

Olympic National Park

Zoë Trager



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Overview

The Olympic National Park covers nearly one million acres in the northwest of Washington State.



The Olympic National Park is very **diverse**. It includes three different ecosystems: mountains, pacific coast, and temperate rain forest.

Hoh Rainforest



The Hoh Rainforest is a part of the Olympic National Park. It is a **temperate rainforest**. The **canopy** is lush and green due to all of the rain the area gets. The Hoh Rainforest is covered in a layer of mosses and ferns as well.

Pacific Coast



Beautiful sunsets can be seen on the coastlines of the Pacific Ocean when visiting the Olympic National Park.

Grey whales can be seen **spouting** in the water. Seals, sea lions, and sea otters are also often swimming in the Pacific Ocean or resting on the beaches.

Olympic Mountains



Mount Olympus is the highest **peak** in the Olympic Mountain Range, reaching 7,980 feet at the **summit**.

Hurricane Ridge is a great lookout point to view the Olympic Mountains.

Weather

Temperate rainforests have mild weather, so it is never extremely cold or extremely hot



How much does it rain in temperate rainforests?

In the Hoh Rainforest, the average rainfall per year is 140 to 170 inches, which is 12 to 14 feet!

Diversity

How is there so much diversity in the Olympic National Park?

Since there are high mountain peaks and low-lying rivers, there are many changes in **elevation**. Different elevations get different amounts of rainfall, causing many different **habitats** to form.





There are a wide variety of plants and animals in the Olympic National Park. Over 1,450 different types of plants grow in the park.

Also, hundreds of species of mosses can be found throughout the park. There is even a hiking trail in the park called the Hall of Mosses where you can find some of the different kinds!

Elwha River Restoration



The Elwha River flows through the Olympic National Park. A large **dam** used to block the river's natural state, but in 2011 the process began to remove the dam.

It was the largest dam removal in US History.

The Elwha River restoration process had many necessary steps in order to return the river flow to its original channel.

This table shows some of the fish found in the Elwha River and how they were affected by the removal of the dam. The ability for the fish to **spawn** was greatly improved once the dam was removed, increasing fish populations in the Elwha River.

| Type of Fish | Pre-Dam Ability for fish to spawn | Post Dam: Ability for fish to spawn |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Coho Salmon | Fair | Good/excellent |
| Chun Salmon | Poor | Good |
| Pink Salmon | Poor | Good |
| Summer Steelhead | Fair | Good |
| Sockeye Salmon | Fair/Poor | Fair/Poor |

Park Protection

The Olympic National Park is one of the largest wilderness areas in the United States. In order to preserve its natural state, it has been named a **World Heritage Site** and an **International Biosphere Reserve**.



How many world heritage sites are there?
There are 1031 World Heritage sites in the world.

Glossary

Canopy: Upper layer of a forest formed by the tops of trees.

Dam: A barrier blocking the flow of water.

Diverse: Different from one another.

Elevation: The height of a place.

Habitat: The place where a plant or animal naturally lives.

International Biosphere Reserve: Ecosystems promoting biodiversity and sustainable use.

Peak: The pointed top of a mountain.

Spawn: Laying eggs in water.

Spouting: Whales shooting water out of their blowhole with force.

Summit: The top of a mountain.

Temperate Rainforest: Woodland area in the temperate zone.

Peak: The pointed top of a mountain.

World Heritage Site: An area recognized as being of outstanding international importance and deserving of protection.

Works Referenced

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