



AUTO TOUR

AAA Washington Travel Services

Central Oregon Coast

Oregon presents a spectacular Pacific face where the forces of nature create a stunning montage of landscapes. Miles of sandy beach alternate with bold headlands. Copious rainfall feeds the myriad streams that wind down from forested heights, through green valleys where dairy herds graze on luxuriant pastures. Approaching the sea, the rivers broaden into estuaries and bays. Dozens of small cities and towns dot the coastline. In these hard-working fishing ports, lumber towns and resort communities the visitor is always welcome. Virtually all Oregon's 400-mile littoral is public domain, thanks to the landmark 1912 legislation that preserved the state's beaches for the people

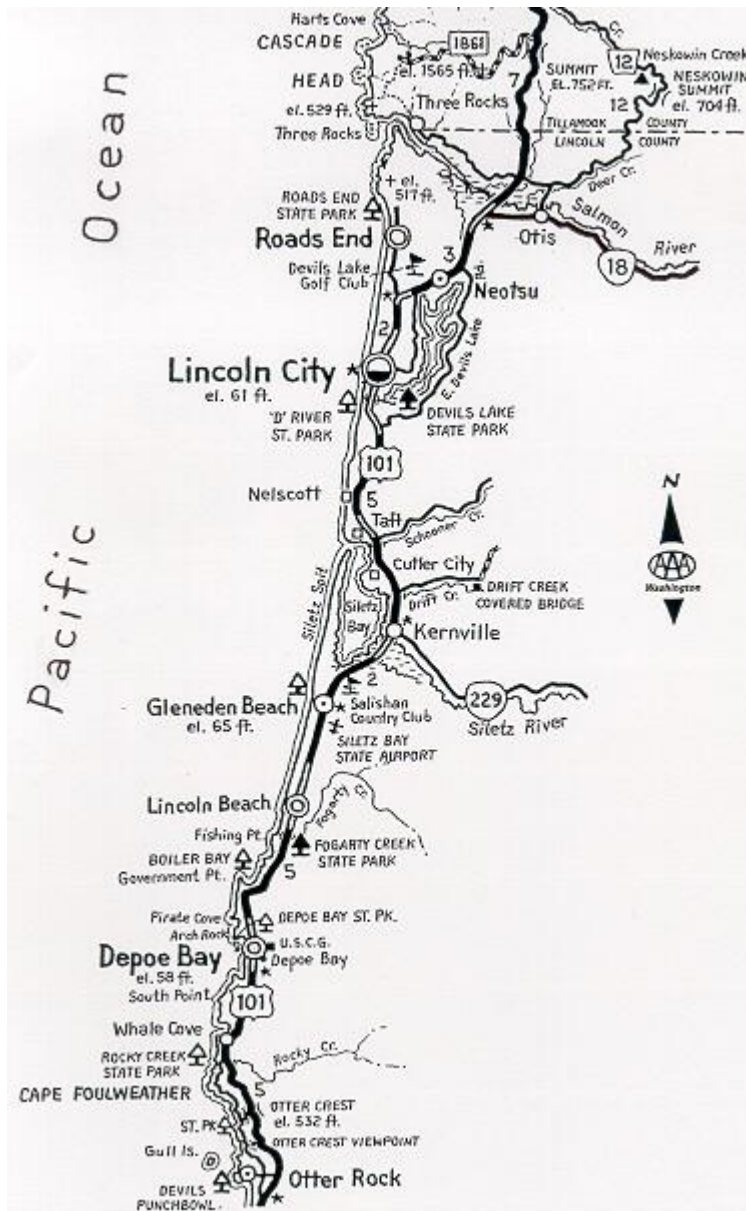


Heceta Head as seen from the viewpoint just north of Sea Lion Caves -- this is one of the most photographed panoramas on the Oregon coast.

AAA Washington's **Central Oregon Coast Auto Tour** covers the 150-mile section of US-101 from Lincoln City to Reedsport. This highway can be driven in approximately four hours, however, numerous en route attractions beckon a much more leisurely pace.

