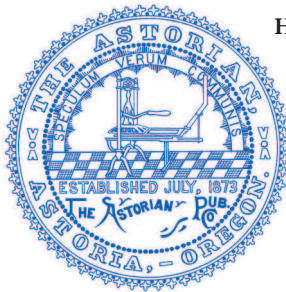


THE DAILY ASTORIAN

Founded in 1873



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Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian
A Dungeness crab caught by researchers near the mouth of the Columbia River.

Scientific research of Dungeness crab more necessary than ever

A delay in the start of Dungeness crab season is nothing new. Dec. 1 is the first possible date, but seldom the actual one in recent years. In fact, timing the season’s start to get better prices and ensure high quality crab is a sign of sophistication on the part of regulators, processors and the fleet.

As noted in our story last week, however, delays are hard on the families of crab workers and boat crew members. The first weeks of crab season are famous for fat paychecks, which go toward catching up with bills and putting presents under the tree. If the closure goes past Christmas — and it easily may considering how slowly crab are hardening and putting on meat this year — it will be important to step with donations to food banks and gift drives.

Beyond this immediate issue, there are both long-term concerns and things we can feel good about when it comes to the status of this locally vital fishery. The Tri-State Agreement that governs crabbing off Oregon, California and Washington was made permanent by Congress this August. Since 1998, it has created a “sustainable, science-based fishery management program that keeps fishermen fishing and crab stocks thriving,” according to U.S. Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash.

This coast-wide system avoids crab in any one area from being plundered when other stretches of the coast are closed. This year, as a processor told *The Daily Astorian* last week, this approach led to the decision, “Whatever’s better for the commodity is best — which is letting the crab sit and grow.”

This attitude has made Dungeness crab consistently one of the most lucrative fisheries on the West Coast. Catches cycle up and down, but it is one fishery that doesn’t ever seem to be on the brink of disaster.

It’s good people have grown smarter about managing crab harvests, because there are other threats that need attention — everything from the acidifying ocean to competition with other industries for offshore areas.

There was confusion on the part of some out-of-area news media about this delay, which they incorrectly attributed in part to the marine toxin domoic acid. Domoic is an issue that defies easy understanding or solutions, with some species of the marine planktonic diatom *Pseudo-nitzschia* sometimes creating it as a byproduct and sometimes not.

At least here around the mouth of the Columbia River, so far this year it isn’t making much domoic. Recreational razor clam digs, which depend on domoic levels below 20 parts per million, have been approved this fall. Dungeness seasons are permitted when crab have up to 29 ppm in their guts. Tests on crab in the Grayland, Washington area found a maximum value of 12 ppm in one crab collected Nov. 5. No domoic at all was detected during testing Oct. 24 off the Long Beach Peninsula. All are safe to eat.

Big city media aren’t wrong, however, to worry about changing ocean chemistry, temperature and other conditions. There’s no telling when domoic might next become a problem in our area. In the longer term, slight increases in seawater acidity could interfere with crab-shell formation or harm the ocean food web that crab rely on.

In addition to the Tri-State Agreement’s sensible management regime, coastal communities must continue actively advocating for scientific monitoring and research of all the factors affecting the health of crab and other fisheries. Only by fully understanding the threats to sea life will we have any realistic chance of making sure crab are around for future generations.

It’s good people have grown smarter about managing crab harvests, because there are other threats that need attention.



GUEST COLUMN

Helping students prep for college



Sue Cody
Sadie Wooldridge was one of several Upward Bound students who painted the North Coast Food Web as a community project in 2016.

By SUSAN CODY
For The Daily Astorian

‘This is the best job I’ve ever had,” says Jon Graves. “Students I have worked with are now nurses, getting Ph.Ds or in Japan teaching English. They have gone to college, they have succeeded and are giving back. That is really satisfying.”

Graves is the director of pre-college programs at Clatsop Community College. For 12 years he has guided students through the maze of college applications and tests to prepare them for a successful future. Two federal programs, Upward Bound and Talent Search, are the main focus of his work.

Upward Bound and Talent Search are programs introduced by President Lyndon Johnson’s War on Poverty in 1965 to get low-income students through high school and into college. The goal was to combat generations of poverty.

Both programs are designed for students who are from low-income households or whose parents have not earned a bachelor’s degree, or both. They are guided on a path to finish high school and be the first generation in their family to receive a college education.

The college has embraced the programs since the early 1990s. Around 75 percent of the students begin college and about 40 percent earn a bachelor’s or associate’s degree, Graves says.

During the summer, students created a professional-looking video about the Upward Bound program at the college: bit.ly/W2Wupward

Building relationships

In Clatsop County, 671 students are participating in the Talent Search program that targets sixth- to 12th-graders. Upward Bound has 73 students from ninth to 12th grade. Eight staff members and school counselors work with students at



Sue Cody
Jon Graves is the director of pre-college programs, including Talent Search and Upward Bound, at Clatsop Community College.

Goal-setting is one of the fundamental steps of college preparation.

Knappa, Astoria, Warrenton and Seaside.

The sister programs work with the same caseload of students.

“We help get kids through high school, which can be a crazy time,” Graves says.

“Building relationships is huge. One of the best things to help students succeed is to build relationships with them so they know there is always an adult in their corner. Unfortunately, not all students have that support.”

Talent Search and Upward Bound host field trips to colleges, throwing together 30 to 40 students from different schools.

“Relationships between the students in the different schools is just phenomenal,” Graves says.

“It is fun to watch kids interact with each other. They have opinions about other schools. When the field trip begins, kids from each school sit together in their own section of the bus. By the end of the trip, everyone is spread out and talking to each other, exchanging phone numbers.

“It is amazing to see how it broadens their support group in Clatsop County and brings down some of the barriers that are artificially imposed on everyone because of what school they go to. It’s just great.”

Focus on goals

During the school year, Talent Search works with high school and middle school students. Goal-setting is one of the fundamental steps of college preparation. Staff conduct workshops on study skills and encourage students to pay attention to their grades and make sure they get the right credits to graduate. As Graves says, everything matters.

The programs help students and parents with scholarship information and filling out the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), letting them know what documents and information they will need to prepare the application.

“We work with parents to let them know which loans are available and which loans are better,” he says. “We don’t want them to take too much money out in loans. It might be better to go to community college and live at home for two years, then transfer to a four-year college, because community college is free in Oregon if you graduate and have a 2.5 GPA.”

Sue Cody is communications lead for The Way to Wellville Clatsop County. She is the former deputy managing editor of The Daily Astorian.