

Lancetfish puts jogger on guard

Strange creature washed ashore at Arcadia Beach

By R.J. MARX
The Daily Astorian

CANNON BEACH — Imagine seeing this as you go for a jog: a jet-black, nearly 6-foot-long creature with a dorsal fin like barbed wire and teeth sharp as razors. With lifeless eyes, it looks like it emerged from Steven Spielberg's imagination.

That's what Melinda Sage Bruton found Wednesday as she headed south on a run to Arcadia Beach.

At first the Cannon Beach woman thought it was a barracuda washed ashore.

But after sending a photo to the Seaside Aquarium, she learned it was a lancetfish, one of two or three reported each year, according to Keith Chandler, the aquarium's general manager.

"Those are just the ones reported," Chandler said. "They get devoured pretty fast by gulls and other scavengers."

After examining Bruton's photos, Chandler said the fish had "quite a bit of damage to its jaw," indicating it could have been the victim of another lancetfish or predator.

"Look at those teeth — they're pointed backwards," Chandler said. "Once they get hold of something with those, it's a one-way ticket."

Melissa Keyser, program coordinator of the Haystack Rock Awareness Program, determined the discovery was a long-nose lancetfish, a species that submerges as far down as 6,000 feet below the surface of the sea but may occasionally surface.

"They can reach up to 6 feet in length and are very common off of the Oregon Coast," Key-



Melinda Sage Bruton

A lancetfish washed to the shore at Arcadia Beach.



Melinda Sage Bruton

There are usually a few reported sightings every year.

ser said. "While they are somewhat of a rare find on Oregon beaches, there are usually a few reported sightings each year."

Bruton is an astute observer of sea life.

Last year she photographed what she described as a "sort of jelly creature," later identified as a salp, washing up on the shore. The salp looks like a jellyfish, but is a type of tunicate — a marine invertebrate — which, Bruton said, "is surprisingly closer in relation to humans than to jellyfish."

On the same day Bruton found the salp, a small white shark also washed up.

Bruton draws lessons from her sightings. "The magnificence and majestic power the ocean brings to the local communities living along the coastline welcome a reminder to the travelers visiting here of our responsibility to maintain its home to the many marvelous and abundant creatures; to respect; to look after and protect," she said in an email.

Union takes 'no confidence' vote against clinical director

By DERRICK DePLEDGE
The Daily Astorian

Union staff have taken a "no confidence" vote against Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare's clinical director, claiming staff morale and the public perception of the agency have steadily declined under the director's management.

Michele Crump-Hart, the clinical director since 2014, is responsible for clinical decisions and programs and is part of the core leadership team. Clatsop County contracts with the private agency for mental-health services, so, like many county employees, staff are represented by Oregon AFSCME, a labor union.

In a March letter to Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare and the county, the union said Crump-Hart should "hold herself accountable and step down or be removed from her position."

Nick Benas, the director of business operations at Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare, said the agency is working with the county manager's office to get an independent review of the union's claims.

"Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare works hard to provide a good work environment for all staff and takes any allegations to the contrary very seriously," Benas said in an email.

Benas said an independent review would "determine the merit of the union's claims, as well as to understand why any related concerns were not substantively raised by staff prior to the union leadership initiating this formal action."

Rich Mays, the interim county manager, said the union's "allegations are concerning enough that some sort of investigation is warranted. We're working as diligently as we can to do it on a timely basis."

Issa Simpson, a council representative for Oregon AFSCME, said union staff had previously complained about the agency's management, pointing to a petition last spring and a resignation letter last fall from a former care coordinator.

Simpson said the union — part of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees — represents 53 of the 71 workers at Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare. The "no confidence" vote against Crump-Hart, she said, was 30-4.

"Our members are feeling very strongly that there needs to be some change in management style and communication in order for them to provide the best possible client services to the community," Simpson said.

The union describes Crump-Hart as a manager who does not welcome feedback on her clinical decisions and who has made abusive and inappropriate comments about the professional performance of staff who have questioned her approach.

Crump-Hart, the union claims, has issued directives on

program operations that she is not familiar or experienced in handling. The union also claims she has expanded her supervision into areas where the union believes she is not qualified.

Union staff complain about a lack of training and a work environment that has contributed to high turnover.

"Staff have been 'scapegoated' for failures in clinical programs or errors due to understaffing and lack of proper program systems and resources,"

the union wrote in the March letter. "Ms. Crump-Hart reminds people often that CBH 'runs on her license' yet she has been unwilling to take responsibility for systemic problems."

Over the past year, Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare has come under increased scrutiny over whether the agency has adequately responded to public and private concerns about gaps in mental-health services.

Law enforcement leaders have described a mental health system that is in "crisis" and "broken."

Sumner Watkins, the executive director of Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare, sent out an apology email to community leaders last June acknowledging that she had heard about consistent feedback that she had not been displaying appropriate leadership skills.



Michele Crump-Hart

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