

# Outdoors

## INTO THE WILD



Jim Border, who volunteers to help members of the public spot whales during Spoken Here Whale Watching Week on the Oregon Coast, scans the horizon for signs of spouts from the tip of Cape Lookout. ZACH URNESS / STATESMAN JOURNAL

### Head into the great outdoors for a post-holiday adventure

**Zach Urness**  
Salem Statesman Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK

If football and turkey are not your idea of a good time, and the outdoors beckons far stronger than the television screen, the weekend after Thanksgiving brings lots of opportunities.

There's annual "Green Friday" celebrations mean free fishing and entry to Oregon's state parks and the arrival of Christmas tree hunting season means it's time to sharpen your handsaw.

Add in the major dump of fresh snow that's hit Oregon's mountains, and you have a lot of fun places to explore.

Here are four adventures and activities to enjoy for "Green Friday" and into the holiday weekend and beyond.

#### Free fishing across Oregon

Oregonians are allowed to fish, crab or clam for free anywhere in the state without a license or tags on Saturday.

If you have relatives or friends visiting Oregon, they can fish for free as well.

Although no licenses or tags are required, all other fishing regulations apply. In other words, you can only keep the normal limit of fish for a given waterway. See the Oregon Sport Fishing Regulations to find out more.

For ideas on where to catch fish, see

the recreation report from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

In general, beginning anglers can target lakes and ponds stocked with trout — they're hungry this time of year.

Crabbing can also be good during the winter months — it's currently in bays and estuaries, and on beaches, docks, piers, and jetties. Get the right gear and consider crabbing in Siletz Bay right next to Mo's Restaurant.

#### Cut your own Christmas tree from Oregon's national forest

U.S. consumers paid an average of \$78 for a Christmas tree in 2018, according to the National Christmas Tree Association.

If that seems pricy, consider paying \$5 for a permit and heading into the forest to harvest your own tree. The Forest Service allows cutting five Christmas trees per household for that modest fee.

The closest place to harvest a tree is Willamette National Forest, about an hour east of Salem.

You can purchase a permit online at <https://openforest.fs.usda.gov>.

If you don't buy one online, you can stop at a Forest Service ranger station for a permit. Detroit Ranger station is open Monday to Friday. On the weekends, local businesses often provide

permits at places such as Mountain High Grocery in Detroit.

The best trees, including noble firs, tend to be in the higher elevations around 3,000 to 4,000 feet. One good option is to drive to a place such as Maxwell, Big Springs or Potato Hill snowparks, which are plowed, and go exploring for a tree. Sno-park permits cost \$25 for a full year of winter recreation and can be purchased from ODOT or local businesses.

The Christmas tree permit typically comes with a map showing where harvest of a Christmas tree is allowed. For other questions, contact a Forest Service ranger station.

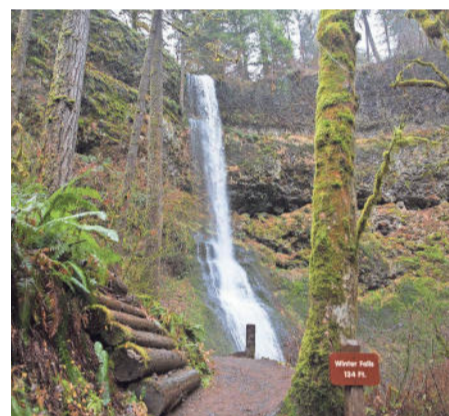
#### Hike to a waterfall!

With the rain finally arriving — along with the snow — Oregon's waterfalls should start pumping out normal November power.

A few favorites closest to Salem include Silver Falls, Shellburg Falls and Henline Falls.

#### Sunshine hiking on the Oregon Coast

It's not exactly going to be warm, or anything close, but it will be bright and sunny on the Oregon Coast this weekend.



Winter Falls, a 134-foot waterfall in South Falls at Silver Falls State Park. MICHAELA ROMÁN/STATESMAN JOURNAL

That means glorious views and a likely solitude at places including Cape Lookout, Hart's Cove and The Knoll near Lincoln City and Tillamook.

Check the National Weather Service website in advance to ensure winds won't launch you off a headland, but otherwise, savor the chilly sweep of blue that comes pretty rarely on the rain-soaked coast.

Zach Urness has been an outdoors reporter, photographer and videographer in Oregon for 11 years. Urness is the author of "Best Hikes with Kids: Oregon" and "Hiking Southern Oregon." He can be reached at [zurness@StatesmanJournal.com](mailto:zurness@StatesmanJournal.com) or (503) 399-6801. Find him on Twitter at @ZachsORoutdoors.

## The real cost of trying to save a few dollars

**Fishing**  
Henry Miller  
Guest columnist



It only took about six hours and a family pack of chicken drumsticks to score this lone \$20-a-pound dungeness crab. DAVID DAVIS/STATESMAN JOURNAL

the outgoing tide.

After moving, we reeled up lots of crabs, every one either females, which are illegal to keep, or undersized, or both.

On my own behalf, it should be noted that I passed the Advanced Crabbing Ethics final, twice.

Although not with flying colors, given the continuing frustration.

On two successive pulls, I caught male dungeness crabs that were, no exaggeration, about a millimeter, a cat's whisker, undersized.

The proctor for the ethics exam was a

local Taft crabber who said that, yes, the wardens were on hand to check on several occasions when he was there.

David and I decided to call it a day just after the tide hit low slack.

And whaddaya know, there was a lunker legal in my trap on the last pull of the day.

Success!

So let's pencil it out: A family pack of chicken drumsticks for bait at \$6.63, about 5.5 gallons of gas in the truck at \$3.07 a gallon or \$16.89, lunch at the Lighthouse Brewpub, \$18 for two (approximately).

So that crab, at let's say a generous 2 pounds, and not counting wear and tear on the truck or the seven hours or so of time, came to \$20.76 a pound.

Hmmmmmm.

Not bad, considering.

That is fishenomics in action.

Happy leftovers!

#### Be Free this holiday!

If you needed another reason to give thanks during the holiday weekend, this one's a keeper.

Friday and Saturday, Nov. 29 and 30, are Free Fishing Days in Oregon, during which no licenses or tags are required to go fishing, clamming or crabbing in the Beaver State.

So if you've made Thanksgiving weekend a family affair, including out-

of-state guests, free fishing can be, ahem, a relative experience.

And hatchery trucks have been rolling across the Willamette Valley planting rainbow trout during the run-up to the holiday weekend.

Walter Wirth Lake at Cascades Gateway Park in Salem was scheduled to get 1,300 fish; Waverly Lake (700 trout), and Timber Linn Lake (500) both in Albany, and Junction City Pond (1,000) south of Junction City off Highway 99, all were on the stocking schedule.

#### Bivalve bonus!

If you've got a flashlight, headlamp or lantern and are spending the holidays at the coast, there are clam-worthy low tides the evening of Saturday, Nov. 30, minus-0.77 feet at 9:22 p.m. at Garibaldi on the north end of Tillamook Bay, minus-0.47 feet at South Beach on the south side of the Highway 101 Bridge on Yaquina Bay.

If you plan on going crabbing or clamming, be sure to call the toll-free shellfish safety Hotline at (800) 448-2474 or check online at <https://www.oregon.gov/ODA/programs/FoodSafety/Shellfish/Pages/ShellfishClosures.aspx>

Henry Miller is a retired Statesman Journal outdoor columnist and outdoor writer. You can reach him via email at [HenryMillerSJ@gmail.com](mailto:HenryMillerSJ@gmail.com)