

## Drowning: Incident occurred on an ebb tide

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Apparently, the other child lost sight of the victim, and about 10 minutes transpired between the point when both were safe, and the time when the friend realized the girl was in trouble. According to Johnson, the child asked a stranger on the beach to call 911.

According to dispatch traffic, the reporting party said a young girl, who was wearing

street clothes, disappeared, and her companion believed she had drowned.

Responders from Pacific County Sheriff's Office, South Pacific County Technical Rescue (Surf Rescue), and Pacific County Fire District No. 1 raced to the beach. The Surf Rescue team deployed rescuers on jet skis, while others served as spotters onshore.

The U.S. Coast Guard launched a boat shortly after the call came in and then

launched a second boat and sent a helicopter to search for the girl. Around 7:35 p.m., a dispatcher reported that the helicopter crew had spotted the girl roughly 500 yards north of the command post.

"They have a swimmer in the water, performing rescue," the dispatcher said.

Johnson said the Coast Guard worked with Surf Rescue volunteers to bring the girl to shore.

Paramedics performed

CPR, and the girl was taken to Ocean Beach Hospital.

Johnson said the girl was still alive in the ambulance, but died shortly after reaching the hospital.

The incident occurred on an ebb tide, when water was still fairly high. It is likely that the victim was in the water for at least 30 minutes. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the water temperature at the time was about 55 degrees.

## Oveson: Her five state meet athletes earned a few medals

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coaching when I was in high school (fifth- and sixth-grade Amateur Athletic Union basketball). I coached all through college, at an elementary school as a PE teacher, and at the middle school in La Grande."

Oveson did some student-teaching in Saipan, and again volunteered her time to coach.

"That was a fun experience. I got to coach outrigger (a sea-going canoe race), soccer and football, and all kinds of crazy things. If they needed a coach, I was it. They have sports year-round there. It was crazy, but a lot of fun."

On her return to the states, Oveson coached volleyball and basketball for a year at Jewell High School.

Then, she was on to the next adventure.

### Commercial fishing

"I started commercial fishing, and thinking that if the right job came up, I would go back to teaching," she said.

Oveson just didn't know that the next teaching opportunity would come from the first email in her inbox.

"I was in Bristol Bay, and I had a day off, so I had a chance to look at my emails (some 800), and the very first one was an announcement for 635 new teaching jobs that I was qualified for. The first teaching job was in Warrenton, Oregon, and I was like, 'Warrenton!?' That would work out well, because I fish out of Warrenton."

"The teaching job was for science and PE, two really cool things that I'm interested in. I didn't have my resume or my teaching license with me (she was still on a fishing boat in Alaska), so I just sent an email to Rod Heyen (the principal), asking to put in my application."

"I gave him my satellite number on the boat if he was

interested, and the next thing I knew I was doing an interview."

And the next thing Heyen was doing was calling her back, "because I was in between setting on the boat," Oveson said.

To wrap it up, Oveson got the job, finished her summer fishing, and arrived in Warrenton the first day of school. "I got off the plane at 5:09 in the morning, and school started at 7:30. That was the most awkward thing for a first day."

And, of course the story of how she came to be a track coach isn't normal, either.

### First practice

"Kersee Lind, the head track coach, called me into his room and asked me if I would be interested in committing to a coaching position with the track team."

"I thought about it and said I was interested. The next thing I knew, Kersee was gone (as coach) and it was mass chaos. And Monday of the first track practice, they said, 'Hey, the job's open, you can apply.'"

And just like that, Oveson was named the varsity track coach, literally the first day of practice.

And all in all, it hasn't been a bad season for Oveson and the track team. Her five state meet athletes earned a few medals.

From Wallowa to Saipan to Warrenton, the journey of life is still in the early stages for Oveson.

"I'm a big believer in things happening for a reason, so it's been a good time for me," said Oveson, who plans on returning to Warrenton High School next year, after Alaska this summer. "I absolutely love commercial fishing. It's been a blast, and (the teaching job) was really the job I was looking for. Mr. Heyen is one of the most supportive administrators. The staff I work with is phenomenal in helping out new people."

— Gary Henley

## Cormorants: 'It's a real mystery for us'

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"The disturbance resulted in nest abandonment and the loss of all the cormorants' eggs by avian predators like seagulls, eagles and crows," she said. "We don't know yet what the cause of the disturbance was."

Officials didn't see any evidence of a coyote or any other four-legged predator, but they did see 16 bald eagles on the island.

"Bald eagles are known to significantly startle and disperse nesting colonies," Echols said. "We don't know if that magnitude of bald eagles could have done this."

### Eagles may not be responsible

Bald eagles have been blamed for decimating Caspian tern and cormorant colonies on the island in the past. But Dan Roby, a researcher with Oregon State University who has studied the tern and cormorant colonies for decades, said he doesn't think eagles could have flushed so many cormorants off their nests.

"I'm pretty confident that's not what caused the cormorants to abandon the colony," he said. "We've seen that number of eagles out there before. We've seen them killing cormorants on their nests, and it doesn't cause that kind of abandonment."

Roby said researchers on



The Daily Astorian/File Photo  
A double-crested cormorant rests atop of nest of eggs in the colony on East Sand Island.

his team did an aerial survey of the island on Tuesday and saw a large group of cormorants on another part of the island. But the nesting area was completely abandoned.

"There were absolutely no cormorants anywhere in the colony," he said. "It's a real mystery for us. It actually amazes me that any kind of disturbance — even people going on the island if that's what happened — could cause all the birds to leave their nests with eggs and then gather on the shoreline as if they were afraid to go back to their nests. It's certainly unprecedented in all the years we were out there working on that cormorant colony."

### Biologists investigating

Echols said about 4,000 birds have returned to the island, but not the nesting area. A team of biologists is investigating what caused the birds to flee their nests.

Federal agents have been shooting cormorants in the area and oiling cormorant eggs on the island as part of a long-term plan to shrink the cormorant colony and reduce how many threatened and endangered salmon the birds are eating. They reported killing 209 cormorants between May 12 and Wednesday.

Officials haven't attributed the disturbance of the cormorant colony to any shooting or

egg oiling activity. Echols said the last time the agents were oiling eggs on the island was May 11. Agents were on the water shooting cormorants on May 16, she said, but they have now stopped all culling activities because the number of cormorants in the colony has dropped below the level where they're required to stop.

### Vocal critic

Bob Sallinger with the Portland Audubon Society has been a vocal critic of the Corps' cormorant management plan. He said colony failure has been one of his chief concerns as federal agencies shrink the size of the cormorant population.

"When you do that, you make a population extremely vulnerable," he said. "Regardless of whether this abandonment was caused by eagles or their own activities, the fact is they've gone in there and deliberately decimated the population. Federal agencies have deliberately put the western population of cormorants at direct risk, and it needs to stop."

Echols said federal officials are monitoring the Columbia River estuary to see where all the cormorants have gone.

Roby said it's still early enough in their breeding season that the birds could still return to their nests and lay more eggs to avoid complete colony failure for the year.

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