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The Dungeness Dispatch

2021: COVID, SEASPIRACY & NEW REGS

As we look back on the 2020-2021 season we can see why it was such a hard season to predict. Alan Shanks, due to a changing ocean, said we could see 8 million pounds or 35 million—as the season was delayed due to low meat yield.

Most of the state was able to start crabbing by December 16th, while the north held with Washington as they waited for Domoic Acid to settle down. But the fleet would stay put until January 8th before finally settling on a price.

It only took about a week for the bigger boats to see that the lower end of Shanks prediction was going to be closer and they started to call it a day.

By March 3rd, the fleet had landed about 10 million pounds, and almost two months later they were just at 11.6 million pounds and controversy swirled around a [Netflix “documentary” claiming it was impossible to fish sustainably](#).

Then, on May 1st, new regulations went into effect to reduce pot limits, require late season tags, and move all crab gear inside 40 fathoms. A host of violations were noted at the start. Fishery managers raised concern as they continue to push forward on the necessary ITP process. The bottom line, as stated during an advisors call in May, is that the transition from April into the late-season measures, “flat didn’t work very well this year due to lack of pre-planning, weather, etc.”

But, there are some positives to take from this season, Executive Director Hugh Link said.

“The overall average price, well above \$4.90/lb for much of the past two months, is one of the highest we have seen in this fishery for Oregon. The previous high was set six years ago, in another low yield year, but at just \$4.11/lb—which is well below what we are seeing these days. And that is good news for the fishermen and it tells us that there is definitely demand for Oregon Dungeness crab even at this turbulent time in our history and with restaurants not operating at their usual full capacity.”



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Our Mission

- “To enhance the image of the Oregon Dungeness crab industry, and to increase opportunities for profitability through promotion, education and research.”



WIND SYMPOSIUM 2.0

In 2020, RODA held a first-of-its-kind symposium on the current science regarding fisheries and offshore wind interaction. Recently, they announced that they had received an additional \$155,000 grant from NOAA Fisheries to conduct a second “Synthesis Of the Science” symposium on floating offshore wind interactions with fisheries.

The [Responsible Offshore Development Alliance \(RODA\)](#) is a broad, membership-based coalition of fishing industry associations and companies working to improve the compatibility of new offshore development with their businesses.

This project will follow the structure of the first [Synthesis of Science](#). RODA will work through the partnership to co-

develop a much-needed summary of scientific knowledge, current research, and monitoring efforts associated with floating turbine technology. This will result in a new resource for understanding the knowledge gaps and most important questions for further research.

Participants in the project are expected to include commercial and recreational fishermen, Tribal Nations, fishing industry representatives, NOAA Fisheries and BOEM experts, wind energy developers, federal fishery management councils, states, and other expert scientists from the U.S. and Europe.

“These fishermen are scientists of the ocean,” - Francis Chan

HYPOXIA RETURNS

Dr. Francis Chan, with Oregon State University, recently learned he will be heading a research institute there. It will be funded with \$37 million from NOAA.

But, right now his attention is on the continuation of a study into the occurrence of hypoxia zones off the Oregon coast. A study that some members of the fleet have helped with.

“I’ve placed 38 sensors in crab pots with help from the crab fleet,” Chan says. “That is indispensable.”

He believes this year is shaping up to be one much like 2006, which was an event that killed thousands of crabs and other marine life.

“When we have really strong wind years, like we’re having this year right now, we tend to have those low oxygen zones,” Chan said.

The winds create upwelling in the ocean, which in turn creates conditions that can cause dead zones.

[This year marks the earliest start to the upwelling season in 35 years.](#)

FIP ANNUAL UPDATE COMING UP

“The Oregon Dungeness Crab fishery is vital to the economic vitality of our coastal communities, our region, and our state. And never has it been more important than right now, from a business perspective, for the longevity of our industry that we showcase the fact that our fishery has been built sustainably for the long-term benefits of our environment.”

That was the way we started a letter that our office recently sent out to seek industry and business support for our efforts on our Fishery Improvement Project (FIP) with an eye towards MSC certification. And that letter went out in the wake of the Seaspiracy controversy, further highlighting the importance of the task that our fishery is currently undertaking as we try to convince an ever-skeptical consumer base of the good that is being done by our fishermen and the industry at-large.

