

CAUGHT OVGARD

MINUS TIDE

By LUKE OVGARD
For the East Oregonian

TILLAMOOK BAY — Tidepools are the most precious and unique part of the Oregon coast. Not only do they instill wonder and trigger the imagination for children and those adults who never outgrew their sense of sublimity, they provide one of the only playgrounds that changes enough to hold our attention over the din of a high-definition digital world. After all, they literally change with the tides. Plus, they’re also home to one of the coolest fishing opportunities around. Unlike your favorite lake or stream, tidepool fishing is not something you can just go to on a whim; it requires some basic planning.

Regulations

First, you have to be aware of the rules protecting the fragile ecosystems contained within the intertidal zone. While parts of the country completely close tidepools to human access, all of Oregon’s tidepools are open to the public for access and viewing, but some are closed to angling. For details on where you can and can’t fish, visit www.oregonmarinere-serves.com/rules. That being said, there are dozens of tidepools with no restrictions found in Oregon, including half a dozen in the Tillamook Bay alone — all of which provide consistent action.

Tides

No two tidepools are the same. Some butt right up against the ocean in rocky, weatherbeaten surf breaks. Others have gently sloping sandy bottoms protected by rock walls well away from the pounding Pacific. Because of this, you’ll need an accurate, localized tide table. I have an app on my phone that was completely free. Tides vary widely from one city to the next, and even the short span from Newport to Waldport



Photo contributed by Luke Ovgard

Though most people just look for crabs here, Barview Jetty Park at the north end of Tillamook Bay is probably the easiest set of tidepools to fish. There are several tidepools here that provide great fishing.



Photo contributed by Luke Ovgard

Probably my personal favorite tidepool resident is the rosy lip sculpin, *Ascelichthys rhodorus*. These fish are unmistakable with smooth, dark skin and a seemingly endless supply of thick slime.

or Garibaldi to Rockaway Beach can result in a difference of an hour or more between low and high tides.

Further, tidepool fishing is a low tide activity. Tidepools also vary in elevation, so while a low

GEAR UP!

At the most basic level, you will need a few things to fish tidepools: ultralight rod and reel, micro hooks, split shot, scissors, bait and a small net. I use a five-foot ultralight rod with a small spinning reel spooled with at least 20 feet of six-pound fluorocarbon line. Tie a loop knot to the end of your mainline just like you would when flyfishing. If you don’t know that knot, learn it by watching this short video on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UL26t2SWT3U>. To that loop knot, you will tie a snelled hook. Understand that the fish you will catch are almost all under six inches in length and require very small hooks. The most readily available “micro” hooks, Owner New Half Moon snelled hooks, can be found on Amazon. A package of 10 sells for \$6. These are even smaller than

you’re imagining, and they come on red line that is the equivalent of about one-pound test, so they’re not meant for anything bigger than your hand. Put a small, non-lead split-shot about an inch above your hook. Using scissors, cut a tiny piece of bait (I prefer cooked cocktail shrimp or nightcrawlers) and put it on the hook. Slide it up the shank to leave the point exposed. Now you have everything you need to start fishing tidepools, but should you fall in love with this type of fishing as I have, you might also consider a headlamp (for night fishing), a small net, a clear box for fish pictures and other specialized microfishing gear. Fortunately for you, a complete shopping list can be found on my blog at <http://caught-tovgard.com/gear-up/gear-up-micro/>. Tight lines.

tide of +1.50 feet might be perfectly fishable in one tidepool, another may require a low tide of -1.50.

My advice? If you’re just getting started, only try fishing tidepools on days with a minus tide.

That is any low tide that drops below sea level, identified in your tide table with negative numbers. Arrive two or three hours before the low tide and fish two or three hours after it. You’ll be able to see when exactly the water becomes fishable and be able to make a note for next time.

Weather

In freshwater, conditions matter. The barometric pressure, cloud cover, wind speed, water temperature and even moon phase can impact the fishing. But poor conditions almost never prevent you from fishing if you really, really want to. Not so in the ocean. If you fish tidepools, you’re sight-fishing, which requires ideal conditions. Too much wind or precipitation will make it impossible to spot the tiny denizens of the deep you trekked out there to catch. A little wind or rain is OK, but the calmer, the better.

Species

To date, I’ve caught more than 20 species of fish in Oregon tidepools. The specific tidepool will impact what you catch, but the most common species I’ve found is the tidepool sculpin (no kidding) that rarely tops four inches in length. These guys like sandy or aggregate bottoms the best and much more active at night. Over sandy bottoms, you’ll also catch Pacific staghorn sculpin in abundance. In vegetated, rocky areas close to or right up against the ocean, you’ll find a lot of juvenile kelp and rock greenling and cabezon. Handle fish with wet hands and treat them gently because they are delicate. Though small, they’re gorgeous, so be sure to get a few pictures.

Read more at caught-tovgard.com; Follow on Instagram and Fishbrain @ [lukeovgard](https://www.instagram.com/lukeovgard); Contact lukeovgard@gmail.com.

