

# Birds: Nonlethal hazing is to increase survival of smolts

Continued from Page 1A

The bridge has hosted the fish-eating birds before, acting as a seasonal home to around 75 to 100 nesting pairs of cormorants on average, according to studies by the Corps — nothing compared to what has been observed in the past few weeks. It isn't clear what the increase means for the bridge itself, or if the nests will remain in use after the regular nesting season has passed.

Meanwhile, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife is continuing with regularly scheduled hazing of double-crested cormorants along Oregon estuaries to protect smolt.

The bulk of this work wrapped up in May, but Clatsop County's Fisheries Project holds a permit from the state that allows them to also harass the birds in July, when the department typically releases fish from net pens in Youngs Bay and Tongue Point. With lower numbers of brood stock this year, however, Natural Resources Manager Steve Meschke doubts they'll need to go out in their boats and chase cormorants around the bay — Clatsop County's usual method.



Cormorants rest below the Astoria Bridge Wednesday.

Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

## Different methods, same birds

Oregon's state-run hazing is very different from the methods undertaken by the Corps on East Sand Island.

Last year, the Corps obtained a permit from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that allowed them to begin targeting and killing double-crested cormorants, planning to ultimately reduce approximately 14,900 breed-

ing pairs of double-crested cormorants to 5,900 breeding pairs by 2018. The agency says the birds eat millions of protected salmon and steelhead traveling through the Columbia River estuary and threaten the survival of those runs, statements and reasoning the Portland Audubon Society and others have since challenged.

As of May 16, the Corps' contractors killed 2,394 dou-

ble-crested cormorants and oiled 1,092 nests to prevent eggs from hatching before all the birds disappeared and culling activities were halted early.

The goal for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife hazing is similar, but different. Instead of using guns, the state and the other groups it contracts with or issues permits to for hazing work are more likely to chase the birds



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian  
A lone cormorant takes flight under the Astoria Bridge.

around in boats or use laser pointers to wake them up and move them away from areas where young fish are going to be passing through.

Their goal with this nonlethal hazing is to increase the survival of smolts, particularly the Oregon Coast coho population that is federally listed as threatened, by changing the cormorants' behavior for a short period of time. The hazing occurs when the fish are passing through estuaries along the southern and mid-coast — Tillamook, Nehalem, Nestucca, Elsie and Coquille — and in the Lower Columbia River. Such hazing has regularly occurred since the 1980s.

## Stresses on fish

Oregon Fish and Wildlife can't say for certain that this hazing ultimately reduces the

number of birds traveling to sensitive areas, or if keeping the birds away from smolts means more fish survive to come back as adults.

"The diet data indicates cormorants don't really care what they eat, they eat what's around and what's easy to catch," said James Lawonn, a biologist and avian predation coordinator for the department. As other prey begin to run through the rivers and up and down the coast after May, research by the department and Oregon State University show salmon make up even less of the birds' diet.

Salmon survival depends on a variety of factors, including huge variables like ocean conditions and habitat loss, Lawonn said. Still, the state is trying to ease any additional stresses the fish may face.

This sort of nonlethal hazing will likely continue for the foreseeable future — the state's particular hazing program is already in the budget for next year — but it is, Lawonn believes, ultimately a social question.

"How much does society want to harass a native bird to promote survival of salmon, some of which are in conservation danger, some of which aren't?" he said.

# Manager: He said the commission keeps such information at 'arm's length'

Continued from Page 1A

## A reversal

The Nygaard family, who own Warrenton Fiber, and Mayor Kujala's family, who own property near the dam, have urged the city to consider taking control of the dam, warning of possible flood risks if the dam is removed by the water district.

The City Commission voted 2-2 in May — with Mayor Kujala recused because of a conflict of interest — against renewing a \$1.2 million agreement with the water district and the Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce on the dam. The agreement would have replaced a gravel road over the dam with a single-lane

bridge so the city could maintain emergency access over the river once the dam is removed. The project would have been funded with money from the federal Bonneville Power Administration.

The commission had twice voted for the deal in the past but reversed course under pressure from the Nygaard and Kujala families.

The water district responded in May by again voting to remove the dam, dropping the provision for a single-lane bridge for the city.

## Planning Commission review

Removing the dam would require a city permit and, likely, a review by the Planning Com-

mission, which could examine whether engineers for the water district and CREST adequately modeled the flooding risk.

A Planning Commission vote could be appealed to the City Commission.

Fritsch said he is concerned the process might now be "tainted" because city commissioners have viewed some of the information on the dam before the Planning Commission and before they might have to weigh an appeal.

The city manager has consistently advised the City Commission to focus on the possibility of securing a bridge over the river for emergency access if the dam is removed — and not the flood-control issues — because the land use questions

would first be heard by the Planning Commission.

Fritsch said the city asked a consultant last year to do a technical review on the water district's engineering reports on the dam to help the Planning Commission, but the water district and CREST withdrew the permit application before the Planning Commission took a vote.