1. Lincoln City to Otter Rock

From the junction with SR-18, an important access route to the central coast from Portland and the Willamette Valley, US-101 glides over green hills. Skirting the north end of Devils Lake, we enter **LINCOLN CITY** (pop. 7,420, alt. 61 ft.), a sprawling amalgam of communities overlooking the Pacific. Described as being seven miles long and five blocks wide, Lincoln City was formed by the 1962 consolidation of a string of beach towns. Lacking a single core, the separate business districts of Oceanlake, Delake, Nelscott and Taft, reflect this legacy. Lincoln City features dozens of restaurants, galleries, boutiques, souvenir shops and motels and motor inns, many overlooking the ocean.



The prime attraction is the wide, sandy beach -- its five-mile stretch broken only by the **D River**. This quarter-mile long stream, which drains Devils Lake, is billed as the world's shortest river; access is available at **D River State Park**, on US-101. **Devils Lake State Park**, east of the highway on the lake's south shore, offers camping, picnicking and swimming. **Roads End State Park**, at the far north end of town, is an excellent beach at the base of a 500-foot rocky headland. Also at the north end of town is **Chinook Winds Casino**, a popular gaming and entertainment venue. Shoppers are served by the **Factory Stores of Lincoln City**, an outlet mall with over 65 stores on Highway 101 and East Devils Lake Road.

At the south end of Lincoln City US-101 skirts the shore of Siletz Bay -- look for cranes and herons on the marshy flats at the bay's southern end. A side road branches east from the bay to the **Drift Creek Covered Bridge**. The 66-foot long span, built in 1914, is Oregon's oldest intact covered bridge.

Salishan, a destination resort featuring golf and tennis, sits on hills overlooking the bay. Highway 101 runs through the beach towns of **GLENEDEDEN BEACH** (pop. 400, alt. 65 ft.) and **LINCOLN BEACH** (pop. 2,078, alt. 70 ft.). At the south end of the latter is **Fogarty Creek State Park**, a wedge of sand flanked by sandstone cliffs -- the island-like rock is popular with climbers while the stream offers safe wading for youngsters.

The landscape now changes dramatically as sandy beaches give way to rocky cliffs. US-101 winds around **Boiler Bay**. You can still glimpse the rusting shell of a ship's boiler at low tide. The vessel *J. Marhoffer* sank off the coast in 1910 -- its boiler washed into this small cove and the moniker endured.

DEPOE BAY (pop. 1,200, alt. 58 ft.), a compact fishing and resort town perches on hillsides overlooking the Pacific. The seven-acre bay is billed as the world's smallest navigable saltwater harbor. It's fascinating to watch commercial and sport fishing boats navigate the narrow channel entrance. The rocky shoreline here makes for outstanding wave watching, especially during winter storms. During high surf the **Spouting Horn**, a tube like cavity in the lava rock, sends its arch of spray over the highway, a most dramatic sight. The town offers several blocks of shops, restaurants and galleries catering to tourists. You can also charter boats for whale watching and deep-sea fishing excursions.

South of Depoe Bay Highway 101 passes **Whale Cove**, a picturesque bay flanked by sandstone cliffs. Just beyond lies **Rocky Point State Park**, an excellent vantage for watching the endless breakers roll against the rockbound shore -- the view stretches north to Cascade Head, beyond Lincoln City.

Highway 101 begins to climb the shoulder of **Cape Foulweather** in a long, well-engineered grade. The old highway (signed SCENIC LOOP), twists through thick rain forest. Both roads top out at **Otter Crest Viewpoint**, 500 feet above the ocean. The English navigator Captain James Cook sighted this eminence through a March gale in 1778, bestowing upon it a term descriptive of the day's meteorological condition. If you are fortunate to be here in clear weather, the panorama stretching south along the scalloped coast to Cape Perpetua is magnificent.

The Oregon Coast Highway swings down from Otter Crest to the village of **OTTER ROCK** (pop. 450, alt. 132 ft.), perched on a rocky bench overlooking the sea. **Devils Punchbowl State Park** showcases a bowl-shaped cavity in the sandstone cliffs. During storms churning waves fill its floor. A trail leads down to Beverly Beach -- watch for surfers in the cove just south of the point.

Highway 101 runs along a three-mile stretch of beach, between Otter Crest and Yaquina Head. The northern section preserved as **Beverly Beach State Park** (camping). The southern part, known as Moolack Beach, is popular with kite flyers.

