



Photos by Edward Stratton/The Daily Astorian

Oyster shell piles are commonplace around Willapa Bay, which produces about a quarter of the bivalve mollusks in the U.S.

## Oysters: Industry dates back to the mid-19th century

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### Big aquaculture

Willapa Bay is part of a statewide aquaculture industry valued at \$232 million by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 2013, \$143 million of it from mollusks spread between 129 farms.

The oyster industry dates back to the mid-19th century, when farmers in Willapa Bay were supplying gold miners in California. Unlike Oregon, Washington state allowed private citizens to own tidelands. The Bush and Callow acts in 1895 allowed the sale of state lands to private citizens to support the burgeoning oyster industry.

Fed with freshwater from nearly a dozen rivers and flushed twice daily by the tides, the bay includes 45,000 acres of tidelands, about 25,000 of them owned or leased for commercial shellfish aquaculture and 9,000 being actively farmed, according to the Willapa-Grays Harbor Oyster Growers Association.

"They definitely see themselves as more associated with agriculture," said David Beugli, a project coordinator with the association.

Beugli said the membership of the association employs about 500 people in Washington's Pacific County. Operations range from small family farms like the Shotwells', which employ a few people and their two sons when they're on break from college and processes oys-



Steve Shotwell, co-owner of Elkhorn Oyster Co., uses a forklift to take hundreds of pounds of Willapa Bay oysters in for separating, cleaning and counting in the small processing room next to his home on Washington's North Nema River.

ters right next to their home, to large companies like Pacific Seafood.

Similar to their landlocked brethren, oyster farmers buy seed from local hatcheries, using old oyster shells as cultch, a surface on which oyster larvae can attach. Elkhorn uses both bottom-culturing, spreading the shells throughout their oyster beds, and off-bottom-culturing, stringing the shells along lines in the beds.

The Shotwells own more than 100 acres of tideland, actively harvesting from about half of them, seeding on other

plots and carefully scheduling plantings and harvests to ensure a constant supply of oysters.

"You're talking about a three-year rotation," Andi Shotwell said, noting smalls can take as little as 18 months to mature, and mediums as long as three or four years.

Elkhorn tries to plant about 15 acres a year to keep going, she said, and can ship out as much as 3,000 to 4,000 pounds in a week. They count oysters by the dozen, a more suitable measurement for restaurants and oysters that vary in size and weight. Steve Shot-

well estimated Elkhorn sends out about 2,000 dozen oysters a week.

### Life on the tides

On Friday, the Shotwells, Ritchey and Kelli Erickson were processing the 800 pounds — or 220 dozen — of small and medium oysters brought in Thursday, breaking clusters of shells with a dry-wall hammer, packing them into mesh bags of five dozen.

"It's about 36 hours max from harvesting to trucking," Andi Shotwell said. "They're refrigerated throughout the process."



Elkhorn Oyster Co. co-owner Andi Shotwell works alongside Kelli Erickson counting oysters from a cage by the dozen into mesh bags for wholesale distribution.

**Willapa Bay is the source of at least a sixth of the oysters consumed nationally.**

A refrigerated truck from Sorenson Transportation Co. makes the rounds twice a week, collecting oysters and shipping them in-shell to Chehalis; from there they go to wholesale accounts in Seattle and San Francisco. The oysters can be tracked from anywhere back to Elkhorn, which sometimes receives calls from restaurants in New York, Miami and Nova Scotia.

"We've had buyers come out," Andi Shotwell said. "They don't realize the amount of work that goes into it."

An environmental studies major, Steve Shotwell met

Andi, a marine biology major, at Western Washington University. The two, fresh out of college, took jobs with Intertidal Resources Inc., a small oyster company in Bay Center, before buying it out in 1995 and forming Elkhorn Oyster Co.

"Everything we do is based on the tide," Steve Shotwell said. "We've raised two kids and everything by that factor."

Sometimes they take the abundance of oysters for granted, he said, "but when someone from out of town comes in and asks about fresh oysters, you know what you have is special."

