



# Protection Island Aquatic Reserve



The Reserve is an important feeding area for around 70% of nesting seabirds in Puget Sound, and holds one of only two places in the Salish Sea where Tufted Puffins nest.



Forage fish form a vital link in the food web between zooplankton and larger predators. The Aquatic Reserves Program has documented surf smelt beach spawning habitat on Protection Island and Thompson Spit.



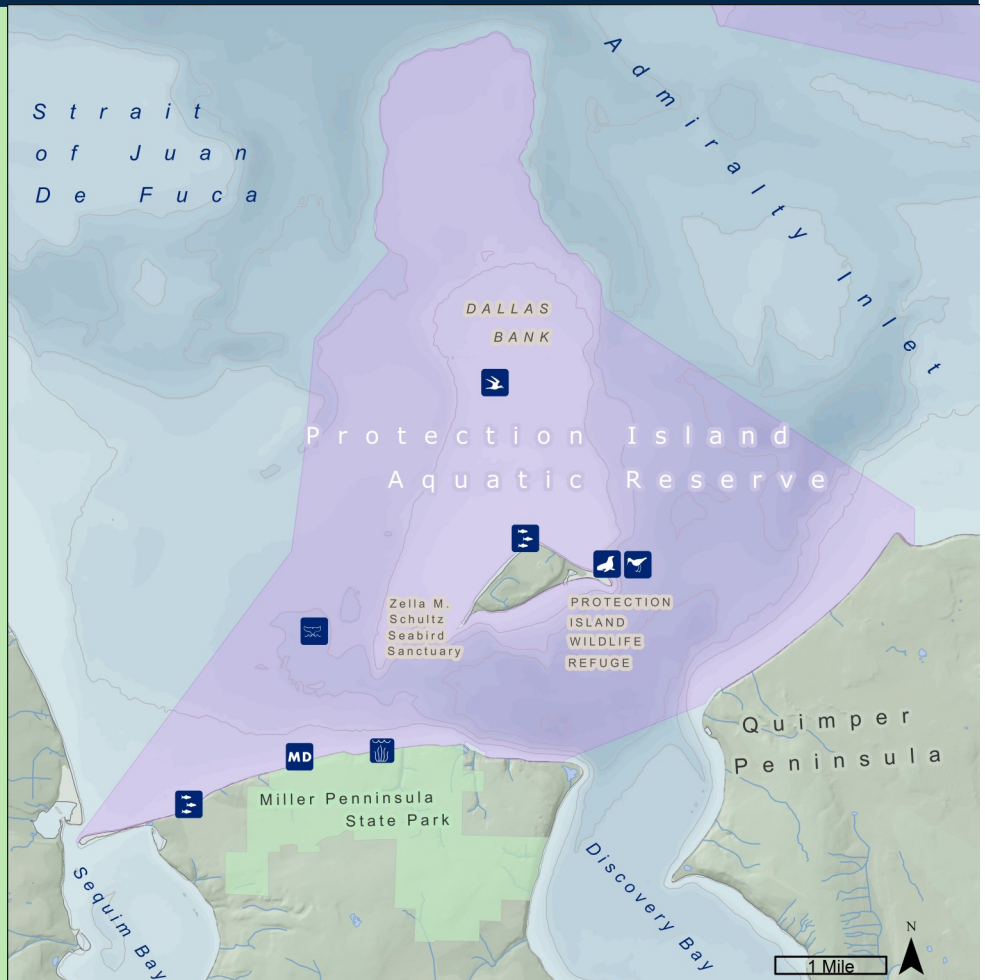
Twelve species of marine mammals forage in the Reserve including orcas, humpback whales, and both harbor and elephant seals.



An eelgrass monitoring site on Thompson Spit will give insight into long-term population trends.



Since 2013, the Aquatic Reserves Program has removed over 1,300 pounds of marine debris from the Reserve, including everything from drinking straws to tires.



## Citizen Monitoring



Last year, devoted Citizen Steward volunteers recognized that year-round bird and marine mammal habitat use in the Reserve, a marine area designated for protection under the DNR, was largely unknown. They began conducting monthly surveys to fill this gap. They have found the highest number of species during the winter when migratory birds such as Scoters, Long-tailed Ducks, and Common Murres visit the Reserve. During the spring, Rhinoceros Auklet and Glaucous-winged Gulls that nest on Protection Island were most abundant. Spring and summer bring rare Tufted Puffins and hundreds of harbor seals to the Reserve.



## Washington Aquatic Reserves

Bringing together partners to inspire science-based stewardship of Washington's exceptional aquatic resources



For more information:

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To volunteer:

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