

SEA STARS MAKE A COMEBACK

Wasting epidemic appears to be over at Haystack Rock

By ERICK BENGEL
EO Media Group

CANNON BEACH — The worst of the sea star wasting disease epidemic that decimated sea star populations along the West Coast during the past 19 months appears to be over at Haystack Rock — at least for now.

Most of what's left are the juvenile sea stars that somehow survived the pathogenic onslaught that killed off more than 90 percent of their fellows during the 2014 beach season, according to Haystack Rock Awareness Coordinator Samantha Ferber, who recorded the death toll at three sites.

"Now that we're past the peak of the disease, we're starting to see that, across the board, sea stars don't have as severe symptoms," Ferber said. However, this may be because the sea stars that *did* show the most severe symptoms have all died, she noted.

A fall survey that Ferber conducted with HRAP volunteers at and around Haystack Rock found that younger, smaller sea stars tended to fare better than older, larger ones.

- Of nine recorded ochre sea stars on Haystack Rock's south wall, the only three that showed wasting signs had a radius (measured from the middle of their body to the tip of their longest limb) larger than 40 millimeters.

- Of 21 recorded ochre sea stars on the east boulder at the Needles, 14 showed wasting signs; the three sea stars with a radius smaller than 40 millimeters showed no signs. (While these numbers demonstrate that not all larger sea stars became infected, they add evidence to the claim that the smaller ones tended not to become infected.)

- Of 24 recorded ochre sea stars on the north boulders, the only five that showed wasting signs were larger than 40 millimeters.

Though Ferber and her team looked at all of the sea star species at Haystack Rock, they were only able to find ochres and six-rayed sea stars. Since the disease hit the rock last spring, "We have not seen a single sunflower (sea star)," a species that used to be seen in the tide pools during lower tides, she said.

Ferber sends the results of these



Photo courtesy of Haystack Rock Awareness Program

The white goo on the severed end of a dead sea star's limbs told Haystack Rock Awareness Program Coordinator Samantha Ferber that the limb loss was the result of the wasting disease, not predation.



Photo courtesy of HRAP

This photo of a dying sea star, taken in May at Haystack Rock, shows the organism at roughly Stage 3 as it disintegrates into a white mush. By July, more than 90 percent of the sea stars at the rock had succumbed to the wasting disease.

quarterly surveys to MARINE (Multi-Agency Rocky Intertidal Network), a consortium of universities and government agencies that monitors the ecology of rocky intertidal areas along the West Coast.

'Falling apart'

Before the wasting disease arrived in Cannon Beach last spring, it had already wiped out millions of sea stars at several sites along the West Coast, from Alaska to Southern California.

Wasting events have happened before, but "we've never seen the disease arrive at the levels that we've seen over the past year, year

and a half," said Melissa Miner, a research associate at the University of California, Santa Cruz, who works with MARINE.

The disease begins as lesions on a sea star's body that degrade its tissue, shrivel up its rays and finally dissolve the invertebrate into a pale goo. It usually kills the organism within a few days to a couple of weeks, though some sea stars may slough off infected rays before the lesions reach their vital organs and later regenerate them.

Ferber first noticed the disease at Haystack Rock last March. By the end of July, most of the sea stars in the rock's intertidal zone had died.

"Sea stars were falling apart," she said. "We could see that sea stars were dying right in front of us."

However, "that's not happening anymore," she said.

Comebacks

HRAP and MARINE are focusing on the number of new sea stars in a given sea star population and what species are thriving in the aftermath of the wasting.

In recent months, six-rayed sea stars have proliferated at the Needles near Haystack Rock, despite that very few were recorded during HRAP's July survey.

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Photo courtesy of Susan Glarum

Becca Cudmore, a Brooklyn-based science writer, who is wearing a black jacket, takes notes during HRAP's October sea star survey. Nadine Nordquist, center, an HRAP staff interpreter, and Alix Lee, the program's 2014 intern, gather information to send to the Multi-Agency Rocky Intertidal Network.

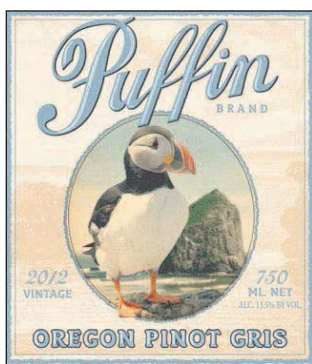
Puffin Wines gathers platinum, gold medals

BY STEVEN SINKLER
For The Daily Astorian

2010 pinot noir — to the Platinum Wine Judging competition held in Kennewick, Wash.

It's truly an honor to participate in this particular competition. Here's why: With most wine competitions, you decide whether your wine is a participant by paying an entry fee, sending your wine in and crossing your fingers. However, to get into the Platinum Wine Judging, your wine must be invited. And to be invited, the wine must have won a gold medal at a competition in Ore-

gon, Washington, Idaho or British Columbia during the year. From this initial list, the judges then select the wines they invite to compete. We were elated to receive an invitation. As I packed up the wines for the event, I put each precious



Additionally, when all of the judges gave the wine a platinum medal, the wine received a "double platinum" award. Likewise, a "double gold" medal would also be awarded if all the judges gave a gold medal to a wine.

As Christmas drew near, I began to anticipate the announcement of the results. The competition is stiff, and the judges are exceptional. I think the Puffin Wines are excellent, but how would they stand up against the finest wines throughout the entire Pacific Northwest? Let's just say that I was a little nervous when I finally received

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