Yaquina Head, a finger of ancient lava, extends a mile out into the Pacific. Its namesake lighthouse, built in 1873, crowns the promontory. A paved road runs along its southern flank to the **Yaquina Head Natural Area** (admission fee), featuring an interesting beach of blue-gray stones and outstanding tide pools -- one unique site is accessible to persons in wheelchairs. Naturalists are usually on duty weekends to answer questions about the area's natural history. Look for the resident colony of sea lions and sea birds on the offshore rocks (field glasses are helpful). A trail leads from the parking lot to the top of a knoll for a sweeping view up and down the coast.

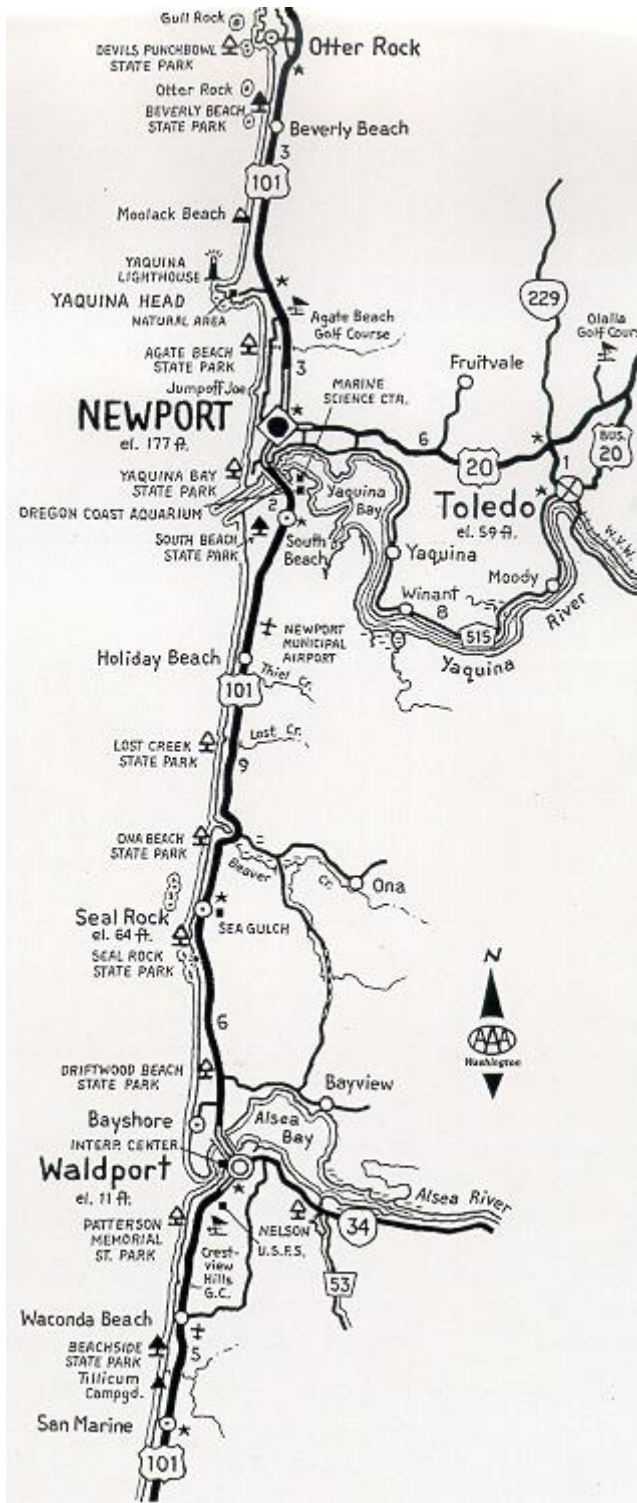
2. Newport to Yachats

The highway passes Agate Beach and enters **NEWPORT** (pop. 9,660, alt. sea level to 200 ft.), metropolis of the central coast. The city spreads over a peninsula between the ocean and Yaquina Bay. Settled in the 1850s, Newport has been attracting visitors since its first hotel opened in 1866. The colorful **Bayfront District**, with its backdrop of steep bluffs, extends several miles along the north shore of Yaquina Bay. Part of the district's charm is its eclectic mix of tourist shops, restaurants, bars, fish-processing plants, canneries and other dockside activities. Tourist attractions concentrate around **Mariner Square**, including the **Wax Works** and **Ripley's Believe it or not Museum**. Across Bay Boulevard is **Undersea Gardens**, a floating aquarium. Charter boats offer sightseeing, fishing and whale watching excursions. The **Coast Guard Station** stands at the west-end of the bay front -- it features a memorial to those who have perished at sea.

