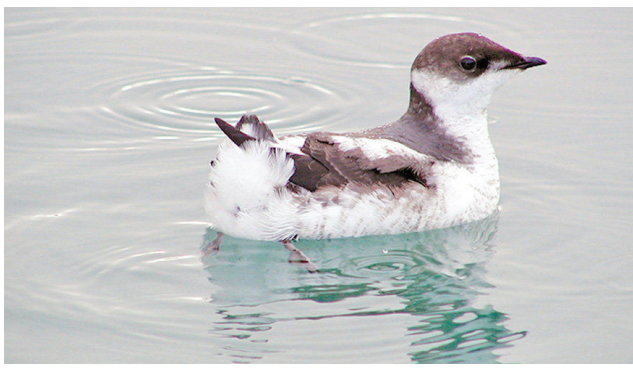


# ODFW Commission to revisit greater protections for marbled murrelet

Environmental groups seek endangered species status

By **GEORGE PLAVERN**  
Capital Press



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission will reconsider listing the marbled murrelet on the state's endangered species list.**

SALEM — Oregon fish and wildlife commissioners are reconsidering whether to grant endangered species protections for the marbled murrelet, a small seabird that nests in coastal old growth forests.

The commission voted 4-1 on Dec. 6 to revisit the status of the marbled murrelet after deciding not to “uplist” the bird from threatened to endangered in 2018.

Environmental groups petitioned the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to classify the marbled murrelet as endangered in 2016. The species was listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act in 1992, and listed as threatened by ODFW in 1995.

Since then, the groups — including Cascadia Wildlands, Defenders of Wildlife, Oregon Wild, the Audubon Society of Portland and Oregon Chapter of the Sierra Club — have argued the marbled murrelet could go extinct in Oregon within the next century, due in part to declining habitat from logging in state forests.

The ODFW Commission initially voted 4-2 in favor of uplisting the marbled murrelet in February 2018, ordering the agency to develop a new management plan and survival guidelines for the species in state forests where the birds nest.

But commissioners changed course in June 2018, reversing the decision and denying the environmentalists’ petition. The groups promptly sued ODFW, and earlier this year a Lane County Circuit Court judge ruled the com-

mission violated state law by not adequately explaining the contradiction between the two results.

Now the commission will take another look at uplisting, with meeting dates to be announced sometime next year. Bob Spelbrink, of Siletz, Ore., was the only commissioner to vote against the motion.

Quinn Read, Northwest program director for Defenders of Wildlife, said in a statement that the decision to list the marbled murrelet as endangered is a matter of science and law, not compromise or politics.

“We are encouraged by the commission’s actions today, but we will continue to demand that they follow the science, respect public process and protect this bird for future generations,” Read said.

Members of agricultural, timber and private forestland organizations also testified at the Dec. 6 commission meeting, saying the decision not to uplist was based on the best and most up-to-date science, which indicates marbled murrelet populations are on the rise in Oregon.

Seth Barnes, director of forest policy for the Oregon Forest and Industries Council, pointed to monitoring work conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Forest Service between 2000 and 2017 showing marbled murrelet populations grew in Ore-

gon by 1.8% per year.

At the same time, the National Council for Air and Stream Improvement used data from the Forest Service to analyze growth and logging of forests potentially used by the marbled murrelet. The results found that, since 1995, coastal forests have added an average of 64,710 acres of trees 50 years or older each year.

“We have abundant habitat in Oregon,” Barnes said. “More older forest structure exists today than we’ve had in decades and continues to grow across ownership.”

Jim James, executive director of the Oregon Small Woodlands Association, said family woodland owners are dedicated to doing the right thing, but remain concerned about over-regulation.

“If this commission were to decide to uplist the murrelet, I believe the only outcome from that ... is that family woodland owners would be concerned, as you would be if your 401(k) is challenged,” James said. “It would take away any incentive to have any large, old trees on your property.”

Jerome Rosa, executive director of the Oregon Cattlemen’s Association, said uplisting the murrelet could have “significant negative consequences” on grazing and access to public lands.

# Oregon hazelnut growers look to penetrate new export markets

Research will focus on new Chinese regions, S. Korea, Japan, Canada

By **MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI**  
Capital Press



Mateusz Perkowski/Capital Press File

Oregon’s hazelnut industry is looking to expand beyond its traditional export market in Northeast China and gain a better foothold in other Asian countries as well.

A new research export initiative overseen by the Oregon Hazelnut Marketing Board will examine improving the crop’s reach into China while better penetrating markets in Japan, South Korea and India.

The study will also analyze ramping up exports into Canada, which is already the second-largest destination for Oregon hazelnuts behind China.

“The potential is quite remarkable to access consumers around the world. It’s going to yield long-term benefits for all the growers and packers in the region,” said Jeff Nawn, whose North Hill Group consulting firm will conduct the analysis. “For the industry, it’s the right time to do this type of work.”

Of the 18,000 metric tons of Oregon hazelnuts exported last year, nearly 80% were shipped to China and most of the rest to Canada, with nominal amounts destined for other countries. Oregon’s total annual production has averaged more than 37,000 metric tons in recent years.

Japan and South Korea are attractive potential markets because they’re wealthy countries that already consume hazelnuts incorporated into high-end chocolates, and Oregon has strong “brand equity” in both nations, Nawn said.

“Oregon has the image of being very clean, natural, wholesome,” he said.

India, meanwhile, has the “largest collection of vegetarians in the world” whose

**Hazelnuts are swept into rows in preparation for harvest. The Oregon hazelnut industry is looking to expand export opportunities beyond its traditional market in Northeast China.**

wages are rising and who are looking for new sources of protein, he said.

Canada is a close neighbor that offers an opportunity to maximize “bang for the buck” in terms of marketing, but current exports are dominated by one confectionary company, Nawn said.

While China is already an important market for Oregon hazelnuts, most shipments end up in Beijing and surrounding areas, he said.

It may be possible to enlarge the Oregon industry’s footprint to include other major metropolitan areas in China, where in-shell hazelnuts could similarly be eaten as a snack food, he said.

“Even though it’s a nice market for hazelnuts, it could be better with some strategic marketing work,” Nawn said.

Last year, Chinese tariffs on Oregon in-shell hazelnuts — the most popular type consumed there — jumped from 25% to 65% due to the ongoing trade dispute with the U.S.

The tariff hike convinced Oregon’s industry to look for ways to increase sales despite the higher barrier while also diversifying beyond the Chinese export market, said Meredith Nagely, manager of the Oregon Hazelnut Marketing Board.

“Tariff mitigation was the impetus for it,” she said.

The trade turbulence comes at a time of looming

growth in Oregon’s hazelnut production, as acreage has grown from roughly 30,000 acres to roughly 85,000 in the past decade.

Between 2007 and 2015, growers focused on planting varieties meant for producing the in-shell hazelnuts that are popular in China, said Larry George, president of the George Packing Co.

More recently, packers have been urging growers to plant more cultivars meant for the production of kernels that can be used by domestic food manufacturers, George said.

However, the industry is “just barely starting to see production increase now” of the kernel varieties, so it needs to focus on widening sales channels for the in-shell nuts that represent the bulk of new production, he said.

“We’re trying to develop those markets first,” George said. “It takes years to develop markets.”

The Oregon Hazelnut Marketing Board is paying for the export research initiative with about half of the \$385,000 it recently received in grant funding from USDA’s Agricultural Trade Promotion Program.

The study is intended to pave the way for the Oregon Hazelnut Marketing Board to receive export-oriented funding more regularly through the USDA’s Market Access Program, Nagely said.

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