



July 17, 2020  
Volume 3, Issue 1



# The Dungeness Dispatch

## 2020 A CONFLICTED SEASON (COVID)

As the 2019-2020 season winds down, the numbers are looking good. But, we all know they do not tell the whole story of what has been a roller-coaster ride from the start.

For those who were able to get out when the season opened on December 31, or during the month of January, it often felt like an actual roller-coaster as storms hammered the coast over and over again.

By the time the weather finally started to relent, Coronavirus or COVID-19 had started to impact the world. Dungeness export to China was disrupted in January and early February, right as Chinese New Year's sales were booming.

In March, social distancing became a reality in the U.S. and business plans had to adjust on the fly as restaurants closed down or became take-out only.

Fishermen did see a slight uptick in price in April, however, as businesses were able to adjust and figure out different ways to deliver seafood to consumers.

The economic hardships for fishing fleets and processors led to a group of lawmakers to push for the inclusion of aid for the industry in an economic relief bill. Eventually, \$300-million was allocated to be split among all U.S. fishermen and processors in the CARES Act. In the end, \$16-million of that was to be provided to Oregon.

Executive Director Hugh Link said these unprecedented developments led to the commission having to adjust its marketing strategy to meet this rapidly changing season. "We revamped our message to suit the ever-evolving market, joining with the hashtag Eat Seafood America movement, for instance, and redirecting some of our ad dollars to where they could be the most good. We will continue to look for ways to be flexible and creative going forward."

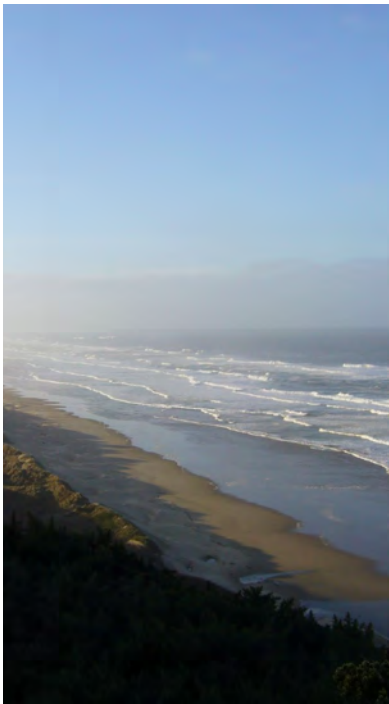


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### Our Mission

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



## ALLIES IN THE FACE OF WIND ENERGY

As wind energy projects off the west coast started to gain momentum through the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), the crab commission looked east for insight and found an alliance.

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. It seeks to coordinate science and policy approaches, through public and private partnerships, to manage development of the Outer Continental Shelf in a way that minimizes conflicts with existing traditional and historical fishing.

It is also an organization that has been dealing with offshore wind developments for a while now.

With sites starting to be investigated off the coasts of California and Oregon, they decided, in January, to launch a Pacific Advisory Committee.

The RODA-Pacific Advisory Committee is comprised of leaders from several West Coast fisheries throughout California and Oregon. Its purpose is to improve science and policy approaches to development, while also increasing and improving communication to help strengthen ties between Pacific fishermen and fishing communities across the country.

(cont'd below)

*RODA partners help keep fishermen focused on both coasts.*

### NEW BAIT SURVEY

Toby Harbison, with Oregon State University, is looking for your help with a survey on bait use. She explains:

"There's a lot we don't know about Dungeness crabs, including exactly what and how much they eat. I'm an OSU graduate student at Hatfield Marine Science Center studying crab feeding. My advisor, Dr. Sarah Henkel, and I think that bait from the commercial Dungeness crab fishery, cannibalism, and wild prey on the seafloor all contribute to their diet.

This survey will help me figure out how much of each type of bait the crabs consume. The data I collect will contribute to our understanding of this valuable and sustainable fishery. Sharing personal information like your name and phone number is completely optional. If you would prefer to do this survey over the phone, call me, Toby Harbison, at (805) 705-7778. Thanks!"

Here's the survey link:

<https://ee.kobotoolbox.org/x/NmjJPDY>

## ALLIES IN FACE OF WIND ENERGY, CONT'D

Recently, RODA's Executive Director, Annie Hawkins, had a featured article on the National Fishermen website titled: [Seven Things Every Fisheries Professional Needs To Know](#).

There are a couple of big points to take away from that article. The first is that fishermen need to be heard. They need to bring their knowledge to the table. Wind energy is not simply putting a floating turbine in the water and plugging it in, but the people putting it there don't know what they don't know.

"When viewed in conjunction with strict fisheries management measures, everything from interactions with protected resources to changes in port traffic and access will affect fisheries in ways that those outside the industry aren't well-suited to understand without your involvement," Hawkins writes.

The very next point she makes is that it is important to get your needs heard and acted on before the first project is settled. Setting precedent is going to have consequences down the road.

"Just because the current projects are not located in your area doesn't mean they won't affect you. A relatively small group of developers own the leases, and the federal permitting process is being tested and tweaked in real time."

