

Wild SIDE

Nereocystis luetkeana Bullwhip kelp

By LYNETTE RAE McADAMS

While it's true the Pacific Northwest is famous for its forests, there's one we often overlook — the offshore kelp forest that thrives beneath the surface of our churning coastal waters. Easily its most impressive member, and the most common seaweed to wash up on our local beaches, is *Nereocystis luetkeana*, known by the more familiar names of bullwhip

kelp, bull kelp, ribbon kelp, horsetail kelp, and sea otter's cabbage.

Actually a complex algae (specifically, the largest in the family of brown algae), bullwhip kelp can be found from Monterey, California, to the Aleutian Islands in Alaska and grows in large fields in the subtidal zone. The fastest-growing kelp in the world, it is an "annual" seaweed, changing from a single spore in the spring to a mature plant by au-

turn. During the summer months, when growth peaks, it can gain up to 10 inches per day to eventually reach a length of 120 feet.

Nereocystis (Greek for "mermaid's bladder"), clings to the rocky ocean floor with a holdfast, or rootlike structure, that keeps it tethered in place. From the holdfast grows a long stalk (called a stipe), that quickly becomes hollow as it reaches for the water's surface. At the end of the stipe is the kelp's airtight trademark bulb, which is filled with a gas containing carbon monoxide, and floats high in the water, keeping the kelp upright. Ribbon-like blades grow from the top of the bulb and spread out like hair across the surface of the sea, converting sunlight into food through photosynthesis.

Underwater, groves of bullwhip kelp provide shelter for crabs, snails, shrimp, sea stars, sea anemones, and many other marine invertebrates. On the surface, its flowing ribbons are popular with sea otters, who like to snack on the kelp and then wrap themselves in the tendrils to keep from drifting away in the currents while they sleep.

A complete source of trace minerals and protein, bullwhip kelp is entirely edible and has been harvested by humans for millennia. Indigenous people used the plant for food and also as a tool, weaving its long stipes into fishing lines and nets, and keeping the bulbs as storage for rendered fat and fish oil. Today, this kelp is still a prominent ingredient in many products, used especially to thicken ice cream, salad dressings, hand lotion and household paints. It is particularly delightful when pickled.



Photo by Lynette Rae McAdams

This massive tangle of bullwhip kelp washed ashore near Ocean Park, Washington.

N W word nerd

By RYAN HUME

Buoy [bü•ē]

noun

1. a floating object, often affixed with a visible signal and anchored to the bottom of a lake, river or bay to mark channels, hazards and mooring opportunities among other things

2. *Buoy Beer*: an award-winning brewery and public house that opened its doors on the Eighth Street wharf in Astoria in 2014

3. *Bell Buoy of Seaside*: a family-owned fishmonger that has been operating for over 50

years and is located on west side of U.S. Highway 101 at the south end of town

verb

4. To keep afloat, or conversely, to keep from sinking

5. *nautical*: To mark with a buoy

6. to be encouraged or to rise up

Origin:

The noun enters Middle English in 1296 as *boye*, meaning a beacon (to which it is probably related) or signal, borrowed either from the Old French *boie* or the Middle Dutch *boeye*, both of which arose from the West Germanic *baukn*.

The verb as it relates to marking with a float derives from the noun's meaning and appears in 1596.

As the verb relates to

"lightness" or "rising up" first occurred shortly after, in the 17th century, and may have been influenced by the Spanish verb, *boyar*, meaning "to float."

"The 50-to-55-foot trawler had struck river buoy 40 near the Megler Bridge, according to a 911 call U.S. Coast Guard Sector Columbia River received at 12:21 p.m. from Astoria Dispatch. The fishing vessel was disabled but was not taking on water or in immediate danger of sinking."

—Chinook Observer staff report, "Boat strikes buoy, gets towed back," *The Daily Astorian*, June 15, 2015

"The wait is nearly over. Buoy Beer Company, Astoria's fourth brewery, will open at 4 p.m. Friday and be on tap this weekend at Fort George's Festival of the Dark Arts and during the statewide Zwickelmania breweries celebration."

—Edward Stratton, "Buoy Beer taps the keg Friday," *The Daily Astorian*, Feb. 13, 2014, P. A4

Bike Trip America

Astoria to New York

Adventure update #1:

June 18 to July 8

By MARILYN GILBAUGH

The crew: Astoria teenage Boy Scouts Bryce Nurning, Ryan Tallman and Jonathan Williams. Gearhart's Pat Wollner and Hawaii's Don Child are the adult sidekicks, she at the wheel of a Suburban, Don on a bike.

The journey so far: 21 days riding across Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana, almost 1,200 miles (1198.60 according to Nurning's schedule) from Astoria to Glendive, Montana. The crew plans to arrive in NYC Aug. 15.

Highlights:

• **Down one on day two:** Mascot black lab Annie, deciding that long days in the Suburban plus no play time are not for her, has found a summer's stay along the way more to her liking. Both Pat and Annie are happy with the decision.



Submitted photo courtesy Don Child

From left, Don Child, Jonathon Williams, Ryan Tallman and Bryce Nurning celebrate reaching the Continental Divide July 1 at Rogers Pass in Montana, at an elevation of 5,610 feet. After leaving Astoria June 18, the group is biking across America this summer to raise funds for Operation Comfort Warriors. They expect to reach New York City Aug. 15.

• **No such thing as too much food:** Burning 5,000-plus calories a day, there is no diet big enough to stop the crew from eating!

• **Lodging:** The crew stays in prearranged churches, private homes, tents, camp grounds, state parks and ranches. They enjoy real beds and hot showers for the first time June 25, provided by the commander of American Legion Post 13 in Lewiston, Idaho. When they roll into town, a TV reporter greets them.

• **June 28 & 29:** The crew climbs up Lolo Pass in the Rockies and down the other side into Missoula, Montana. Fundraising for Operation Comfort

Warriors reaches approximately \$2,500. They receive a \$200 check from American Legion Post 9 in Lincoln, Montana.

• **July 1:** The group crosses the Continental Divide at Roger's Pass, elevation 5,610 feet. All water from here on flows into the Atlantic.

• **July 2:** They cross the last of the Rocky Mountains.

Find out more: Daily or nearly daily (due to the whims of Internet connections) details, photos and videos are available on Bryce Nurning's *Bike Trip Across America Facebook page* and on Don Child's blog at donsbike.blogspot.com