

Changes coming to hatchery programs

Five-year transition planned

By **KATIE FRANKOWICZ**
For The Daily Astorian

Significant changes are coming to certain federally-funded hatchery programs next year, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration staff told stakeholders at a briefing Thursday.

Rob Jones, NOAA's West Coast head of hatcheries, said the agency is proposing a variety of increases and decreases in salmon production at Mitchell Act-funded hatcheries along the Columbia River in Oregon and Washington state. This, coupled with other proposed changes, he said, will continue work decades in the making to design the "next generation of hatchery operations."

The proposed changes in production would be phased in over an approximately five-year transition period, and will eventually affect abundance to commercial and sport fisheries.

"I expect that what will emerge from this opinion is changes to release numbers," Jones said in a press confer-

ence later. "In some places there will be reductions. In other places, it could be the status quo or even increases."

It is likely any reduction would not be felt in fisheries until around 2026, estimated James Dixon, a fisheries biologist with NOAA's West Coast Sustainable Fisheries Division.

There are 62 hatchery programs that receive Mitchell Act funds in the Columbia River Basin — in Oregon, Washington state and Idaho. The Mitchell Act is a law passed by Congress in 1938 to put money toward conserving and rebuilding declining salmon and steelhead runs on the Columbia River.

Together these hatcheries produce more than 63 million fish annually and, over the past 10 years, received funding that has ranged from \$12 million to \$22 million per year, according to a Mitchell Act final environmental impact statement published in 2014. NOAA is required to review hatchery operations and their effects on threatened or endangered stock and make funding decisions for hatcheries that operate on money from the Mitchell Act.

Throughout the transition period proposed Thursday, "we'll be really tailoring each hatchery program after understanding where each of their

fish end up," Jones said.

"We're going to be watching very carefully how these actions (play out) and if something doesn't play out very close to what we expected, we'll revisit whether that action will be adjusted."

And that, he said, could very well happen within the first five years.

The proposed changes discussed Thursday with stakeholders will be gathered in a biological opinion expected to be released in January. This opinion will address how NOAA plans to mitigate impacts of hatchery operations on protected fish.

Though the agency had already started a larger review of the impacts of Mitchell Act funding several years ago, they are on a tight timeline with this particular biological opinion due to a legal challenge filed by the Wild Fish Conservancy. The group argued that the agency was not doing enough to protect listed fish from the impacts of hatchery fish, according to NOAA spokesperson Michael Milstein.

Since reforms of hatchery programs began in earnest in the 1990s, NOAA has continued to study and learn "how the fish are doing and the hatcheries are performing," Jones told stakeholders.

Ilwaco man sentenced to six years for sex abuse

By **KATIE FRANKOWICZ**
For The Daily Astorian

A 21-year-old Ilwaco, Washington, man pleaded guilty to first-degree sexual abuse and first-degree rape and was sentenced to six years in prison Thursday.

Jesse Lee Jetland, 21, of Ilwaco, was arrested in March following a month-long investigation by the Clatsop County Sheriff's Office after he had been found in a 13-year-old Astoria girl's bedroom. He and the middle-schooler had sex and he had hidden in her room for nearly a day before he was caught. He also had sexual contact with another underage girl during this same period, and provided marijuana to both girls.

The sex and sexual contact were consensual, but with minors, which led to the charges of sexual abuse and rape, explained Clatsop County Deputy District Attorney Dawn Buzzard.

Jetland was sentenced to 75 months for each charge and will serve these sentences concurrently. He also pleaded no contest to a charge of delivery of marijuana to a person under 18 years old. Other charges against him were dismissed.

These included two charges of first-degree sodomy and first-degree burglary, among others.

His attorney, Mary Ann Murk, asked Circuit Court Judge Philip Nelson to allow Jetland to stay at the Clatsop County Jail through the Christmas holiday. Jetland's birthday falls on Christmas Day and he had hoped to see his family before leaving for prison.

Judge Nelson said he had no control over this and it would be up to the jail and the Oregon Department of Corrections.

Murk also expressed concern about Jetland being placed in a standard sex offender program. A neurological evaluation showed Jetland has a number of developmental delays, she said.

Still, she told Nelson, "he understands and he's accepting the consequences of his actions."

The charges to which Jetland pled guilty are both Measure 11 crimes that carry mandatory minimum prison sentences. When he is released, Jetland will be required to register as a sex offender.



Jesse Lee Jetland

Family, hospital settle wrongful death suit

Family had alleged medical malpractice

By **DERRICK DePLEDGE**
The Daily Astorian

A \$2.1 million medical malpractice and wrongful death lawsuit against Columbia Memorial Hospital has been settled.

Ann Potter, an Astoria bookkeeper, died several weeks after having surgery at the hospital in 2013 for a perforated ulcer. Her family alleged that Edouard Duret, the doctor who performed the surgery,

prescribed Potter pain medication that can cause stomach or intestinal bleeding.

Potter, 77, was married to Tom Potter, an architect who served on the Astoria City Council. Tom Potter died last year.

The family's lawsuit named Duret, who has retired, and the hospital. The terms of the settlement are confidential.

"It's a satisfactory resolution," said Mark McCulloch, a Portland attorney for the family.

Paul Mitchell, a spokesman for the hospital, declined to comment.

The suit was filed last March. A hearing on a

motion in the case had been scheduled for Thursday in

Circuit Court. A trial had been set for January.

Inslee wants to close Naselle Youth Camp

EO Media Group

OLYMPIA, Wash. — The Naselle Youth Camp is targeted for closure in Washington state Gov. Jay Inslee's proposed state budget.

The youth camp, one of Pacific County's largest employers, houses 76 young people who have gotten into trouble with the juvenile justice system.

Inslee plans to relocate them to Echo Glen Children's Center in Snoqualmie and Green Hill School in Chehalis. The governor's budget claims savings of \$7.4 million over the coming two-year budget cycle.

In an interview in April, Pat Escamilla, the youth camp's new superintendent, said state officials assured him the camp was staying open for the foreseeable future.

The youth camp is one of just three across the state, and is the only one that has the state Department of Natural Resources occupational programs.

Closing the camp has been suggested several times by governors since the 1990s, but the decision is ultimately up to the state Legislature.

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