Explore Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve’s incredible ecosystem

Aquatic Reserve
Cherry Point
Visit the

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Boating, fishing and other forms of recreation in the Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve are not limited by the Reserve’s designation.

Get involved to protect the Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve

1 Join the Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve Citizen Stewardship Committee.
   We are a citizen group working to conserve the unique habitats, species, and ecosystems of the Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve. By working with other organizations, we engage the community in the protection and enhancement of these important areas. With your help, we can continue to make a difference in the health of our local marine ecosystems. For more information, please contact the Citizen Stewardship Committee.

2 Volunteer with the Citizen Stewardship Committee on one of our projects.
   From habitat restoration to outreach programs, we have a project for you! Join our dedicated group of volunteers to help protect the health of our local marine ecosystems. Be part of the solution and help protect the future of our local marine ecosystems.

Cherry Point is considered a “significant bird area” because shorelines along the Reserve provide nesting, breeding, feeding, and resting grounds for many different species. These species include the Great Blue Heron, which nests north of the Reserve in one of the largest heron rookeries in the state.

Two species of forage fish, Pacific herring and surf smelt use the Reserve as spawning grounds. Forage fish are a very important food source for marine birds, salmon, and other large marine predators.

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Forage Fish

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Shoreline Modification

Construction of breakwaters, artificial reefs, and marina structures are ecological concerns. These activities reduce the amount of suitable habitat for forage fish spawning, nesting for birds, and spawner irrigation along the shoreline, which provides critical shading of the nearshore habitat during the summer.

Salmon

Five species of salmon (Chum, Coho, Pink, Chinook, and Sockeye), Steelhead trout, and Bull trout use Cherry Point as rearing habitat, a place for young fish to feed and adjust to salt water before heading out to the ocean.

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Invasive Species

Due to the large amount of vessel traffic, especially from international waters, ballast water containing invasive species is a concern. Additionally, invasive species that are already present at the Reserve pose a threat to native species.

Other threats to the Reserve include shoreline modification, pollution, and climate change.

Pollution

Marine debris, both floating in the water and washed up on shore, poses a threat to the Reserve’s health. Marine debris includes items such as plastics, fishing gear, and household waste. These items can harm marine life, entangle animals, and negatively impact the environment.

Climate Change

If climate scientists’ predictions of sea level rise, ocean acidification, increased storms, and coastal flooding are correct, the Reserve will be severely impacted. Shoreline erosion, loss of bird nesting and seal haul out/pupping habitat, and water no longer supportive of calcium-bodied life, a base of the marine food chain.

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