

## The Nehalem

Strongly associated with the Clatsop Tribe, the Nehalem occupied the Oregon Coast from Tillamook Head to well south of Tillamook Bay. The tribe still lives in Oregon today. Their language is part of the Penutian group. The Nehalem had two names for a big-foot-like creature which depended on the gender of the animal. A *Qe'ku* was a wild woman while a *Yi'dyi'tai* was a wild man.



### Wild Man

Source: *Nehalem Tillamook Tales*, by Elizabeth Derr Jacobs, 2003. Corvallis: University of Oregon Books.

People were drying fish up the Nehalem River. They heard a noise, the brush was crackling loudly, they knew that no wind nor common animal could be making that kind of noise. They hurried into their canoes and crossed over to the other side of the river. They forgot their little dog. They crawled into a place and lay down to listen. Their little dog barked and barked, then suddenly quit. Then they heard a terrific noise as Wild Man knocked down one side of the house. Then he must have gone back into the woods. They could not sleep they were so frightened, although they knew it was such a deep river he would be unable to wade it.

The next day one fellow went over in a canoe to have a look. One side of that large house where they had dried fish was smashed to pieces. The dog was lying there dead, and Wild Man's huge tracks were all around. That fellow came back and told the people, "Yes, I saw his tracks." They put all of their belongings and their fish in canoes and left that place for good. They would not live there any more for fear he might come again. After that no one would camp on that side of the river.

That really happened.

### Wild Men

Source: *Nehalem Tillamook Tales*, by Elizabeth Derr Jacobs, 2003. Corvallis: University of Oregon Books.

There must have been a whole tribe of Wild Men because there were always some around.

A Nehalem man was not married. He would go hunting and permit the married people to have the meat he got. One summer he killed an elk, and he saved the blood. He took the elk's bladder and filled it with the blood. He made a camp near there. He placed that bladder of blood near his feet, lay down, and went to sleep. Wild Man came and helped himself to the elk meat.





The man awoke. He was too warm, he was sweating. "Goodness! What is the matter?" he asked himself, looking about. It was like daylight, there was such a great fire burning there. Wild Man had placed large pieces of bark between the man and the fire so the man would not get too hot while he slept. You see, he treated that fellow well. When he spoke to him, Wild Man called the man "My nephew."

The man awoke to see Wild Man, that extremely large man, sitting by the fire. He had the fat ribs and front of that elk on a stick, roasting them by the fire. He said, "This is how I am getting to be. I am getting to be always on the bum, these days. I travel all over, I cannot find any elk. I took your elk, dear nephew, I took your elk meat."

That man stretched himself, he had forgotten about that bladder of blood. He kicked it with his feet, causing it to make a noise. Wild Man looked around; he said, "It sounds as if a storm were coming." (A Wild Man does not like to travel when it is storming.) Wild Man was afraid of that noise, he kept kicking that bladder of blood. He said, "Yes, a storm is coming." Wild Man asked, "My dear nephew, would you tell me the best place to run to?" That man showed Wild Man a high bluff. "Over in that direction is a good place to run," he told him. Wild Man started out running. Soon the man heard him fall over that bluff.

The man did not go back to sleep any more that night. In the morning he went to look. There Wild Man lay, far down at the foot of the bluff. He went around by a better route and climbed down to see the body. He took Wild Man's quiver, he left Wild Man lying there. Then he became afraid, so he made ready and returned from the woods taking as much meat as he could carry. He said, "Wild Man found me. He jumped over the bluff." He too found all kinds of bones in that quiver.

They must have been lucky pieces because elk would come down from the mountain for him, and only he could get sea lions on the rocks.