As part of walking that walk, we have to continuously update our progress in a transparent manner. Which we will again be doing with the help of ForSeas Solutions, as we work to complete an annual report by the end of August.

You can follow our progress on our page at [FisheryProgress.org](#).

There are a total of 11 goals, some with two or three sub-sections, that need to be updated. Those goals, basically, get narrowed down to try to meet six primary objectives:

1. Develop an index of crab stock status that takes uncertainty into account and assures that abundance stays in a productive zone (by 2022).
2. Identify whether there are any main primary or main secondary species associated with this fishery (by 2023).
3. Develop and implement short- and long-term options for reducing whale entanglements in Dungeness crab fishing gear by (2025).
4. Develop and implement new technologies to streamline logbook submittals and to monitor compliance with closed or restricted fishing areas (marine reserves) (by 2025).
5. Develop a Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) for the Oregon Dungeness Crab fishery that explicitly incorporates the precautionary approach and includes objectives consistent with achieving the outcomes expressed by MSC’s Principle 2 by (2024).
6. Conduct an external review of key parts of the Oregon Dungeness crab fishery management system (by 2025).



This year, the LPGA's longest-running non-major event is set to celebrate 50 years in mid-September (complete with live Golf Channel coverage) and we'll making ourselves visible.

MARKETING REPORT: MIX OF OLD AND NEW

It was another unusual year on the marketing front, with the pandemic still going on and a lot of events postponed once again. We also ran into the question of how to handle a down year as landings forced us to change our messaging. But we adapted, highlighting our sustainable fishing practices and got creative in the types of ways we engaged with the consumer.

With the mentioned release of Seaspiracy and the rising public concern about sustainable fishing practices, it was important to keep driving the message home about the value that our fishery places in sustainability.

Once again, we had a great group of media partners and got a lot of bang for our buck. Some of the highlights included a fantastic launch leading up to the Super Bowl, as KOIN-TV got us an estimated \$15,000 of added value. The brief campaign in the Portland area netted at least 4.4 MILLION impressions (when an advertisement or any other form of digital media renders on a user's screen). We also again put our Culinary Ambassador Leif Benson to work (the first of many, many times this year) appearing in their Big Game Tailgate segment before the Super Bowl: [YOUTUBE LINK: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jrQoL3jpEQo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jrQoL3jpEQo).

KATU-TV also overdelivered, providing an additional \$8,000 of added value exposure. A number of other partners overdelivered in clicks or spots. But one of our most fruitful partnerships was with account exec Julie Lee at KGW. She not only delivered a great campaign, but also continued to contact us after and match us with no-cost or low-cost publicity opportunities. Those included putting Leif back to work on Zoom as he took part in a fundraiser for the Oregon Zoo Foundation and as part of Fleet Week during the Portland Rose Festival.

Julie also put us in contact with representatives of the Cambia Portland Classic. The LPGA's longest running non-Major event is celebrating its 50th year this year. We have reached a sponsorship agreement with them that will have us in a number of locations that week in September. Their demographic is largely our demographic and this will provide a great opportunity to spread our message of sustainable fishing and potentially reach a global audience if we gain some pictures and/or mentions during the Golf Channel's broadcast of the tournament.



License Plates

The commission is moving forward with exploring options for a specialty license plate for the official state crustacean.

At our last board meeting, some designs were submitted from Cappelli Miles. There is no specific timeline. But, the general plan is to have further work done on designs and, if the decision is made to go forward, we would utilize our presence at the LPGA golf tournament to start collecting contacts for those interested in purchasing a plate.

Once we get approval from the DMV on our design (again, that is if we move forward) it would be up to us to get 3,000 plates sold ahead of ultimate approval.

For perspective, this month Oregon Parks and Recreation Department and Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board announced a new salmon plate design would be rolling out Sept. 1.

The DMV does collect a surcharge upon sale of these plates that can be put towards a cause.

The salmon groups released their first license plate in 1998, to help fund the protection and restoration of native salmon habitat. According to the release, the plates have raised more than \$8 million so far.



VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

Congratulations. We have all just about made it through another unbelievable season. It was another year of dealing with the effects and impacts of the Coronavirus. But, this one came with low landings and a new challenge brought on by the inability to test razor clams for domoic acid for much of the season.

That inability meant that ODA had to test, and test, and test Dungeness. Even though crab in Oregon stayed below action levels all season. This resulted in many headaches for processors and the industry. It is something that needs to be addressed, and is being addressed as I write this, before we head in to next season.

Speaking of change, as you can read in this newsletter, there has been a changing of the guard. After 17 years, **Rick Lilienthal** is leaving the commission. It will be impossible to replace his experience, and his wisdom and candor will be missed. Thank you for your service, Rick.

I also want to thank **Joanna Goslin** for her service and many vital contributions to the commission as our office manager. We wish her well in her new career.

As those members depart, I want to welcome aboard our newest member: **Jacob Fletcher**. We look forward to actually having an in-person meeting soon (we hope). Greetings, Jake!

Finally, I want to encourage you to take advantage of our text alert system. You can find out how to set it up on the last page. But the system will allow us to get important and time-sensitive messages faster and straight to your phones.

-Crystal Adams/Commission Chair

COOS BAY JETTY REPAIR

Rep. Peter DeFazio announced that he secured an additional \$32.72 million for the Port of Coos Bay as part of the Fiscal Year 2022 Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill.

CEO of the Port of Coos Bay John Burns says “our North Jetty is losing 20 feet every year and has receded more than 750 feet since it’s construction. This deterioration creates a very dangerous situation for commercial ships, commercial and sport fisherman, and

recreational boaters, and impedes the U.S. Coast Guard’s ability to carry out search and rescue missions. Thanks to Chairman DeFazio’s leadership, the Corps of Engineers will finally have the money it needs to repair the jetty, and that will save lives.”

Rock is expected to be delivered this winter, with reconstruction of the head beginning by late spring.

CRABINAR WRAP

The Elakha Alliance held an online forum featuring a number of experts to discuss the possibility of sea otter reintroduction on the Oregon coast. Unfortunately, the “Crabinar” didn’t provide the kind of give-and-take that many in the crab industry were hoping for.

Alan Shanks was included in the lineup and started off the discussion highlighting his studies that have been funded by the Oregon Dungeness Crab Commission, with his belief that nearly all legal 4-year-olds are taken each year. Something that wasn’t addressed in subsequent presentations when speakers contended that introducing voracious crab eaters into the mix would not impact the fishery.

Tracey Grimes, who took part in a study in California, noted that—indeed, sea otters that they studied from 1999 to 2012 ate a lot of Dungeness crab. Yet, again, they contended no long term impact.

Afterward, some of the researchers suggested they could better address concerns if they knew what they were and asked us to provide them with a top 6 or 8 questions the fleet may have. We will do that, but we still do not know how that compensates for actual discussion.

More to come, I’m sure.

ODFW REMINDERS

The derelict gear program industry notice went out in June.

Remember, the season closes August 14th and all crab gear must be out of the water by August 14th. The two-week gear clean-up period was removed by permanent rule in September 2020.

Also, an unlimited amount of derelict crab gear can still be retrieved August 15 - October 31 by any commercially licensed vessel but cannot be kept or sold unless participating in the permitted post-season recovery program.

All of the completed post-recovery registration forms will be posted on [ODFW’s post season derelict gear webpage](#).

The Conservation Plan exhibit will be in front of the OFWC in September.

ODFW will be presenting an informational exhibit to the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission (OFWC) on the DRAFT Habitat Conservation Plan (CP) to address marine life entanglement risk reduction and incidental take in the Oregon commercial Dungeness crab fishery.

