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 breeding population size and distribution along Oregon’s coastline & adjacent to Marine Reserves and Protected Areas
- Estimate nesting success and disturbance to nests
- Promote community engagement & awareness

**Methods**

- Participants use standardized, easy-to-use survey protocols for counting oystercatchers and monitoring nests
- Human & pet disturbance at nest sites is quantified
- We estimated nest success based on proportion of nests that fledged at least one chick
- We used N-Mixture statistical models to estimate population size

**EFFORTS FROM 2015 - 2019**

- Nearly 900 surveys conducted
- Over 230 nests monitored
- Over 80 community scientists
- >2000 people engaged on-site
We monitor 75 sites along the coast!

What are we learning?

- Population estimate indicates at least 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 (south of Florence)
- About 75 oystercatchers use shoreline habitat adjacent to the Marine Reserves & Protected Areas
- About 31% of monitored nests fledged at least 1 chick
- Human disturbance of nesting sites appears highest on the North and Central coasts

Conservation impact of this project:

- Contributing to conservation planning for this species & its habitats (e.g. informing rocky shoreline protection efforts 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

Get involved! Contact Joe Liebezeit (jliebezeit@audubonportland.org; 971-222-6121)

To learn more about the Oregon Black Oystercatcher Project visit: https://audubonportland.org/issues/community-science