



Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Joaquin Cruz works on a fishing boat at the Port of Astoria.

CLIMATE AND CRAB

Researchers see threats to fishery

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

Fishermen for lucrative Dungeness crab are already busy preparing boats and gear for the upcoming season.

What they'll find when they hit the fishing grounds is always an open question, but researchers and fishery managers are seeing a large harmful algal bloom off Oregon's southern coast and a mass of unusual warm water forming off Alaska.

More and more, these and other events tied to a shifting climate threaten the fishery, determining when seasons open and how successful fishermen are after they drop their pots.

"We don't see these challenges going away," said Troy Buell, with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's marine resources program.

"Our ability to adapt to what's going on in the ocean will determine if we're successful or not."

In recent years, blooms of domoic acid, a naturally occurring marine toxin that can accumulate in razor clams and then potentially in crab meat, has delayed, curtailed and even shut down crabbing seasons on the West Coast.

The increasing number of blooms led to regulatory changes in Oregon this year. The state now requires the fishing industry to track crab from when it is landed to when it reaches consumers. Fishery managers hope the move will provide more flexibility within the fishery itself when marine toxin levels spike, while also improving the state's ability to track contaminated crab.

This summer, the state also began looking at ways to increase its management flexibility when it comes to

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ABOVE: Crew members on board the F/V Pacific Pacer prepare the boat for the upcoming crab season. BELOW: Joaquin Cruz takes a look at his work while welding on board a fishing boat at the Port of Astoria.



WESTPORT

Road rage suspect is a former fire chief

Stone was once involved in arson

By JACK HEFFERNAN
The Daily Astorian

The Westport man accused of killing another man with his truck was once the rural community's fire chief and was convicted in a bizarre embezzlement case, Clatsop County District Attorney Josh Marquis said in court Thursday.

Jeffrey Craig Stone, 65, allegedly hit Curtis Michael Russell, 22, of Longview, Washington, with a Dodge truck on Wednesday afternoon. Russell became stuck in the truck's undercarriage and was dragged more than 1,300 feet, according to court records. He sustained significant head injuries and died at the scene.

The two men had been driving west on U.S. Highway 30 around 4 p.m. when one became angry at the way the other passed ahead, Marquis said. The vehicles repeatedly passed each other, and one of the men directed an obscene gesture toward the other.



Jeffrey Craig Stone

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DAs ding Brown on transparency

Marquis and others worry about prison bill

By JACK HEFFERNAN
The Daily Astorian

District Attorney Josh Marquis and several other prosecutors have criticized Gov. Kate Brown on transparency just days before Tuesday's election.

In an open letter signed by eight district attorneys, the prosecutors take issue with her administration's unwillingness to disclose potential bills for the 2019 legislative session. Specifically, the letter points to a leaked concept of a bill that may call for prison sentence reductions for all state inmates.

In an unusual move, the administration has delayed releasing hundreds of proposals for bills until after the election, citing attorney-client privilege with the state Legislature's lawyers. The documents would offer clarity about the administration's planned policy changes — and how it intends to fund them — in 2019.

But a number of brief legislative concepts were leaked to The Oregonian, including one that says "adjusted release dates for all (state Department of Corrections) inmates."



Josh Marquis

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States seek common ground on river policy

Commissioners review gillnet options

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

VANCOUVER, Wash. — Oregon and Washington state are still figuring out what to do about gillnets on the Columbia River. But one thing is clear to fish and wildlife commissions in both states: Concurrent rules are crucial.

The two commissions met in a joint work session Thursday in Vancouver to discuss several river-related topics. No decisions were made, but commissioners agreed to begin working toward how to address where gillnets will be allowed, as well as what types of fishing gear might replace them.

The commissions hope to develop plans for the short term, ahead of the 2019 salmon seasons, and for the long term.

Though the states largely agree on how to jointly manage recreational and commercial salmon fisheries on the river, they have diverged over a policy adopted five years ago to phase gillnets off the river's main stem.

Last year, Oregon's commission appeared willing to walk back from the plan when, in a close vote, commissioners considered giving gillnetters some time on the main stem. They backed away from the decision under pressure from Gov. Kate Brown, who asked the commission to revisit the issue and make a decision more in line with Washington's policies or come up with another plan endorsed by staff.



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Oregon and Washington state are discussing how to deal with gillnets on the Columbia River.

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