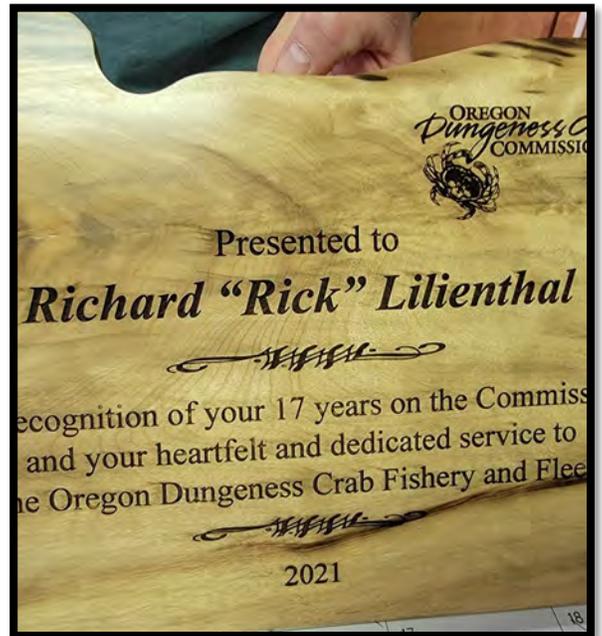
In recent years the OFWC has adopted enhanced accountability measures (September 2019) and entanglement risk reduction measures (September 2020), all of which are foundational to the approach to managing entanglements in the fishery and described in the draft CP. The plan will be released in mid-August for public review and comment prior to the OFWC meeting on September 17. There will also be an opportunity to provide public comment on the draft CP at the OFWC meeting.

BULLETIN BOARD MATERIAL

END OF AN ERA:

For almost two decades, the ODCC has had one constant as part of the board and that has been fisherman Rick Lilienthal. That run ended with his most recent term on June 30th.

The fishery owes a debt of gratitude to all who serve on the board, but a big one to Rick for all the time put in helping to guide and enhance the image of the industry over the past seventeen years. We wish you the best, Rick!



“This community—and oyster growers too- are important for this project because salt marshes, along with their channels and surrounding areas, can be important for Dungeness crabs.” - Dr. Catherine de Rivera, PSU.

Oregon Focus Groups on Marsh Restoration: Fishermen Needed for Portland State Study

- Participants will receive a \$40 gift card and a meal.
- Participants must be 18 years of age or older and be fully vaccinated to be eligible.
- The focus groups will be held on the following dates and locations:
 - 1) August 5th 10:30-noon at the Yacht Club (750 SE Bay Blvd., Newport, OR 97365);
 - 2) 2) Alsea Bay, August 5th 4:30-6pm at the First Baptist Church (2620 E Alsea Hwy, Waldport, OR 97394) and
 - 3) 3) Coos Bay, August 6th 10:30-noon at 91167 South Slough NERRS (61907 Seven Devils Rd, Charleston, OR 97420).

Choose the one that fits your schedule and email Shersten Finley at sfinley@pdx.edu and/or leave a message with your name and contact number at 503-725-2497. Please let us know if you have any food allergies, require child care or translation services. Thank you!



OREGON DUNGENESS CRAB COMMISSION

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JAKE FLETCHER/CHARLESTON

JOHN MOODY/NEWPORT
(Processor Rep)

MIKE RETHERFORD/
NEWPORT

JARED REEVES/CHARLESTON

BRIAN NOLTE/BROOKINGS

LEIF ERIC BENSON/PUBLIC
MEMBER

BOB EDER/ASTORIA

VITAL FISHERY ALERTS TO YOUR PHONE

TEXT MESSAGE PROGRAM:

Remember, to consider opting-in to receive industry alerts via text message. It's part of an effort to improve our ability to provide you with timely updates on information important to the fleet. Texts will be sent to those who voluntarily register to receive this information as needed. **Just text CRAB to (833) 763-0443.** Estimate 2 messages per month (message and data rates may apply).

NEXT ODCC MEETING:

The next meeting is expected to be held soon *and in person*. Watch for the exact date and location, to be determined. Sign up for the text alert program and it will be sent to your phone.



TO BEST SERVE YOU AND ALLOW THE USE OF HYPERLINKS THE NEWSLETTER IS NOW SENT ONLY VIA EMAIL, **UNLESS YOU HAVE SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED MAIL DELIVERY**. IF AT ANY TIME YOU WOULD LIKE TO CHANGE YOUR DELIVERY OPTION, PLEASE CONTACT US AT:

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