

Whales and turtles could be protected from entanglement under new conservation plan

By SOPHIA PRINCE
Jefferson Public Radio

A new conservation plan to protect whales and turtles from entanglement has been released by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Getting entangled in fishing gear is often deadly for these animals. When whales get caught in the vertical fishing lines that attach the buoys to the crab pot, their fins and flukes get wrapped up in the ropes. It can take them up to six months until their injuries from these lines ultimately kill them. The rope can cause severed appendages or lead the whale to starvation because they are not able to dive to catch their prey.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife has released a draft of a conservation plan. Ben Enticknap, a senior scientist with environmental group Oceana, explained the basics of the plan.

“Every spring, deeper waters off the Oregon Coast will be closed to dungeness crab gear to prevent entanglements with humpback whales,” Enticknap said. “And it also includes a reduction in the amount of fishing efforts that can occur, so there’s a 20% reduction in



A whale entangled in fishing gear.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

pots that can be set, starting on May 1 each year.”

One innovative solution that’s being suggested are pop-up crab pots that use buoys on the ocean floor instead of ropes in the water

column. Pop-up crab pots use acoustic release technology that releases the buoy on the ocean floor when a button is pushed. One problem though, according to Enticknap, is that the conservation

plan does not include any financial incentives to crab fishermen for using pop-up technology.

The plan has been released for public comment ending on Sept. 16.

Coos Bay port to construct new container terminal

By SIERRA DAWN McCLAIN
Capital Press

COOS BAY — Oregon International Port of Coos Bay, on the state’s southern coast, has announced it will construct a multimodal container facility to relieve congestion and broaden trade opportunities, including for agricultural goods.

For the project, the Port of Coos Bay has partnered with NorthPoint Development, a Missouri-based development firm. The port and NorthPoint have entered into a memorandum of understanding. The parties intend to finalize negotiations and sign a contract by the end of 2021.

The new facility will sit on the North Spit, a finger of land separating the bay from the Pacific Ocean. Once constructed, the facility will move more than one million 40-foot containers annually in and out of the port.

The new terminal, port officials say, could have a significant impact on shipment of farm goods.

“Development of a container terminal here in Coos Bay will truly be transformational for Coos Bay, as well as for shippers looking to get their goods and commodities to market in an efficient manner,” said Margaret Barber, the port’s director of external affairs and business development.

Most of Oregon’s export agricultural commodities, Barber said, are being shipped to ports in Seattle, Tacoma and the San Francisco Bay Area. Those ports, she said, are “experiencing all-time levels of congestion,” adding “crippling delays,” costs and emissions.

The coronavirus pandemic has further exacerbated bottlenecks. In late August, the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach had 47 vessels anchored offshore waiting to berth in the harbor.

A new terminal in Coos Bay, port leaders say, could help relieve congestion on

the West Coast. Chad Meyer, the president and founding partner of NorthPoint, said the new facility should improve logistics, expedite turn time and eliminate anchoring for ships.

“This project will create a new gateway that will offer quick turnaround because we don’t have the same levels of congestion here,” Barber said.

Barber said she believes the terminal will also create benefits for inland U.S. producers who rely too heavily on the Mississippi River for barge and ship transportation. The new terminal, she said, will allow Midwest producers to ship products westward.

John Burns, the port’s CEO, said he anticipates the new facility will also boost the regional economy.

“This project has the potential to diversify the region’s economy and create employment opportunities both for the existing workforce and for future generations,” Burns said.

Some critics, however, say turning Coos Bay into a major West Coast port is a pipe dream because Coos Bay is surrounded by narrow, winding roads, has limited access to trade corridors and must rely on its rail line.

Recent Coos Bay Rail Line improvements have cost taxpayers millions of dollars, according to legislative records. Some Oregonians say the investment is worth the payoff; others disagree.

Jeff Reimer, an Oregon State University professor of international trade and agricultural economics, said railroad developments have spawned a “huge amount of controversy.”

“Is it a good use of taxpayer money? Some say it is, some think it isn’t,” Reimer told the Capital Press.

The port is also moving forward with its channel modification project, intended to deepen and widen the channel so larger ships can pass through.

Judge orders immediate actions at Willamette basin dams to help salmon

By BRADLEY W. PARKS
Oregon Public Broadcasting

A federal judge has ordered the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to take immediate action to improve fish passage at dams in the Willamette River basin.

In a final opinion and order issued last week, U.S. District Judge Marco Hernandez said the Army Corps had for years failed to provide adequate passage for threatened Chinook salmon and winter steelhead trout at dams it operates in the basin.

“As evinced by the listed species’ continuing decline, the Corps’ failure to provide adequate fish passage and mitigate water quality issues is causing substantial, irreparable harm to the salmonids,” Hernandez wrote in the opinion.

The order comes a little over a year after the court decided in favor of three

environmental organizations that sued the Army Corps and the National Marine Fisheries Service, arguing the agencies weren’t doing their part to protect the species.

Laurie Rule is a senior attorney at Advocates for the West, a nonprofit environmental law firm that represented the plaintiffs. She said the dismal state of salmon and steelhead runs this year underscore the importance of the judge’s order.

