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ONE DOLLAR

Washington to allow gillnets back on Columbia

A temporary reversal of a hard-line policy

By **KATIE FRANKOWICZ**
The Daily Astorian

The Washington State Fish and Wildlife Commission is giving commercial gillnet fishermen time on the Columbia River this year, temporarily reversing a policy that had banned them from the river's main stem.

The commission voted 3-1 Saturday in favor of the change, which would allow gillnets during the spring, summer and fall seasons. Two commissioners, including Larry Carpenter, the chairman, abstained, saying they wanted more time to collect public input.

The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission will consider the proposal at a meeting March 15.

Under the policy change, gillnetters will probably not get out on the river until the summer.

Spring salmon seasons have already been set and gillnetters will be allowed to fish the main stem this spring only if run sizes come in well over what is anticipated — an unlikely scenario given how low the predictions are for upriver spring Chinook, said Ryan Lathrop, Columbia River fishery manager for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The change, recommended by a committee that included fish and wildlife commissioners from Oregon and Washington state, only applies to this year's river salmon fisheries. It was an effort to get both states on the same page this year.

Columbia River Reform, also known as the Kitzhaber Plan after former Gov. John Kitzhaber, was enacted in 2013 with the goal to phase gillnets off the river's main stem by 2017.

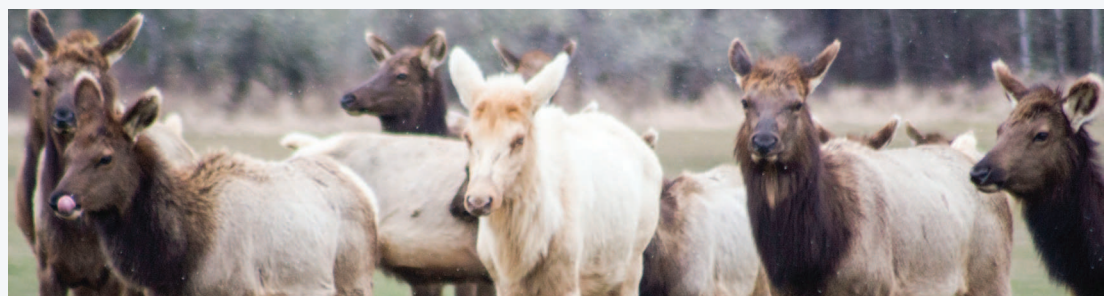
Oregon and Washington state manage river fisheries together, but have diverged in recent years over whether or not to allow gillnets back on the main stem. Oregon has been interested in allowing gillnets back on the river.

The joint Oregon-Washington committee plans to continue meeting to discuss a long-term overhaul of salmon management policies.

"The major policy changes are yet to come," said Commissioner Robert Kehoe, who served on the committee and voted in favor of the change for the season.

The discussion in Washington dismayed sport fishing groups. A representative of the Spokane

See *Gillnet*, Page A7



A rare blonde elk cow mixes with the brown herd during a feeding.

JEWELL SCHOOL FEEDS THE ELK



Photos by Edward Stratton/The Daily Astorian

Autumn Kutts, 5, pushes off a block of alfalfa Wednesday onto the Jewell Meadows Wildlife Area. BELOW: Students in Kai Davidson's preschool class at Jewell School get an up-close view of an elk antler after feeding a few herds at Jewell Meadows.

Last of a series of public feedings

By **EDWARD STRATTON**
The Daily Astorian

JEWELL — Onlookers are usually cautioned not to approach or feed the elk herds that pop up along highways and fields around the urban centers of the North Coast.

But preschoolers at Jewell School spent a snowy Wednesday morning riding through the Jewell Meadows Wildlife Area, dropping bricks of alfalfa off the sides of a tractor-trailer for the 300 or so elk who inhabit the refuge.

"The wildlife area was established primarily for viewing and education purposes, which this tour serves," said Charlie Chamberlain, a senior technician in the wildlife area who helped facilitate the tour Wednesday.

See *Elk*, Page A7



Gearhart draws the line on elk feeding

Modeled after a similar ordinance in Warrenton

By **R.J. MARX**
The Daily Astorian

GEARHART — Eight months ago, inspired by an ordinance in Warrenton, Bebe Michel asked Gearhart to ban wildlife feeding to discourage human interaction with elk, deer, bear and other wild animals.

Michel saw the ordinance as one way to cope with an ongoing concern over elk in Gearhart,

where at times it seems the animals outnumber residents and every encounter comes with risk.

On Wednesday, Michel was in the audience at the City Council meeting as Ordinance 917 received unanimous approval.

"The attracting or feeding of wildlife within the city limits is declared to be a public nuisance and safety issue and is prohibited," the ordinance states.

Along with elk, residents and visitors may not feed bear, cougar, coyote or wolves, among other animals.



Bebe Michel

Feeding songbirds and squirrels is permitted, provided the food is contained in a feeder.

Violations could bring a penalty of up to \$500, but officials hope they'll find compliance before issuing fines.

The ordinance will become law in 30 days.

After the meeting, City Administrator Chad Sweet credited Michel with "a lot of great work. Not only does she come up with ideas, she also helps us with the solutions."

For Michel, this is the first city ordinance she's seen to fruition.

"Sitting here today, I was really kind of amazed at myself that I had proposed an ordinance and now seen how it went from proposal to work sessions and wended its way through the entire process to get to this point where we now have the ordinance in place," she said.

"Two years ago, if you had told me that I would have done this, I would have said, 'No, that's not ever going to be something I'm going to do.' When people say one person can't do anything, I'm proof that that isn't the case."

