

# Dead sea lion washes ashore in Cannon Beach



Brenna Visser/The Daily Astorian

Jason Husa from the Marine Mammal Stranding Network works with Dalin D'Alessandro from Portland State University to dissect the sea lion.

## Researchers did a necropsy on the sand

By **BRENNA VISSER**  
*The Daily Astorian*

CANNON BEACH — People watched in awe — and slight disgust — as researchers performed a necropsy on an adult Steller sea lion Saturday at Silver Point Beach.

The sea lion washed up dead near Haystack Rock the morning of Feb. 26 before the city decided to move the giant marine mammal south to a more remote section of the beach. Stranded animals are typically dissected quickly and quietly to avoid upsetting onlookers.

This time, Keith Chandler from the Seaside Aquarium said they decided to wait until the weekend so people attending the Coast Conference, a marine education and stewardship event, could watch for educational purposes. It so happened Debbie Duffield, a biology professor at

Portland State University who regularly conducts necropsies on stranded marine mammals, was going to be in town for the conference, as well.

Duffield and volunteers from the Marine Mammal Stranding Network dissected the 8-foot long creature for tissue samples that will later be tested for research purposes and a cause of death.

“We usually get this size of sea lion wash up around here every 18 months or so,” Chandler said. “If you’re into this kind of stuff, it’s fascinating to see the anatomy of these guys.”

As of Sunday, what was left of the sea lion was buried in sand by the city. But for those who were around for his short tenure on the beach, Haystack Rock Awareness Program director Melissa Keyser said she hoped they learned something valuable.

“I think there’s a great educational opportunity here, especially as a coastal resident,” Keyser said. “We’re all educators about marine life, and this is vital knowledge to have as an educator.”

# Washington Legislature phases out Atlantic salmon farming

By **PHUONG LE**  
*Associated Press*

SEATTLE — The Washington Legislature on Friday voted to phase out marine Atlantic salmon aquaculture, an industry that has operated for decades in the state but came under heavy criticism after tens of thousands of non-native fish escaped into waterways last summer.

After lengthy debate, the state Senate passed the bill on a 31-16 vote. The House earlier passed it on 67-31 vote and it now heads to Gov. Jay Inslee, a Democrat who has expressed support.

The bill would end state leases and permits for operations that grow nonnative finfish in state waters when current leases expire in 2022.

The bill targets Canada’s Cooke Aquaculture Pacific, the largest producer of farmed Atlantic salmon in the U.S., whose net pens in northwest Washington collapsed in August. Cooke currently has two leases with the state.

State officials last month blamed Cooke’s negligence for failing to maintain its net pens. They said the escape of the salmon put the state’s ecosystem at risk and fined the company \$332,000. Up to 263,000 invasive Atlantic salmon escaped into Puget Sound, raising fears about the impact to native Pacific salmon runs.

State Sen. Kevin Ranker, a Democrat who sponsored similar legislation in the Senate, said the “state ban is a strong stance to ensure the protection of our marine environment and native salmon populations.”

Joel Richardson, vice president of Cooke, said in a statement that the company was “deeply disappointed” with the bill’s passage, the potential impact on the industry and “more than 600 rural workers and their families that rely upon salmon farming for their livelihoods.”

He said the company will evaluate its operations and investments in the state and ensure that whatever decision

they make puts families and workers first.

Richardson told lawmakers last month that Cooke would be able to seek damages under a provision of the North American Free Trade Agreement if the measure passed. He said the bill would strip the Canada-based company of its \$76 million investment in the state in an unfair way. He did not address that issue in his statement Friday.

Sen. Judy Warnick, a Republican, said “we are putting an industry out of business.”

Other Republicans who opposed the bill said it would put people out of work, shut down a vital industry and set a bad precedent.

“This is the wrong action tonight and I’m just appalled that this is the direction we’re going,” said Sen. Shelly Short, a Republican.

Republicans introduced numerous amendments that were rejected, including proposals to allow growing native fish or single-sex Atlantic

salmon in net pens and a tax incentive package to help the industry transition to other operations.

Atlantic salmon farming has been in the state since the 1980s but remains controversial in the Northwest, famed for its native Pacific salmon runs and where tens of millions of dollars are spent each year to bring back declining populations of wild Pacific salmon stock.

Washington state joins Alaska, which has banned commercial finfish aquaculture. Oregon and California do not have commercial salmon farming operations.

“Phasing out of industrial ocean fish farms in Washington is a victory for our oceans and coastal communities,” said Hallie Templeton with Friends of the Earth in a statement.

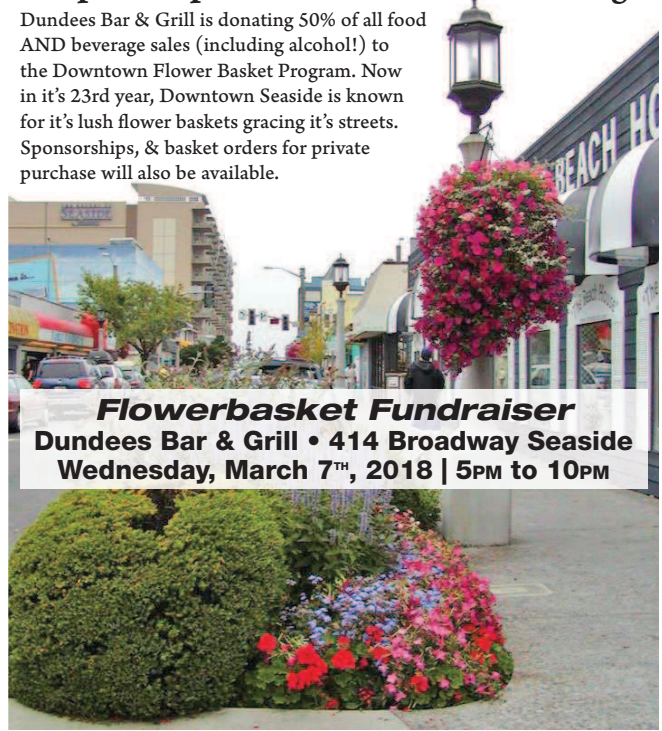
Cooke, based in New Brunswick, Canada, is the only company to farm Atlantic salmon in state waters.

The company bought operations from Icicle Acquisition Subsidiary in 2016. It was in the process of getting per-

mits for an expanded operation near Port Angeles when the net pens off Cypress Island capsized.

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