Newport's main business district straddles US-101 at the top of the bluff. History buffs will enjoy the **Lincoln County Historical Museum** (545 SE 9th Street) and the adjacent **Burrows House**, built in 1895 and furnished in period. U.S. Highway 20, which has its western terminus in Newport, is the longest numbered route in the country, extending 3,237 miles east to Boston.

Nye Beach is a picturesque oceanfront community of weatherworn clapboard cottages, the site of the area's first hotels. At the Nye Beach Turnaround is the **Yaquina Arts Center**. On the bluff to the south is the historic **Sylvia Beach Hotel**, erected in 1913. Visitors flock to the beach, a five-mile expanse of sand stretching from Yaquina Head to the jetty-girt mouth of Yaquina Bay. The northern end is known as **Agate Beach**, named for the beds of colorful stones. **Yaquina Bay State Park** crowns a pine-clad knoll overlooking the beach and harbor entrance. There are dozens of picnic sites tucked away in the piney coves. Its lighthouse, dating from 1871, is open to tours, and is reputed to be haunted.

The **Yaquina Bay Bridge**, a graceful arch of steel and concrete, carries US-101 over the mouth of its namesake bay. The center span is 138 feet above the shipping channel and the pedestrian walkway affords fine views of the harbor. On the south side of the bay is a marina and public fishing pier -- pedestrian ferries connect the south bay with the Bayfront district in Newport proper. Nearby are the **Hatfield Marine Science Center** and the **Oregon Coast Aquarium**, featuring outstanding displays of the region's natural history.



An interesting side trip from Newport follows Bay Boulevard east -- this route parallels the bay and the Yaquina River upstream eight miles to **TOLEDO** (pop. 3,560, alt. 59 ft.), located at the head of navigation.

Settled in the 1860s, the town occupies a hilly site overlooking the sprawling tidewater lumber mill. The federal government first established this mill to process Sitka spruce, an important component of early 20th-century aircraft. Howard Hughes' HK-1 Flying Boat, the world's largest aircraft, popularly known as the 'Spruce Goose,' was entirely built of wood shipped from the Toledo mill.

The Sitka, or Tideland spruce is one of the great commercial timber trees of the Pacific Northwest. It ranges along the coast from southeast Alaska to northern California. Generally reaching 80 to 125 feet in height, specimens occasionally exceed 200 feet. Its wood is lightweight and durable and was considered a "strategic species" for the early aircraft manufacturing industry.

Toledo's prosperity has waxed and waned with the vicissitudes of the forest products industry.

About a dozen abandoned storefronts lining Main Street have been converted into antique and second-hand shops. The **Toledo Museum** is located in the basement of the City Hall at Main and Second. US-20 offers a fast return route to Newport.

South of Newport, Highway 101 runs along the coast for a dozen miles, in places just above the grassy dunes. **Lost Creek** and **Ona Beach** state parks offer beach access.

SEAL ROCK (pop. 500, alt. 64 ft.), a scattered resort community, takes its name from an offshore reef frequented by marine mammals. **Sea Gulch** is a collection of tourist establishments.

The highway continues a half-dozen miles south to **WALDPART** (pop. 2,060, alt. 11 ft.), a fishing town on the south shore of Alsea Bay. Crabbing and clam digging are popular on the tide flats. The town's settlement dates back to 1880. At the

northern edge of town the **Alsea Bay Bridge Interpretive Center** exhibits the history of coastal transportation and bridge building. South of town US-101 parallels the shoreline, passing **Beachside State Park** (camping) and the community of **SAN MARINE** (pop. 200, alt. 29 ft.).

