

# Salmon: It's been a spotty season on the Columbia River for fishermen

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The summer season typically peaks early, not long after that June 16 date, said Chris Kern, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's deputy administrator of marine and Columbia River.

"We should have early indications of whether that run size is also smaller or not," he said.

In the last seven days, 45 shad have passed Bonneville Dam. Shad, a migratory fish that moves between ocean and river just like the spring Chinook, first arrived on the West Coast by train in 1871. A particularly rough migration if you're a fish. They adapted quickly, mapped new ways in new waters and are now found from Mexico to Alaska. For decades now, they've arrived in the Columbia River in late May and they cross over Bonneville Dam by the thousands, even the millions.

So 45 is an interesting number.

"At 45 for the year, the shad are having problems," said Roler. "I think everything is having problems in this flow."

Tucker Jones, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's ocean salmon and Columbia River program manager, is also optimistic that spring Chinook numbers could pick up at Bonneville. But, he said, if those numbers remain low, and steelhead numbers — forecast to come in at 131,000 fish total — remain low, "you start to get this body of evidence ... it starts to seem like, OK maybe our (original) forecast is a little bit optimistic."

For now, he said, "We manage with this forecast until further notice."

"You only have the experiences that you have," he added. Biologists and fishery managers look at the historical records and assume "whatever we're seeing this year is probably somewhere in the realm of what we've seen in the past."

And in the past, he said, "(a run) has never been this late and big."



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Martin Rice prepares for another salmon season in Youngs Bay in April. Low salmon runs in the Columbia River have put that fishery in doubt.

## Spotty season

For commercial and recreational fishermen alike it's been a spotty season on the Columbia River.

In April, Washington extended the sport fishing season on the Lower Columbia River to give anglers another chance at the salmon. Poor river conditions seemed to be keeping fish from biting,

managers said. Meanwhile, anglers above Bonneville haven't even had a shot at spring Chinook yet and steelhead fishing is closed entirely until further notice.

Until there is proof that more spring Chinook are out there waiting to pass Bonneville, any steelhead fishing could inadvertently impact

protected fish, fishery managers say. Steelhead fishing itself could be restricted this summer if the run comes in as low as fishery managers predict. Already the department is considering a plan that would close steelhead retention at dams east of Bonneville.

A commercial Oregon tangle net fishery on the river's main stem was waiting for the run update in May before it was going to be allowed to open — a green light that likely won't flash given the downgraded forecast for returning spring Chinook.

Commercial gillnetters, restricted to select fishing areas off the Columbia River main stem, said

the season was a disappointment, though landing numbers reveal a season on par with previous years. Fishermen landed a total of 7,015 Chinook, according to preliminary numbers released by Oregon. This is only slightly lower than last year, when fishermen landed 7,276, but well behind 2015 when fishermen were one fish shy of 11,000.

For those commercial fishermen who were lucky in their landings, the prices remained fairly high. Steve Fick, owner of Astoria-based processor Fishhawk Fisheries, paid fishermen as high as \$20 and \$15 a pound early in the season. The first fish he bought this spring was 33 pounds, Fick

said: A \$660 fish.

The price per pound later dropped to around \$8.25 a pound as the season progressed.

"It's been OK as far as having some fish for those who are participating," Fick said. "It's been viable."

But viable is not the same thing as lucrative, he added.

## Agreeing on fish

Since 2012, Oregon and Washington have been united in phasing gillnet fishing off the main stem of the Columbia River, a process that was supposed to be complete this year. But the plan hit a speed bump when Oregon's Fish and Wildlife Commission backpedaled on some of the

reform measures and considered allowing limited gillnet fishing on the main stem. Following criticism from Gov. Kate Brown, the commission changed its decision again. The back and forth between Oregon and Washington — the two states jointly manage fisheries on the Columbia River — was stressful to both fishermen and fishery managers, who weren't sure what to expect in the summer and fall if the states couldn't agree on who could fish, how much they could catch and what gear they could use.

"We're in agreement now," said Kern. "As of the last meeting, we have the same allocations and gear types for summer."



Brenna Visser/The Daily Astorian

Cars are parked where the city plans to implement timed parking on Hemlock Street between Second and Third streets.

## Parking: Business owners have mixed reactions

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### Enforcement

City Manager Brant Kucera said the first few weeks will be all about educating business owners and visitors about the rule change.