Next up, [RODA received a \\$150,000 NMFS grant](#) to convene a first-of-its-kind symposium on the current science regarding fisheries and offshore wind interactions.

The project, "Understanding the State of the Science," will advance agency, fishing industry, offshore wind energy developer, and public understanding of existing research on interactions between the two industries.



*Fresh off his appearance on Top Chef, Gregory Gourdet made time for two segments on KOIN in Portland to discuss Oregon Dungeness Crab for our campaign!*

## MARKETING REPORT: COVID CAMPAIGN

This was an unusual campaign to go with what has been an unusual year.

Our board approved a marketing campaign, that was a slight increase over last season. A part of that was due to an increase in the amount of digital advertising that we were going to be doing this time around. We were also going to be partnering, once again, with the Portland Winterhawks minor league hockey team.

We also started a new process this year. Borrowing, slightly, from the Beef Commission we went through a bid process this year. Something we learned from and will do again for 2020-2021, only much sooner in the year.

Then the coronavirus hit. The live market dried up and social distancing arrived. We hit the brakes on our campaign before it even started. The Portland Winterhawks never did get to finish their season, so our contract with them was never acted on.

As the fishing industry and restaurants adjusted their business plans on the fly, we tinkered with our marketing campaign. We added the newly started Eat Seafood America messaging to our ads, and sidelined our more celebratory ads in favor of the spots that focused on our fishermen and family.

We also moved our focus, which has been pretty wide ranging in past years, and zeroed in on the I-5 corridor to the coast. Although, some campaigns still reached larger populations in the center of the state.

The campaign ran from May through June, and ended with a bit of a silver lining for us. Since people were staying home more the radio and television stations were reporting some of the highest ratings they had seen in years, or even decades. Also, we were one of the few people out there advertising, and in appreciation we were being given some very choice free spots to help fill whenever they needed to plug something in (for instance, just at this one station in the Medford area, midway through the campaign we had already received over \$1200 in bonus spots).

Our Culinary Ambassador Chef Leif Benson, again, did a tremendous job for us. Appearing on a variety of programs (many from his home)! And, we also had a great assist from Chef Gregory Gourdet (pictured above) who put together some great spots.



### Hashtags

For those unfamiliar: Simply put, hashtags (like #EatOregonSeafood) are a way to connect social media content to a specific topic, event, theme or conversation.

Since the closures and social distancing began, the media messaging from the crab commission has made use of two hashtags

#EatSeafoodAmerica, which was begun by the Seafood Nutrition Partnership, and #EatOregonSeafood.

The majority of the seafood that Oregonians eat is served in restaurants, so the sharp decrease in seafood sales between March and May was significantly impacting business.

To relieve some of the industry's economic pain, Oregon Sea Grant fisheries specialists partnered with the Oregon Department of Agriculture and the Oregon seafood industry on an initiative called Eat Oregon Seafood.

That would lead to the creation of a [webpage](#) and the accompanying #EatOregonSeafood campaign.



## VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

Sadly, we have been touched by tragedy recently. So, I would like to start by extending my condolences to the families and friends of Lyle Marrington and Kyle and Amber Novelli. They will be terribly missed.

This has been a year unlike anything many of us have ever seen, and the Coronavirus makes the future hard to predict. But, one thing you can count on is that you have a hard working board of commissioners who will continue to do what we can to “enhance the image of Oregon Dungeness Crab through promotion, education, and research.”

Change is another thing you can count on, and this is the time of year for change within commodity commissions. While I took over the role of Chair of the Crab Commission a few months back, this is my first time addressing you from the “Bridge.”

So, I want to take this opportunity to thank the former chairman, **John Corbin**, for his many years of faithful service to the board and the fishermen of this fleet. It was a job well done.

I also want to thank **Tyler Long** for his service and many vital contributions to the commission as board member over the past three years. Thank you, Tyler!

As those members depart, I want to welcome aboard our newest members: **Bob Eder** and **Jared Reeves**. We know they will hit the ground running. Greetings, guys!

Finally, another new member joined ODCC, as **Joanna Goslin** was hired as the Office Manager. Next time you call the office, welcome her aboard.

-Crystal Adams/Commission Chair

## SEA OTTER REINTRODUCTION EFFORT

Updating you on an issue that is gaining in public attention, the Oregon Dungeness Crab Commission recently wrote an editorial letter to fourteen newspapers around the state. The letter was sent in long and short form, depending on the paper’s rules for submitting letters.

The letter came in response to a recent study touting some economic benefits if a nonprofit dedicated to bringing the sea otter back to Oregon waters is successful.

The group is named the Elakha Alliance — “elakha” is the Clatsop-Chinookan word for sea otter.

The Smithsonian reported that the study shows the otters’ effect on their ecosystem—including increasing populations of fish, carbon capture and tourism—far outweigh the costs to the commercial shellfish fisheries with which they compete for tasty clams and crabs.

## THE COMMISSION’S REPLY:

Dear Editor,

A recent story has been gaining traction about a new study showing there could be economic benefits to the reintroduction of sea otters to the Oregon Coast.

We believe that to be an over-simplified look at the issue. To be objective, the Oregon Dungeness Crab Commission wants you to know that there could also be profoundly serious economic ramifications for the state.