Small woodlands association meets April 12

PILOT ROCK — The Umatilla/Morrow Chapter of the Oregon Small Woodlands Association (OSWA) invites forestland owners from the two counties to join them Friday, April 12 at 9:30 a.m. at Camas Prairie Wood Products, located at 610 N.W. Cedar, Pilot Rock. A barbecue lunch

will be served at noon. This meeting is open to anyone wanting to learn more about OSWA. A tour of the adjacent Woodgrain sawmill and discussion with members of the Woodgrain sales team concerning trends in the lumber market will allow landowners to ask questions and gain valuable

information about lumber demand and log prices for 2019. The regular meeting for the chapter will follow lunch. The meeting is expected to adjourn by 3 p.m. OSWA is an organization made up of Oregon small woodland owners who practice and believe in the strength of peer to peer com-

munication between landowners; the strength of a unified effort to address legislative and regulatory challenges; and the strength of partnerships in addressing and solving common problems. Questions can be referred to Hans Rudolf at 541-276-3491.

Outdoor experts give the scoop on pooping in the wild

By NICOLE BLANCHARD
Idaho Statesman

BOISE, Idaho — Some litter is obvious — plastic bottles, beer cans and cigarette butts stick out like sore thumbs on the side of a trail. But what about the other stuff, the food waste that surely will biodegrade in the woods? After all, apple cores and banana peels and dog poop are natural, right?

Nope. “Can something be biodegradable and harmful to the environment? Possibly,” Evan Worthington, a Boise Bureau of Land Management wilderness ranger, told the Idaho Statesman. “We really lean on these words, ‘biodegradable’ and ‘natural.’ A Buick is biodegradable.” Worthington has been an ambassador for the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics for more than 10 years. Leave No Trace is an organization focused on educating people on how to responsibly enjoy nature — or, as Worthington calls it, “table manners for the outdoors.” And that means not tossing your table scraps by the trailside, no matter how innocuous they might seem. “If you wouldn’t find it in that area normally, it doesn’t belong on the ground,” Worthington said in an interview. Those cigarette butts, bottles and wrappers can

take five years or more to finally decompose. And even “healthy” food scraps can stick around for a while. Orange and banana peels can take up to two years to fully decompose, Leave No Trace reports. What’s more, Idaho’s arid environment can further preserve litter, Worthington said. **The scoop on poop** A lot of Worthington’s Leave No Trace talks touch on litter and similar beginner topics, but he’s also an expert in what he calls “the scoop on poop” — and not just animal poop, but human waste of all kinds. Worthington, with Idaho Trails Association board member Pam Bond, sometimes host feces-focused talks for outdoor recreationists. Bond began giving general talks on Leave No Trace’s Seven Principles and quickly found the topic people wanted to know most about was waste. Worthington said he hopes the talks address some of the embarrassment or the “yuck” factor that can surround the topic. “This is a common denominator between us, and it’s not something to be ashamed of, it’s not something to panic about,” Worthington said. For the most part, things are pretty straightforward. “Nothing earthshattering has happened to how you pee in the woods,” Bond said.

Judge defends Obama expansion of national monument

By ANDREW SELSKY
Associated Press

SALEM — A judge has defended former President Barack Obama’s expansion of a national monument in Oregon, ruling against a logging company’s lawsuit that said the expansion deprived it of timber. Environmental groups hailed Tuesday’s ruling. The case ironically put the Trump administration in the position of defending Obama’s expansion of Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument, even after Trump’s former Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke recommended shrinking it. In the lawsuit against President Donald Trump, lawyers for environmental groups sided with U.S. Justice Department lawyers in fighting the logging company. Two similar lawsuits are being heard in federal court in Washington. For the Trump administration, the unlikely alliance is all about preserving presidential power. For the environmentalists, it is about protecting the Cas-



AP Photo/Jeff Barnard, File

In this July 6, 2000, file photo, Pilot Rock rises into the clouds in the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument near Lincoln.

cade-Siskiyou National Monument, which at the stroke of Obama’s pen in his final days in office in 2017 nearly doubled in size to more than 150 square miles. Kristen Boyles, attorney with Earthjustice, a San Francisco-based legal group that is one of the defendant-intervenor in the three lawsuits, applauded the decision by U.S. Magistrate Judge Mark Clarke. “Cascade-Siskiyou

National Monument is one of America’s natural wonders, not a collection of standing logs for a timber company,” Boyles said. Clarke’s ruling is not final. He referred his report and recommendation to a U.S. district judge, and said any objections are due within 14 days. John Murphy, owner of Murphy Co. and Murphy Timber Investments LLC, the Oregon timber concern that brought the lawsuit in federal court in Med-

ford, said it would file an objection. “I am very disappointed in Judge Clarke’s decision,” Murphy said in a telephone interview. “We operate five mills, and we need the wood.” Murphy noted that other mills have been shutting down because of lumber scarcity and competition from the Southeast, where much of the timber is grown on private land. In contrast, roughly half of the land in Oregon belongs to the federal government.