"We are interested in educating business owners and moving into this gradually. We've never had timed parking, and when we put up signs, behavior isn't going to change overnight," Kucera said.

Police Chief Jason Schermerhorn is also adding two new public information officers to help enforce the new time limit between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m., as well as the ordinance passed in April that says a driver moving a car within the same block or parking lot does not count as starting over with a new time limit.

Each officer will be full time and paid around \$14 an hour. After the summer trial period,

the city will decide whether or not to retain the two new additions or cut back in the next fiscal year.

"We've been needing to add positions anyway because of an increase in tourists," Schermerhorn said.

Schermerhorn said he expects the added enforcement duties will mean an uptick in paperwork to process, but is approaching the pilot as "by trial and error."

"A lot will depend on how traffic is coming and going, but it will be effective to relocate parking from employees so they aren't taking it away from customers," he said.

### Business concerns

Timed parking has received mixed reaction from some downtown business owners. Some see having downtown parking available for employees as a necessity, and others as a luxury.

Jeff Ter Har, the owner of Ter Har's clothing store on Hemlock Street, wrote a letter to the Cannon Beach Gazette that asserted the city did not involve business owners enough in a public process when making this decision.

"Love government that thinks it knows better about what to do than the businesses that rely on that parking for their survival," wrote Ter Har, a photographer who contributes to The Daily Astorian.

Jean Gogueu, who co-owns Josephine's on Hemlock, said the issue isn't so much about timed parking as it is about appropriate parking for employees. He takes issue with employees' use of street parking instead of public lots on Spruce because those could be used for customers, he said.

"Timed parking would help turnover, but in the long run people need direction on where to go," he said. "When time's

up, where is (the driver) to go? It will be musical cars."

Gogueu also said most of his business comes from foot traffic, so shortening the amount of time one can park there won't necessarily increase business.

Melisa Colvin is the gallery manager at Bronze Coast Gallery on Hemlock, and she also expressed that high turnover wouldn't necessarily bring in more customers because most business is driven by foot traffic.

Nevertheless, she believes timed parking is worth a try.

"I would like to see how it goes. I don't know if it will solve the problem, but maybe it could be seasonal," Colvin said. "It would break the tendency of people who work down here to park and leave their car all day."

The consultant hired by the city will monitor the situation throughout the summer and present his findings to the City Council in the fall.

## Warrenton: Whoever is selected will fill a term that expires in 2020

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candidates and ask questions. The commission plans to select a candidate at a meeting in June.

Whoever is selected will fill a term that expires in 2020. The seat became vacant when Balensifer, with vocal support from residents, was appointed in May by commissioners to take over as mayor. Kujala had stepped down in March to spend more time with his family and focus on his business, Skipanon Brand Seafood.

At the meet-and-greet Tuesday night, the three candidates met with anyone who stopped by, answering questions and talking with commissioners. All three men say they were motivated to apply out of a desire to give back to their community.

### The candidates

Baldwin, who grew up

in Warrenton and was part of the push to make the mayoral office an elected position, said residents asked him to apply. Baldwin lost to Kujala in the 2014 mayoral election.

"If there's something I can help with, I'm here," he told the commissioners. "I just feel like I owe the city of Warrenton."

"I thought it was a great opportunity to take what I've learned and continue to grow our city," said Mitchell. He believes Warrenton should not be "just a place you drive through, but a place you drive to."

LeChurch said he wants to help people have a better sense of what is going on at the city.

"I want to help people get what they need," he said.

If appointed, this would mark LeChurch's first time holding political office.

## Seaside: Protections for eagles sought at meeting

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### Eagles

At April's City Council public hearing, neighbor Dawn Miller sought protections for eagles on nearby Stanley Lake, a concern seconded by City Councilor Tom Horning.

Folk said neighbors are "trying to make it something it's not."

"Whenever you have trees there might be bird," Folk said last week. "If the trees are in the wetlands and are part of the buildable property, they are never going to be touched. To me, it's off-limits to everybody."

Monday he repeated that

commitment.

"We couldn't touch them (the wetlands) if we wanted, and we don't want to," Folk said.

Plans are still in the preliminary stages, Folk said after Monday's vote, and could include 10 duplexes.

"I'll do whatever I can do make sure it's a beautiful project, affordable and people will be proud to live there," he added. "Now that we are where we are, we have to get to the grindstone. I'm excited to get started and have some great houses for people to live in."

An ordinance annexing the property into the city also passed unanimously.