3. *Yachats to Florence*

YACHATS (pop. 670, alt. 35 ft.), pronounced YAH-hots, bears a Native American name descriptive of its setting, *at the foot of the mountain*. Perched on a hillside overlooking the sea and its namesake stream, Yachats is a pleasant resort community. Good beaches both north and south of town feature agate beds popular with rockhounds. From May to September fishers dip for smelt in Yachats' coves.

South of Yachats the coastal mountains come right down to the sea. Highway 101 winds around the base of **Cape Perpetua**, one of the major headlands on the central coast. English Captain James Cook sighted this high promontory on 7 March, 1778, naming it for Saint Perpetua, a third-century martyr. The U.S. Forest Service operates the **Cape Perpetua Visitor Center** featuring exhibits of how the forces of nature created Oregon's coastal landscape. Across the highway the **Trail of the Restless Waters** leads through spruce and pine woods to dramatic overlooks of the rocky shore -- the tide pools down on the rocks are fascinating. Off the northern edge of the trail is **Devil's Churn**, a deep cleft in the dark lava rock at the very base of the cape. The wave action in this cleft is awesome. Exercise caution when walking near the precipice and watch for so-called 'sneaker waves.'

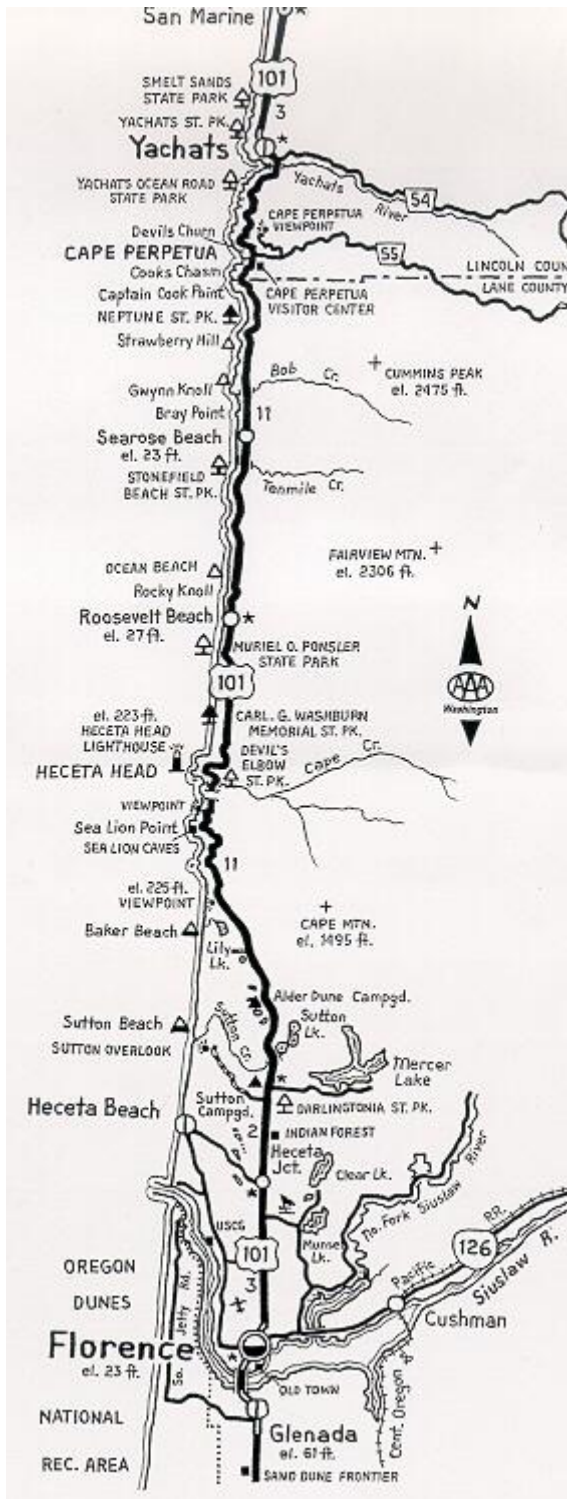


There are two routes up to the crest of Cape Perpetua. The St. Perpetua Trail switchbacks 1¼-mile from the visitor's center up the cape's south flank. A narrow road also winds two miles up to the **Cape Perpetua Viewpoint**. The 803-foot summit offers one of North America's most spectacular coastal vistas. The panorama stretches from Cape Foulweather on the north to Cape Blanco far to the south (the view to the south at left). In clear weather the seaward horizon is more than 30 miles distant.

