

Chinook lost in hatchery mishap

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

Washington’s campaign to rear more salmon for orcas suffered a setback this month as 6.2 million Chinook fry suffocated at a state Department of Fish and Wildlife hatchery in Pierce County.

The losses amounted to about 9 percent of the 68 million Chinook raised annually at Fish and Wildlife hatcheries. The department’s hatchery division manager, Eric Kinne, called the loss devastating and one that won’t be easy to make up.

Increasing hatchery production is part of Gov. Jay Inslee’s proposed \$1.1 billion orca rescue plan. The plan was based on recommendations from the Southern Resident Orca Task Force. Inslee also embraced a recommendation to look at removing four dams on

the lower Snake River to increase fish runs.

The dams are part of a river system that allows wheat farmers to barge grain to export terminals on the Columbia River. Other elements of the orca recovery plan could affect land regulations and water rights.

The Chinook fry at Minter Creek Hatchery in Gig Harbor died Dec. 14 during an early evening windstorm that knocked out electricity to pumps that constantly flow water through about 900 small trays. Each tray held about 6,800 fry, Kinne said.

Hatchery workers were unable to start a backup diesel generator to keep the water flowing. “It was a mad scramble,” Kinne said.

After a half hour, deprived of oxygen in freshwater, the fish began to die, Kinne said. Fish and Wildlife has not said why the gen-

erator did not start. “We’re still investigating the root cause,” Kinne said.

The mishap killed 4.2 million Deschutes fall Chinook fry, 1.5 million Minter Creek fall Chinook fry and 507,000 White River spring Chinook fry. Fish and Wildlife had planned to end the production of White River spring Chinook fry, but decided to rear more this year in an early effort to increase prey for orcas.

The Chinook were scheduled to be released in May or June. Out of the 6.2 million fry, about 14,700 could have been expected to return after three to five years in the ocean to be harvested or to spawn.

Fish eggs at the hatchery, including roughly 4.2 million chum salmon and 2 million coho salmon, survived the power outage.

The losses were higher than

the 2.4 million Chinook fry that died when mud, gravel and trees flooded a Kalama River hatchery in southwest Washington during a storm in 2015.

The Washington Farm Bureau, which is represented on the orca recovery task force, said it supported increased hatchery production. It abstained, however, from endorsing the slate of recommendations sent to Inslee, primarily because of the recommendation to study removing the four dams.

The dams generate enough electricity to power a city the size of Seattle, according to the Bonneville Power Administration. The dams have long been criticized by environmental groups as impediments to fish.

The dams were built between 1962 and 1975 and have fish passages. According to NOAA Fisheries, the number of wild spring and

summer Chinook returning to the river has declined since the dams were built, but increased hatchery production has more than offset any loss of prey base for orcas caused by the dams.

There is no evidence orcas distinguish between wild and hatchery fish, according to NOAA Fisheries, which concluded in 2014 that removing the dams was not necessary to the recovery of orcas.

Inslee said he wants a task force to study whether the hydroelectricity could be replaced with wind and solar power, and whether the barges could be replaced with trucks and trains. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers operates the federal dams. Inslee said a state task force could contribute to a court-ordered environmental review of the dams. Inslee has proposed spending \$750,000 on the task force.

2018

Holiday Worship

Calvary Episcopal Church

DECEMBER 24

8:30 pm - Carol Sing

9 pm - Holy Eucharist

DECEMBER 25

10 am - Holy Eucharist

503 N. Holladay, Dr. • Seaside, OR

First Baptist Church

A place where you feel like family...come home.

Christmas Eve

Candlelight Service

December 24th

6 PM

Christmas Day

Sunday Advent

Worship Services

10:45 AM

7th & Commercial, Astoria • (503) 325-1761

Christmas Eve

Candlelighting Service at 7 pm

Special music provided by

Members of

the Congregation

Sermon:

“O Holy Night”

Seaside United

Methodist Church

241 N. Holladay Dr. • Seaside • 503-738-7562

Join us Monday December 24th

4:30 & 6pm

Christmas Eve

ncff

North Coast Family Fellowship

2245 N/ Wahianna Rd. • Seaside

Rejoice in Jesus' Birth

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service • 10pm

Christmas Day Worship Service • 10am

AT

Bethany Free Lutheran Church

451 34TH STREET • ASTORIA

(across from Safeway)

FOR MORE INFO CALL (503) 325-2925

Peace Lutheran Church

DECEMBER 24TH

Carols & Candlelight Service

7 PM

12TH & EXCHANGE • ASTORIA

CHRISTMAS ON CLATSOP PLAINS

Christmas Eve Service

December 24th • 7pm

Next to Camp Rilea

PIONEER PRESBYTERIAN

SINCE 1846

A Christmas Service

of Lessons and Carols

Monday

December 24th

7pm

First Presbyterian Church

1103 Grand Ave. • Astoria, Oregon

Christmas Eve Service

Monday, Dec 24th @ 7:00pm

Unto Us a Son is Given

Unto Us a Child is Born

saiah 9:6

Coastline Christian Fellowship

89386 Highway 202 ~ Astoria ~ 503.325.1051

OUR SAVIOUR'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Sunday, December 23

8:00 & 10:00am

Fourth Sunday in Advent

Sunday December 24

7:00pm

Family Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

320 1st Avenue

(across from the Seaside Convention Center)

www.oslc-seaside.org

ALL ARE WELCOME

Christmas Eve Worship

Monday, Dec. 24

5 pm: Family Service

Candlelight Service: 10 pm

Christmas Day Worship

Tuesday, Dec. 25 at 10 am

First Lutheran Church

Stephan Kienberger, Pastor

725 33rd Street, Astoria, OR 97103

www.astoriafirstlutheran.com 503-325-6252

Grace Episcopal Church

1545 Franklin, Astoria

(503) 325-4691

www.graceastoria.org

Lessons & Carols

Wednesday, December 19th, 6PM

A festival of readings and music for the season

Christmas Eve Services

Monday, December 24th

Family Worship

4:30 PM

Hymn Sing

10:30 PM

Midnight Mass with choir

11 PM

Christmas Day Service

Tuesday, December 25th

Morning Prayer

10 AM

Last Sunday of Advent Service

SUNDAY • DECEMBER 23RD • NOON

Christmas Carol Service

MONDAY • DECEMBER 24TH • 7 PM

ASTORIA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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