“It’s important because these fish are in really bad shape,” Rule said.

Chinook salmon and steelhead in the Upper Willamette River system are both listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Dams on the Willamette and its tributaries have blocked access to spawning grounds for the fish, contributing to population declines.

In a 2008 biological opinion, the National Marine

Fisheries Service found that “lack of passage is one of the single most significant adverse effects on both the fish and their habitat.” The service outlined a number of steps the Army Corps could take to prevent the species from going extinct. The judge’s opinion says the Army Corps has been dragging its feet.

“The status of the species has continued to decline since the 2008 BiOp was issued,” Hernandez wrote, “and the Corps’ operation of the (Willamette Valley Project) is a cause of that decline.”

The Army Corps argued in court that it hadn’t done irreparable harm to the species because they hadn’t been downgraded from threatened to endangered. The judge rejected their arguments.

“Unfortunately, the Corps has not been doing its job for a very long time,” said

Jen Pelz, the wild rivers program director for WildEarth Guardians, one of the plaintiffs. “We welcome this immediate action.”

The Army Corps said in a written statement that the agency will review the judge’s order to ensure compliance.

“We take our Endangered Species Act obligations seriously and are committed to taking actions that will benefit ESA-listed salmon and steelhead while continuing to work on finding solutions that balance our authorized purposes,” the statement said.

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SEVEN-DAY FORECAST FOR ASTORIA

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
71 52	68 54	65 50	67 51	65 50	64 49	65 51
Increasing cloudiness	Partly sunny	Some sun with a shower	Partly sunny	A chance for showers	Partial sunshine	Mostly sunny

ALMANAC

Astoria through Sunday

Temperatures

High/low 67/58
Normal high/low 69/52
Record high 87 in 2014
Record low 43 in 1969

Precipitation

Sunday 0.04"
Month to date 0.04"
Normal month to date 0.32"
Year to date 38.02"
Normal year to date 39.44"

Forecasts and graphics provided by **AccuWeather, Inc.** ©2021

UNDER THE SKY

Tonight's Sky: Ursa Major is low above northern horizon before midnight.

Source: Jim Todd, OMSI

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today 6:44 a.m.
Sunset tonight 7:42 p.m.
Moonrise today 7:16 a.m.
Moonset today 8:30 p.m.

New First Full Last
Sep 6 Sep 13 Sep 20 Sep 28

TODAY'S TIDES

Astoria / Port Docks

Time	High (ft.)	Time	Low (ft.)
1:45 a.m.	7.9	8:30 a.m.	-1.0
2:38 p.m.	7.4	8:42 p.m.	0.6

Cape Disappointment

Time	High (ft.)	Time	Low (ft.)
1:21 a.m.	8.0	7:38 a.m.	-0.9
2:13 p.m.	7.3	7:48 p.m.	0.8

Hammond

Time	High (ft.)	Time	Low (ft.)
1:32 a.m.	8.3	7:57 a.m.	-1.1
2:22 a.m.	7.7	8:10 p.m.	0.7

Warrenton

Time	High (ft.)	Time	Low (ft.)
1:40 a.m.	8.3	8:14 a.m.	-0.9
2:33 p.m.	7.8	8:26 p.m.	0.7

Knappa

Time	High (ft.)	Time	Low (ft.)
2:22 a.m.	8.2	9:31 a.m.	-0.8
3:15 p.m.	7.7	9:43 p.m.	0.6

Depoe Bay

Time	High (ft.)	Time	Low (ft.)
12:32 a.m.	8.5	7:05 a.m.	-0.9
1:26 p.m.	7.8	7:16 p.m.	1.1

NATIONAL CITIES

City	Today Hi/Lo/W	Wed. Hi/Lo/W
Atlanta	83/71/t	83/68/t
Boston	79/64/s	82/69/pc
Chicago	85/60/t	76/58/s
Dallas	95/71/pc	95/69/s
Denver	86/57/s	90/60/s
Honolulu	87/75/pc	87/74/s
Houston	94/70/pc	93/72/pc
Los Angeles	85/65/s	86/68/s
Miami	90/76/t	90/78/t
New York City	78/69/s	83/69/sh
Phoenix	105/85/s	106/85/s
San Francisco	74/59/s	77/59/s
Wash., DC	86/71/s	88/69/pc

Weather (W): s-sunny, pc-partly cloudy, c-cloudy, sh-showers, t-thunderstorms, r-rain, sf-snow flurries, sn-snow, l-ice.

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REGIONAL FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.

City	Today Hi/Lo/W	Wed. Hi/Lo/W
Baker City	93/45/pc	91/49/s
Brookings	64/54/c	69/53/pc
Ilwaco	66/54/c	64/53/pc
Newberg	91/54/pc	85/53/s
Newport	63/49/pc	61/50/pc
North Bend	65/53/pc	68/52/pc
Roseburg	95/57/pc	88/56/pc
Seaside	71/52/c	68/53/pc
Springfield	93/54/pc	87/54/pc
Vancouver	90/58/pc	84/56/s