



Photos by Oregon State Police

A program to reward people who report poaching had a successful year in 2017.

Poachers: Albany area had highest number of rewards

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deer, since those animals are the most popular big game for hunters, said Sgt. Joe Warwick of the state police's fish and wildlife division.

The Albany area had the highest number of rewards at 11.

Pinpointing why hunters report more or fewer poaching cases can be difficult. Not all poaching convictions are a result of tips, and not all informants accept rewards.

"We don't know much about the informants," Dungannon said. "They give the tip, we write the check and we send it to them."

Dungannon suggests recent raises in reward money may be a factor in last year's spike. Standard amounts range from

\$100 for game fish, shellfish, upland birds, waterfowl and fur-bearers to \$1,000 for big-horn sheep, mountain goats and moose.

Dungannon also pointed to the state police's efforts to advertise the program on social media and in local publications.

"There are things that officers can do to take the game to the next level and get the word out to the community," Dungannon said.

Nearly all of the fund's financial support comes from courts ordering those convicted of violations to pay restitution. The hunter's association and other conservation groups also pitch in when unusually large award amounts are requested.

A bill pending in the state Legislature may help on that

front. While judges already impose fines for misdemeanor offenses, the bill would lay out a precedent to impose such fines in addition to any jail or prison sentence. It also would give the state the ability to deny licenses, tags and permits if fines are not repaid.

"This removes any doubt from the court that they're able to assess the restitution to the state and to the TIP fund," Dungannon said.

To continue its growth, police and others who run the fund can think of ways to incentivize hunters to turn in suspected poachers.

"It's a big deal to take home an elk," Warwick said. "We need to tell them, 'That bull elk that guy poached, that's a bull you could have caught legally.'"



Authorities credit advertising on social media and local publications with getting the word out about the incentive program to report poaching.

Guns: 'Bill doesn't fix the systemic problems'

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Rep. Janeen Sollman, D-Hillsboro, wept as she talked about verbal and physical abuse she experienced from an alcoholic father.

Rep. Andy Olson, R-Albany, said he also had witnessed horrific domestic abuse during his former career as a police officer. Olson voted against the bill, because, he said, it would not prevent abusers from obtaining guns illegally and killing or injuring others. The legislation also fails to address the root cause of gun violence, he said.

"This bill doesn't fix the systemic problems our state is experiencing, that is why I am going to vote 'no.'"

The legislation also would require Oregon State Police to notify other law enforcement when they learn someone has tried to obtain a gun illegally.

Under existing law, only convicted abusers in domestic relationships, such as a spouse, former spouse, co-parent or live-in partner, are prohibited from having guns. The bill expands the ban to current and past intimate partners of all kinds, as well as stalkers.

Barker said as a compromise with reluctant supporters of the bill, he and other sponsors agreed to remove a provision that would automatically dispossess an accused abuser or stalker of their guns if they missed one court hearing.

A study by the Oregon Department of Justice showed that more than 16 Oregonians were killed in nine separate domestic violence incidents between Dec. 25, 2016, and Jan. 16, 2017. Not all of the fatalities involved romantic relationships.

Women are more likely to be killed in domestic disputes when a gun is present in the home, Barker said.

Laws aimed at keeping guns from abusers have reduced homicides of intimate partners, according to recent research published in the American Journal of Epidemiology.

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Planners: Port 'very interested' in who new community development director will be

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The person the city hires will oversee a department that is responsible for significant pieces of Astoria, from economic development, zoning, land use planning and code enforcement to historic preservation, building inspections and the urban renewal districts.

Weiser has more than 20 years of experience in planning, much of it in southern Oregon where she worked for Jackson County and the cities of Medford and Jacksonville. She also has experience in development and historic preservation.

Moab has a population of around 6,000 people, but a daily tourist count of anywhere from 25,000 to 50,000, she told the audience Thursday. Like

Astoria, and many other cities across the country, Moab is dealing with workforce housing issues that have been exacerbated by the rise of vacation rental options like Airbnb. Violette was Tomball's first city planner and worked to incorporate zoning practices into a city that had never had them before. The economic development corporation she leads now has a board that reports to the city and is tasked with creating jobs and promoting economic development. While linked to the city's formal planning and permitting processes, it is a separate entity.

Violette said Tomball is very similar in size to Astoria, in terms of both population and land. The city had a population of 10,753, according to the census.

Astoria's community development director position has been filled by Estes since October after former director Kevin Cronin left the job amid concerns about his management. Cronin has continued to work in the area as a consultant. Port of Astoria Commissioner Frank Spence said the Port had a good working relationship with Cronin and has contracted with him to work on grants.

"The Port is certainly very interested in who the new community development director is going to be because we work so closely with that person," he said.

The Port's main hub and industrial land are in Astoria, subject to the city's zoning and land use regulations. Whatever the Port or its tenants want to do must go through the city. "So a

close working relationship is extremely important from our point of view," Spence said.

Jared Rickenbach, a general contractor and member of the city's Design Review Committee, agreed.

"That person is your connection with the city," he said.



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

Astoria is hiring a new community development director.

Sea stars: 'Their ability to eat stuff is their ecological importance'

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in sea water for awhile, move with currents. We don't have a smoking gun of why it pops up here or there, or why it went to California and Washington first."

Over the past two years, Gravem said the percentage of sea stars affected by the disease at survey sites along the Oregon Coast has settled at closer to 10 percent.

The figures reported in Cannon Beach in January are some of the earliest for the year, Gravem said, but could possibly be a worrisome indicator.

"Some populations are recovering, but they aren't out of the woods," she said. "If another outbreak occurred, it'd be concerning for the survival of the whole species."

Many questions still remain about what aggravates the disease and why some areas are affected more than others. His-

torically, die-offs have been associated with warm ocean temperatures, but Melissa Miner of MARINE — the Multi-Agency Rocky Intertidal Network — said the organization has not seen a correlation between higher water temperatures and sea star wasting.

"Other localized groups who conduct surveys felt they saw relationship, but we don't see that as the case on the broad scale," Miner said.

Haystack Rock, like many places along the coast, had a significant resurgence of sea stars in 2015.

The drop in wasting in early 2015 could be a result of a massive reproduction effort in response to the disease, Owen said.

"Most of the sea stars surveyed during this time were very young recruits," he said. "The subsequent spike in percent wasting may correlate

with a resurgence of the disease as many of these juveniles then became infected as well."

While many Oregon sites have made a substantial recovery, Gravem said, the sea stars are smaller. The role sea stars play in the ecosystem is a "big mean predator," she said, and their job is to eat prey like snails and limpets. If smaller sea stars are eating less, that could lead to an overabundance of snails and limpets, threatening the intertidal balance.

"Their ability to eat stuff is their ecological importance. A big star can eat more than a little sea star," she said.

Overall, a higher population of juveniles point the fate of sea stars in a positive direction. But anomalies like Haystack Rock remind researchers there are still many unanswered questions.

"We don't know what 2018 will hold," Gravem said.

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