The shelter on the ocean-facing flank served as a WWII watchtower. Along the short trail, note the striking differences in vegetation -- the south-facing slopes are grassy, while a deep forest cloaks the shadier, cooler north flank.

South of Cape Perpetua US-101 skirts isolated beaches backed by precipitous ridges. After a dozen miles the road winds around **Heceta Head**, named in 1775 for the Spanish navigator Bruno Heceta. The much-photographed **Heceta Head Lighthouse**, erected in 1894, crowns the promontory. **Devils Elbow State Park** preserves the steep cliffs and sandy beach at the base of the cape. Highway 101 arches over Cape Creek via a graceful span, then tunnels through a ridge that rises abruptly above the sea. The pullouts just south of the tunnel offer outstanding views back to Heceta Head and its lighthouse -- one of the quintessential Oregon Coast panoramas.

Listen for the raucous bark of Steller sea lions -- they frequently haul out on the rocks at the base of the cliffs. Just south of here is **Sea Lion Caves**, featuring the only Steller sea lion rookery on the North American mainland (all others are on offshore rocks and islands).



You're more likely to see large numbers of these massive pinnipeds inside the 1,500-foot long cave during inclement weather. At other times they tend to gambol in the surf and sun on the rocky shore. An elevator transports visitors down into the cave for a peek at life in the otherwise secretive rookery.

Highway 101 continues to wind along the base of Cape Mountain to **Dune Country Viewpoint**. Here, 225 feet above the sea, southbound travelers have their first view of the Oregon Dunes. The coastline changes dramatically south of here -- the mountains recede and a broad coastal plain opens up. Prevailing winds and currents have filled this plain with sand, piling it up into some of the tallest coastal sand dunes in the world.

The highway drops down to the plain, skirts freshwater lakes and traverses a mixed woodland of pine, alder and waxmyrtle. The coast rhododendron thrives here -- look for its delicate pink blossoms from May into June.

Darlingtonia Wayside (watch for the turnout east of US-101, five miles north of Florence) preserves one of the region's more unusual plants. Follow the half-mile trail through eerie bogs of the insectivorous pitcher plant *Darlingtonia californica*, also known as the cobra lily, for its fanciful resemblance to the hooded serpent.

Indian Forest, just down US-101, features full-scale replicas of North American Indian dwellings -- deer and bison roam the paddocks. The gift shop proffers Native American crafts.

FLORENCE (pop. 7,600, alt. 23 ft.), founded in 1895 as a trading center for the farms and lumber camps along the Siuslaw River, is a popular resort area and the northern gateway to the Oregon Dunes. Florence stands at the midpoint along the route of US-101 between Astoria and the California border. The city occupies the right bank of the Siuslaw, four miles above its mouth.

The origin of its name is disputed -- one version says it honors late 1850s state senator A.B. Florence; a second insists the town was named for a French sailing vessel shipwrecked near the mouth of the Siuslaw in 1874. **Old Town**, the city's turn-of-the-century business district, faces the river -- it features a collection of shops, galleries and restaurants. Two local attractions include the **Siuslaw Pioneer Museum** (on US-101) and the **American Museum of Fly Fishing** (280 Nopal Street). There are several scenic drives in the area. **Rhododendron Loop** follows the north bank of the Siuslaw to Heceta Beach (rhododendron blooms are best in late spring). On the opposite shore of the river, **South Jetty Road** runs through pine woods out onto the dunes -- note the line of ponds and marsh immediately behind the dunes. The graceful concrete arches of the **Siuslaw River Bridge** carries US-101 across its namesake stream.

4. The Oregon Dunes



The highway runs along the eastern edge of the Oregon Dunes, one of the continent's largest expanses of coastal sand dunes.

The **Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area** is a 32,000-acre reserve of shifting sand, woodland, freshwater lakes and shoreline, stretching 40 miles along the Pacific between the mouth of the Siuslaw River and Coos Bay. There are many campgrounds and several state parks adjacent to the national recreation area. The reserve is administered by the U.S. Forest Service, with headquarters and a visitor center in Reedsport.