It is one reason that members of the commission have been involved in discussions with the Elakha Alliance from early on in their mission to restore sea otters to the Oregon coast. We have been stressing to them our concerns, and the need for an exhaustive economic feasibility study.

The bottom line is that Sea Otters, in any true number, have never co-existed with the commercial or recreational Oregon Dungeness crab industry. And, in other areas of the Pacific Northwest where reintroduction has taken place the results have been devastating for the fishermen.

Sea Otters weigh between 35 and 90 pounds and must eat 25-percent of their body weight — each day- to survive. Like many Oregonians, they love Dungeness crab.

In the 1960’s, Alaska reintroduced about 400 Sea Otters to Southeast Alaska. In 2000, that number had grown to an estimated 12,000. By 2012, there were an estimated 27,500 Sea Otters calling SE Alaska home.

Commercial fishermen there have been battling to find some balance ever since. But, it is tough going because the Sea Otters are protected by federal law.

So, you have a population of these voracious eaters that is growing at a rate of 12-percent, annually, unchecked.

That kind of growth, here on the Oregon coast, could have a significant impact on the recreational crabbing industry and a commercial crabbing industry that has brought in over a half a billion dollars to the state’s economy just over the past four seasons.

This is just a quick glance at why we believe there is still much work to be done and many more questions to be answered before Elakha Alliance can say that some benefits are enough to outweigh others and reintroduction should go forward.

It is our hope that, in the interim, everyone does a better job at fully spelling out what these impacts are going to be. Because, as other communities have found out, this can create one major problem that could become exceedingly difficult to try and solve later.

Oregon Dungeness Crab Commission



## BULLETIN BOARD MATERIAL

### ODFW UPDATE:

ODFW is still on track to have the commission hear the regulatory package at the September 2020 meeting (which may need to be held remotely). Information about that package (industry notices, etc.) is on ODFW's [commercial crab website](#).

Also, recently in the Florence area, **humpbacks were reported in high abundance in ~40 fathoms in and amongst crab gear**. ODFW is asking that you work to voluntarily move crab gear into more shallow water.

Please take these reports seriously, share this information with those who can act on it, and do what you can to proactively address this.



*"...Oregon crab gear (from this fishing season) has been recovered from a dead juvenile humpback whale, that washed ashore in the Point Reyes area in mid-June. It is in all of our best interest to avoid additional entanglements..." - ODFW*

### Oregon Whale Entanglement Working Group:

#### BEST PRACTICES

- ◆ Remove any fishing gear you are not actively tending
- ◆ Use the minimum amount of scope required to compensate for tides, currents and weather
- ◆ Remove excess lines floating at the surface
- ◆ Maintain gear to ensure lines and buoys are in good working condition and clearly marked
- ◆ Remove all crab pots from the ocean by Aug 14th
- ◆ Bring derelict gear to shore in-season
- ◆ [Consider participating in the post-season derelict gear program](#)

Thank you for your attention and support in making sure our fishery remains in compliance with federal law.

### Humpback Whale

(*Megaptera novaeangliae*)



Artists: David H. Haines

Size – medium (<45')

Fluke – present when diving



Artists: Colin Bevan Haines

Dorsal fin – arched back



Artists: Colin Bevan Haines

Blow – tall, bushy



Artists: Colin Bevan Haines

**OREGON DUNGENESS  
CRAB COMMISSION**

CRYSTAL ADAMS/  
CHARLESTON (Processor Rep)

RICK LILIENTHAL/  
CHARLESTON

JOHN MOODY/NEWPORT  
(Processor Rep)

MIKE RETHERFORD/  
NEWPORT

JARED REEVES/CHARLESTON

BRIAN NOLTE/BROOKINGS

LEIF ERIC BENSON/PUBLIC  
MEMBER

BOB EDER/ASTORIA

## A MONTH TO SAVOR DUNGENESS

### Share recipes and pictures of vessels:

We love to include as much of the fleet as possible in our social media posts. You can help. If you have great pictures of vessel and crew, or of a favorite Dungeness dish, send it to [tim@oregondungeness.org](mailto:tim@oregondungeness.org) and we will share it far and wide. Thanks!



### NEXT ODCC MEETING:

The next meeting is expected to be held in October. Watch for the exact date and location, to be determined.

**TO SAVE COSTS THE NEWSLETTER WILL SOON BE SENT VIA EMAIL ONLY (UNLESS YOU REQUEST MAIL DELIVERY), WHERE YOU WILL ALSO BE ABLE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE HYPERLINKS, PLEASE SEND YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS TO US AT:**

[OFFICEMANAGER@OREGONDUNGENESS.ORG](mailto:OFFICEMANAGER@OREGONDUNGENESS.ORG)

**OREGON DUNGENESS CRAB  
COMMISSION**

964 Central Avenue  
P.O. Box 1160  
Coos Bay, Oregon 97420

Phone: (541) 267-5810  
Fax: (541) 267-5772  
E-mail:

[officemanager@oregondungeness.org](mailto:officemanager@oregondungeness.org)

