on implementation back to the legislature in 2023. State agencies adopted administrative rules, and harvest restrictions took effect at each site after the collection of two years of baseline data.

CURRENT STATUS

ODFW is responsible for overseeing Oregon's five marine reserve sites. These responsibilities include scientific monitoring, outreach, public engagement, coordination with Oregon State Police on enforcement efforts, and site management plans and

reviews every five years. This work is to culminate in a comprehensive evaluation and report to the legislature in 2023.

Cape Falcon: The [Cape Falcon Marine Reserve](#) is located off the northern coast near the town of Manzanita. This is Oregon's northernmost site and includes a marine reserve and two MPAs.

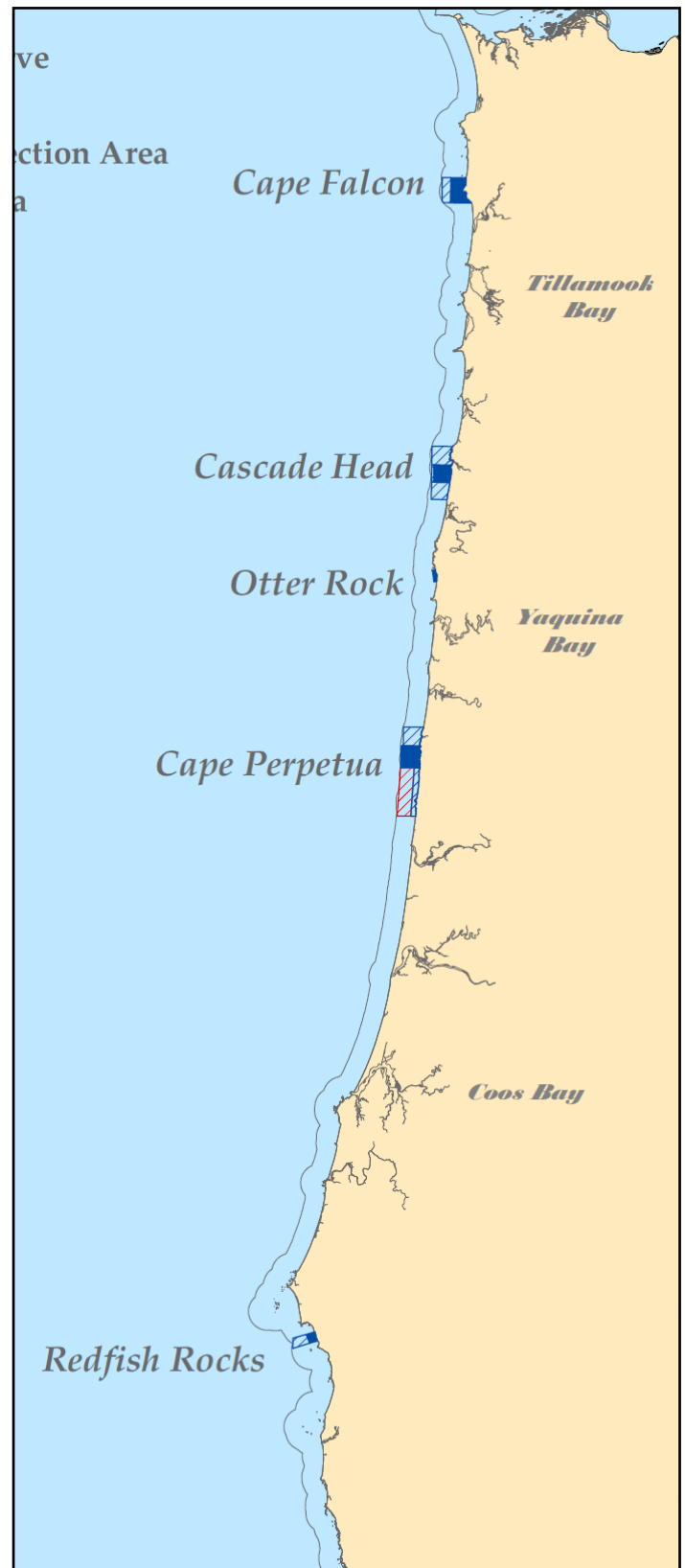
Cascade Head: The [Cascade Head Marine Reserve](#) is located off the central Oregon coast, stretching between the Cascade Head headland and Lincoln City. The site includes a marine reserve surrounded by three MPAs.

Cape Perpetua: The [Cape Perpetua Marine Reserve](#) is Oregon's largest marine reserve. The site is located off the central Oregon coast stretching between the towns of Yachats and Florence and includes a marine reserve, two MPAs, and a [Seabird Protection Area](#).

Otter Rock: The [Otter Rock Marine Reserve](#) is located off the central Oregon coast, near the unincorporated town of Otter Rock. This is Oregon's smallest marine reserve at 1.2 square miles.

Cape Perpetua: The [Cape Perpetua Marine Reserve](#) is Oregon's largest marine reserve. The site is located off the central Oregon coast stretching between the towns of Yachats and Florence and includes a marine reserve, two MPAs and a [Seabird Protection Area](#).

Redfish Rocks: The [Redfish Rocks Marine Reserve](#) is located off the southern Oregon coast between Rocky Point and Coal Point, just south of the town of Port Orford. The site includes a marine reserve with an MPA to the west that stretches offshore towards the state's Territorial Sea boundary.



Source: Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

For more information: <http://oregonmarinereserves.com/reserves/>

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