

Photo Courtesy of Petty Officer 3rd Class Jonathan Klingenberg U.S. Coast Guard Cmdr. Brian Anderson, left, received a Meritorious Service Medal for his two years on the cutter Alert. During a change of command Friday, Anderson had thanks for his crew and flowers for his wife.

Culver: Vice Adm. Charles Ray presided over the event

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Presiding over the event was Vice Adm. Charles Ray, commander of the Pacific Area overseeing Coast Guard operations from the western U.S. to the eastern shores of Africa.

"When you're running a 47-year-old ship, leadership makes a difference," Ray said of the elder ship, its keel laid in 1968 before it was commissioned in 1969.

Ray praised Anderson for his two years on the Alert, including missions from Washington state to South America. Ray presented Anderson with a Meritorious Service Medal. Anderson had flowers and other gifts for his wife and children.

During Anderson's time on the Alert, its crew helped enforce the right-of-way on the Columbia River during the Buoy 10 fishery, rescued boaters, busted fishermen illegally harvesting shark fins, freed snagged sea turtles, captured drug runners and shipments of cocaine, rescued adrift Ecuadorian fishermen and worked with the Mexican Navy and other forces. While under Anderson's command, the Alert's crew of more than 70 also earned the coveted Battle 'E' award for operational excellence, earning 96 percent on operational readiness tests in Everett, Wash., in 2013.

"You're my family, and I'll miss you," Anderson said to his crew, assembled under the tent for the transfer of command.

As well as changing command of the cutter Alert, Anderson and Culver traded administrative and at-sea jobs and the East for the West Coast, respectively.

Culver comes from his previous position in Portsmouth, Va., as deputy of cutter forces on the East Coast. He has experience on several Coast Guard cutters over his tenure, including the Point Arena, Salvia, Taney, Ocracoke and Dauntless.

Anderson heads to Portsmouth to work in the navigation and sensors division of the Command, Control, and Communications Engineering Center.

Culver, who has three adult children and two grandchildren, kept his introduction brief. To Anderson, he added "fair winds and following seas to your family."

Cormorants: Groups fail to get judge to stop bird killings

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An environmental impact statement calls for them to shoot adult birds, spray eggs with oil so they won't hatch, and destroy nests. Carcasses of dead birds will be donated to educational and scientific institutions, or otherwise disposed of through burial or incineration.

Biologists blame the cormorants for eating an average 12 million baby salmon a year as they migrate down the Columbia to the ocean. Some of the fish are federally protected species.

The cormorant population on East Sand Island near Ilwaco, Wash., has grown from about 100 pairs in 1989 to some 14,000 pairs now, making it the largest cormorant nesting colony in the West. Soil dredged from the bottom of the Columbia to deepen shipping channels was dumped



Steve Ringman/The Seattle Times via AP

Double-breasted cormorants on East Sand Island in the Columbia River near Ilwaco, Wash., in 2011. Government hunters have begun scouting an island at the mouth of the Columbia River as they prepare to shoot thousands of hungry seabirds to reduce the numbers of baby salmon they eat.

on the island over the years, expanding the area available for nesting.

Conservation groups failed in a bid to get a federal judge to stop the killing, arguing dams on the Columbia kill far more young salmon than the birds do.

Bob Sallinger, conservation director of the Portland Audubon Society, said Wildlife Services and the corps should hold off for this year after getting started two months later than recommended. The late start would increase the suffering of the birds by producing more chicks that starve to death after their parents are killed.

"I think this demonstrates a remarkable level of indifference and ineptitude," he said.

Cormorants are the latest birds targeted for eating baby salmon. Biologists pushed Caspian terns off Rice Island in the Columbia, and created nesting habitat in lakes in eastern Oregon and San Francisco Bay to draw them away from the mouth of the Columbia.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife also has been shooting and harassing cormorants on coastal rivers to protect salmon.

Sea lions are also killed to reduce the numbers of adult salmon eaten as they wait to go over the fish ladder at Bonneville Dam in the Columbia.

North Jetty repairs nearly a year ahead of schedule

By KATIE WILSON EO Media Group

CAPE DISAPPOINTMENT, Wash. — Contractors working on much-needed repairs to a major jetty at the mouth of the Columbia River are almost a year ahead of schedule.

Jetties are dangerous places, waves crash into and over them, and contractors working on them have to shut down operations when bad weather is on the way. But the West Coast's mild winter meant relatively few delays to work on the 2.5-mile long North Jetty at Cape Disappointment State Park — part of the reason contractors are so far ahead of schedule now, said Michelle Helms, a spokesperson for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which maintains the three-jetty system at the mouth of the river.

Work progressed steadily into a strangely mild and warm April and early May.

For weeks now flatbed trucks have been trundling down State Route 100 with massive granite rocks weighing up to 30 tons each strapped down on their beds, carrying them to North Jetty.

At the start of the project last year, the corps hoped to start bringing these jetty stones this spring, but that was an "at the earliest" kind of estimate. They expected to still have contractors in the park and working on critical repairs to North Jetty into 2016. Now, it appears work could easily wrap up by October.

On May 13, corps staff was en route to the state park to do a final inspection of lagoon fill work another group of contractors completed before Spring Break this year. They stopped to brief members of the Ilwaco Merchants who were meeting that morning on their progress at the jetty.

Safety reminder

Corps Project Manager Eric Bluhm reminded the group that the jetty is not a safe place to be even under the best conditions. Even though much of the area is marked off as a construction zone, park visitors sometimes still wander too close.

At low tide recently, two women wandered down from a nearby camping area and were sitting on the jetty, unaware that an excavator was working almost directly above them.

Blumh said the corps and its contractors are working closely with park rangers and have their own security measures in place. However, the repairs will make the jetty easier to access and will be even more attractive to fishermen. Both North and South Jetty have been popular fishing spots basically since their construction.

"I'm sure there will be persistent fishermen who'll try very hard to get back to traditional fishing areas," said Ed Saldana, North Jetty critical repairs project quality assurance representative.

Next stages

North Jetty is still slated to undergo a more complete rehabilitation beginning in 2017, work that could run through 2020. At the same time, rehabilitation work will begin on the much older and much longer South Jetty in Oregon's Fort Stephens State Park.

Rehabilitation work on Washington's Jetty A, a one-mile-long jetty located southeast of North Jetty, begins this year and is expected to continue through 2017.



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