The city consultant continued to review the water district's engineering reports in the expectation that the project could come back before the Planning Commission.

Fritsch said the City Commission "has always kept that at arm's length and has not collected that information. It's what we did for Oregon LNG.

It's what we did for Wal-Mart."

Pressed as to whether he should have shared more details with the commission, the city manager said: "I don't think it would have been appropriate."

## Defined flood plain

Among the city consultant's main conclusions, according to an October memo, is that while only minimal differences in water elevations are expected if the dam is removed, the water district's engineering reports did not identify specific areas of inundation or properties that could be impacted. The consultant also questioned the potential impact of even small increases in water elevation on the city's levees, even though the dam is

not part of the levee system.

Tessa Scheller, the chairwoman of the water district's board of directors, said the water district was aware of the city consultant's observations before adopting the engineering plan.

"We're confident that we understand the flood plain," she said. "We live here. We would not want to flood ourselves."

The water district took possession of the dam — built by the federal government in 1963 — after the structure exceeded a 50-year life span.

"We are determined to remove that dam," Scheller said. "Our liability increases every day it's there and open for public misuse."



**THERE.**  
WHEN YOU NEED US.™

# BE READY. BE PROTECTED.

*BECOME A MEMBER*

Life Flight Network's membership program, formerly offered as an option with the Medix ambulance LifeCare membership program, is now available directly from Life Flight Network. As the closest air medical provider in Clatsop County, first responders will often call on us to provide ICU level care while providing rapid transport during a serious emergency. Such flights can be expensive and insurance might only cover a fraction of the actual charge.

While we hope you'll never need our services, becoming a member today will ensure if you do, you'll be covered by Life Flight Network's membership program.

**Life Flight Network is there when you need us.**

## MEMBERSHIP INCLUDES:

- Coverage for you, your spouse and **all household dependents** claimed on your tax return
- **No out-of-pocket costs** for medically necessary emergent flights completed by LFN

**SIGN UP HERE:** [LifeFlight.org](http://LifeFlight.org)  
**OR CALL:** 1-800-982-9299





**NOW OPEN & WE NEED YOU!**

**Pelican Brewing Company is**

**NOW HIRING**

Line Cooks, Janitors, Dishwashers, Servers, Hosts & Bussers

**APPLY IN PERSON ANYTIME AT:**  
1371 SW Hemlock, Cannon Beach

**OR SEND YOUR RESUME TO:**  
[Employment@Pelicanbrewing.com](mailto:Employment@Pelicanbrewing.com)

[www.yourlittlebeachtown.com/employment](http://www.yourlittlebeachtown.com/employment)

Questions? Call Stephanie 503-965-7779 ext. 307

**Thank you to our 50's Cruise Reunion Car Show Sponsors we couldn't have done it without your support!**



– from the Lower Columbia Classic Car Club

A.F. Dick Machine Shop –Astoria	L & D Race Tech –Warrenton
Action Sign Works –Astoria	Mark's Auto –Seaside
Advanced Collision Repair –Seaside	McCall Les Schwab Tires –Warrenton
Affordable Towing –Astoria	Neil Baeten Auto Body –Astoria
American Century Trophy –Astoria	North Coast Auto –Astoria
American Family Ins. –Astoria	North Coast Truck –Astoria
Andi Warren/Farmers Ins –Astoria	Nu-Way Carpet –Astoria
Astoria Deal's Only –Astoria	Nygaard Logging –Warrenton
Astoria Ford –Astoria	Ocean Crest Chevrolet –Warrenton
Astoria Warrenton Mini Marts –Astoria, Warrenton	O'Riley Auto Parts –Warrenton
Auto Zone Auto Parts –Warrenton	Pioneer Market –Long Beach
Beach Baron Car Club –Ocean Park	Polk Riley Printing –Astoria
City Lumber Co. –Astoria	Pud Pul –Astoria
Classic Body Works and Towing –Astoria	Putman's Pro Lube –Warrenton
Clatsop Power and Equipment –Astoria	Rods Auto and Marine Electric –Warrenton
Columbia Motor Parts –Astoria	Seaside Muffler and Off Road –Seaside
Comfort Suites –Astoria	Sowins Real Estate –Astoria
Costco –Warrenton	Springer's Garage –Astoria
Cruizin Magazine –Freeland, WA	Steve and Judy Jordan –Astoria
Darlene Webster –Chinook	Sunset Napa Auto Parts –Astoria
Del's O.K. Tire Factory –Astoria	Tackle Time –Warrenton
Ed and Jeff Penuel –Warrenton, Gresham	Vinson Bros Construction –Astoria
Frank & Debbie Kossak –Portland	Warrenton Auto/Marine Repair –Warrenton
Jim Varner's Automotive –Astoria	Warrenton Napa Auto Parts –Warrenton
Judy & Ernie Atkinson –Astoria	Wilcox & Flegal Oil Co –Astoria
K. Manufacturing –Astoria	Woody's Wabbits –Astoria