Honeyman Memorial State Park is set in a quiet forest with freshwater lakes, backed by towering dunes. The woods blaze with pink rhododendron in May and June. Hike to the crest of the dune facing Cleawox Lake -- from the top the view stretches across a miniature Sahara to the distant Pacific. Islands of forest poke through the sea of sand. It's great fun to run pell-mell down the dune faces. If you trek out across the dunes, keep your bearings -- it's easy to get disoriented. Watch for patches of quicksand in low-lying areas.

Over the millennia, wind-blown sand has blocked the lower reaches of coastal creeks, forming freshwater lakes of all sizes in the watersheds east of the Oregon Dunes. These dune country lakes have the characteristic irregular shoreline of a "drowned valley." The larger lakes, such as Siltcoos, Woahink, Tahkenitch and Tenmile, reflect the blue or gray of the prevailing sky conditions. Water in the smaller ponds is brown or even black -- their color the product of decaying vegetation. Most of the larger lakes are popular fishing grounds; species include bass, trout, perch, crappie and bluegill. Other recreation includes swimming, boating and sailing. Largest of these dune-blocked coastal lakes is **Siltcoos**. Its outlet, the Siltcoos River, struggles through the dunes finally reaching the sea.

The town of **DUNES CITY** (pop. 1,290, alt. 80 ft.), on the northwest shore of Siltcoos Lake, has the usual tourist services. There is a cluster of Forest Service campgrounds southwest of town.

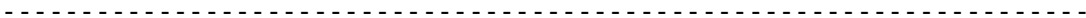
The **Oregon Dunes Overlook**, 5 miles south of Dunes City on US-101, offers an outstanding viewpoint encompassing miles of pine woods, golden dunes and the distant Pacific. Signs interpret the natural history and a hiking trail leads through six different wildlife habitats ranging from forest, marsh, grassland and dune to beach.

South of here, US-101 winds through forest with occasional glimpses of dune, passes Tahkenitch Lake, then ascends a wooded ridge. From the crest the view extends southwest over the estuary of the Umpqua River. This stream rises in the Cascades north of Crater Lake, flowing 200 miles to the Pacific. Its lower 20 miles are navigable. The highway drops down to the river's north shore and the village of **GARDINER** (pop. 750, alt. 43 ft.), a company town built to house workers of the sprawling, now-shuttered waterfront paper mill. Gardiner dates back to the early 1850s and is one of the coast's oldest

settlements. Its white frame buildings are reminiscent of New England. This site had a customs office and post office as early as 1851. Note the tall windmill palms growing in some of the yards, indicative of the mild climate.

Highway 101 follows the Umpqua River for a mile, then bridges the broad stream. **REEDSPORT** (pop. 4,230, alt. 10 ft.), busy trading center of the lower Umpqua, sprawls along the south bank of the river and extends up its tributary sloughs. Reedsport, named for late 19th-century pioneer homesteader Alfred W. Reed, is headquarters of the Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area. The **Visitor Center** is on US-101 at the junction with SR-38. The **Umpqua Discovery Center**, on the riverfront east of Highway 101, features displays of the area's natural and human history. You can visit the research vessel *Hero*, moored at the Center's pier. There are displays of its trips to the Antarctic. Jet boats will take visitors up and down the lower Umpqua. Three miles east of Reedsport on SR-38, the **Dean Creek Elk Viewing Area** offers roadside pullouts. The local herd of Roosevelt elk, largest of the world's elk species, numbers more than fifty.

AAA Washington's "**South Oregon Coast Auto Tour**" picks up at Reedsport and continues to the California border.



**KEEPING
INFORMED ON
THE ROAD**

Here is a listing of Central
Coast radio stations . . .

FLORENCE
KCST - 1250AM
KFLO - 88.1FM
KCST - 106.9FM

LINCOLN CITY
KBCH - 1400AM
KCRF - 96.7FM

NEWPORT
KPPT - 1230AM
KNPT - 1310AM
KLCO - 90.5FM
KSND - 95.1FM
KSHL - 97.5FM
KPPT - 100.7FM
KYTE - 102.7FM

REEDSPORT
KLUU - 1030AM
KLFR - 89.1FM
KSYD - 92.1FM
KJMX - 99.5FM

WALDPORT
KORC - 820AM