## Lawyer: Motion hearing for Roden scheduled for next month

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The defense also claims the investigation went out of its way to paint a picture of Roden's girlfriend, Dorothy Ann Wing, as a largely innocent victim.

Wing, 26, pleaded guilty in January to first-degree manslaughter and two counts of first-degree criminal mistreatment. She will be sentenced to more than 15 years in prison, but only after she truthfully testifies at Roden's trial, according to the plea agreement.

"It is clear that Detective Goodding is determined to build a case against Randy

Roden no matter how much evidence he has to ignore, distort, or mischaracterize," Huseby wrote.

### Goodding lawsuit

At trial, Huseby plans to bring up a \$7.5 million lawsuit against the city of Seaside and Oregon Department of Human Services that claims department caseworkers and Goodding were negligent with previous reports of abuse leading to a 2-year-old boy's death in March 2014.

The lawsuit claims Goodding failed to report child abuse as required under the state's mandatory report-

**'Detective Goodding's extreme focus on Randy Roden is obvious and baffling.'**

### Conor Huseby

defense attorney for Randy Lee Roden, the live-in boyfriend accused of torturing and murdering his girlfriend's 2-year-old daughter

ing statute and made false statements in a police report regarding the child, who was later murdered in Portland.

"Detective Goodding's extreme focus on Randy Roden is obvious and baffling," Huseby wrote. "How-

ever, a pending wrongful death lawsuit in which Goodding is named provides some insight into what motivates Goodding's tunnel vision and bias."

Clatsop County Chief Deputy District Attorney Ron Brown filed a written objection

to Huseby using the lawsuit in court. Brown said the evidence of the lawsuit is irrelevant, prejudicial and improper character evidence. The lawsuit itself is hearsay, he said.

Roden, 28, is accused of abusing Wing's daughter, Evangelina Marie Wing, multiple times between Oct. 31 to Dec. 20, 2014. An autopsy found the toddler was the victim of homicide and apparently died from blunt-force trauma. He was indicted on 15 charges related to the girl's murder and the abuse of her two brothers.

The charges accuse him of the intentional maiming or torture of the toddler and having a

pattern and practice of assault. He is facing the potential of the death penalty.

Roden is already serving a 100-month prison sentence for a probation violation from a previous domestic violence conviction. He violated his probation by possessing marijuana, oxycodone, and methadone and failing to report that he moved in with Wing. The drugs were discovered during a search warrant of the couple's Seaside residence Dec. 20, 2014, the day the toddler was found dead.

A motion hearing for Roden is scheduled next month in Clatsop County Circuit Court.

## Ban: 'I understand that some of my goals were unrealistic'

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Lawmakers in several states, including California, have proposed alternatives to daylight saving changes or asked that voters decide on whether to keep the practice.

"What I would really like to see the country say is enough is enough and end daylight saving nationally," Miles said.

He said if more states opt to abolish the practice, there may be more momentum for a national change.

Oregon Sen. Kim Thatcher, R-Keizer, introduced a bill in January 2015 that would have let voters to decide whether to abolish daylight saving in 2021.

Dozens of Oregonians testified in favor of the measure.

The legislation stalled in the Senate Rules Committee because some lawmakers were concerned about being out of sync with Washington and California, according to Thatcher's office.

The country had an on-and-off-again relationship with daylight saving time until 1966 when Congress codified it to try to simplify a confusing patchwork of different time zones across the country. Individual states were allowed to opt out. Arizona, Hawaii and some U.S. territo-

ries have chosen to remain on standard time.

The No More Daylight Saving Time in Oregon initiative was the first that Miles sponsored.

"I'm not upset it didn't get on the ballot," he said. "I learned a lot. I understand that some of my goals were unrealistic. It'll give me more of an ability to be successful next time."

In the meantime, he maintains a Facebook page where he'll give supporters updates on the effort: [www.facebook.com/nomoredstinoregon](http://www.facebook.com/nomoredstinoregon)

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