

Cormorant harassment aims to protect young fish

Harassment, or "hazing," of double-crested cormorants is set to begin soon in several areas along the Oregon Coast in an effort to improve survival of juvenile salmon.

Double-crested cormorants are fish-eating waterbirds that occur throughout the state. The species is an Oregon native, and is particularly prevalent on the state's estuaries during April through October.

Research indicates cormorants can consume significant numbers of juvenile salmon during this time period.

To reduce the threat to young fish, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) is

working with several nonprofit and local governmental organizations to haze cormorants on six coastal estuaries over the next two to four months.

Hazing will involve driving the birds from locations where juvenile salmon are seasonally concentrated, toward areas where non-salmon fish species are more abundant.

Workers will use boats and, on some estuaries, small pyrotechnics, to accomplish the task.

Hazing is intended to increase the survival of both wild-spawned and hatchery salmon juveniles as they migrate to the ocean.

Some of these spring migrants represent species that are experiencing conditions of conservation risk, including coho salmon, which is federally threatened in Oregon under the Endangered Species Act.

Hazing workers are being provided by the Clatsop County Fisheries Project, Port of Nehalem, Port of Bandon, North Coast Salmon and Steelhead Enhancement Fund and the Alsea Sportsmen's Association.

ODFW will provide a portion of the funding and program oversight, and will conduct some hazing operations itself to protect hatchery releases on the lower Columbia River.

Spring Chinook season extended on lower Columbia

The spring Chinook fishing season on the lower Columbia River has been extended through April 10 under rules adopted by Oregon and Washington fishery managers.

Managers cited poor fishing conditions and limited harvest to-date in making their decision to extend the season.

The Columbia River from Buoy 10 upstream to Beacon Rock (boat and bank) plus bank angling only from Beacon Rock upstream to the Bonneville Dam deadline will remain open for spring Chinook through Monday, April 10.

The closure area near the mouth of the Lewis River remains in effect.

The daily bag limit is two adult salmonids per day, but only one may be a Chinook.

Only adipose fin-clipped fish may be kept; all sockeye must be released per permanent regulation.

All other permanent regulations apply.

Anglers are reminded that under rules previously adopted, from March 16 through May 15 the mainstem Columbia River will be open for retention of adipose fin-clipped steelhead.

STEP to feature local clam digging expert at next meeting

The Florence Salmon Trout Enhancement Program (STEP) will show a video and have a talk by Mike Bones on digging clams in the Siuslaw Bay during the group's next meeting on April 5.

The video will show how and where to dig the local eastern soft shell clams. It will also show how to clean and prepare them.

Bones grew up in the Florence area and worked at Honeyman State Park, where

he led many campers and other visitors on clamming trips. He will explain his techniques and answer questions after the meeting.

Florence STEP meetings are held in the back room of the Florence Elks Club, beginning at 7 p.m., on the first Wednesday of each month.

There will be a short business meeting before the clam digging presentation.

The public is welcome at all STEP meetings.

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Together, Wes Wells and I have served the Florence Area for the past 12 years through our family owned business, Wells Tree & Landscape. We have three children who attend Mapleton High School; Dominic Wells, Haley Wells, and Alyssa West. I recently earned my Oregon Real Estate Brokers license to further help our community. I am eager to share my knowledge of the local area with newcomers and serve local residents in the sale of their home.



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