

Otters from 1B

it — we've been living with an ecosystem that appears normal and healthy, but it is not what it was when sea otters were here."

Evidence of the benefits of sea otters in nearshore coastal habitats has been measured in California's kelp forests and estuarine habitats such as Elkhorn Slough near Santa Cruz, Calif.

Researchers found that the addition of sea otters changed species interactions in these ecosystems to promote native vegetation growth, such as eelgrass, and helped offset negative effects of human-caused pollution.

While Oregon-based researchers can study habitat suitability for sea otter reintroduction, another key piece is community education. "With reintroduction, there will be concern by other ocean resource users that sea otters could outcompete them," explained Bailey. "Part of it on our end is to understand that level of concern and to work to investigate and avoid potential impacts. For instance, we learned at the Symposium that there is no evidence that sea

otters eat oysters — which is a question likely to arise from commercial oyster growers."

The Oregon Coast Aquarium — which sees over 420,000 guests a year — has great potential to take a leadership role in educating coastal communities and beyond on the significance of sea otter reintroduction. And if the time comes to physically relocate and reintroduce sea otters to Oregon, the aquarium's sea otter husbandry expertise and resources will prove critical.

That's where the new sea otter holding facility comes in.

The aquarium is one of only 13 rehabilitation facilities across North America authorized to accept rescued sea otters — but all are at full capacity. Currently, an injured or abandoned sea otter pup deemed non-releasable may have no facility available for intake, which can result in euthanasia.

Circumstances could worsen if an unusual mortality event, such as an oil spill, resulted in a large number of animals requiring care and treatment.

The aquarium is currently home to three male sea otters, Nuka, Schuster and Oswald. In

order to accept more of these threatened species, the aquarium requires a separate holding area for quarantine and treatment.

In collaboration with Oregon and U.S. Fish and Wildlife agencies, the aquarium plans to build an additional sea otter holding facility. It will be placed adjacent to the current otter habitat and designed to facilitate Behind-the-Scenes guest experiences focused on sea otter natural history and future reintroduction research.

This is part of a larger plan for the aquarium to raise funds to build a Marine Wildlife Rehabilitation Center for aquarium staff and veterinarians to provide critical care for injured or stranded marine animals as well as the permanent collection.

"If and when the time comes for sea otter reintroduction on the Oregon coast, additional animal facilities at the aquarium can serve as areas for sea otter quarantine and holding for relocation" said Brittany Blades, Assistant Curator of Marine Mammals at the Oregon Coast Aquarium and Attendee to the Sea Otter Symposium. "In the short

term, the sea otter holding area will give us the ability to provide a home for an additional rescued sea otter pup that would otherwise have nowhere else to go."

The aquarium is raising funds for the new sea otter holding facility through donations. If you are interested in contributing to our sea otter program, you can make a tax-deductible donation to the Oregon Coast Aquarium, a nonprofit organization, at www.aquarium.org/give.

The Sea Otter Symposium held by the Elakha Alliance was a critical first step toward potential sea otter reintroduction on the Oregon coast, said Bailey.

"We are just beginning this journey by reaching out to scientists, agencies, zoos/aquariums and people with reintroduction expertise in Alaska and California to figure out the best path," said Bailey. "But we've put our foot on the path, and we're determined to see this through."

For more information about sea otter introduction in Oregon or to get involved, contact Robert Bailey at Elakha.Alliance@gmail.com.

Fishing from 1B

levels. Fresh fish will continue to enter the estuary on each tide and "stage" throughout the estuary waiting for a bigger rain event. Best techniques include trolling herring/spinners and bobber fishing with bait.

All wild coho must be released during the 2018 fall salmon season.

Sea-run cutthroat will continue to enter the estuary and lower river throughout the month and into the fall. These fish are very aggressive, respond well to flies and lures, and can be up to 20-inches long.

SALMON RIVER:
Cutthroat trout, fall Chinook

Fall Chinook fishing on the Salmon River has been slow this year. Fish are being caught every day but it has been slow overall. Fish will continue to stack up in the tidewater waiting for the next big rain event. Best techniques include trolling herring/spinners, bobber fishing with bait, and casting spinners from the bank.

All wild coho must be released during the 2018 fall salmon season.

Sea-run cutthroat are also available in the Salmon River. Although not as popular as the larger rivers in the area, the Salmon River still provides opportunity to catch these scrappy trout up to 20-inches in length.

Trout fishing is open in streams and rivers.

SILETZ RIVER: *Steelhead, cutthroat trout, fall Chinook*

Fall Chinook fishing on the Siletz river/bay has been slow but anglers are catching a few fish every day. Fish are now scattered throughout the entire estuary and will continue to stage waiting for the next big rain event. Best techniques include trolling herring/spinners lower in the estuary, while bobber fishing with bait and casting spinners from the bank generally works better higher in the estuary.

All wild coho must be released during the 2018 fall salmon season.

Summer steelhead are in the river. Fishing has picked up as water temperatures have

started to cool down and we've had a few small rains. Most of the fish are located in the upper river especially in the gorge area. Early mornings or late evenings are not as critical with the cooler temperatures and overcast weather so fishing can be good throughout the day. Casting spinners, drifting bait or using a bobber and jig can be effective.

Steelhead fishing is open in the gorge area year round but salmon fishing/retention is closed upstream of the Illahee boat ramp located in the town of Siletz during the fall salmon seasons.

The 3.5-mile bridge (aka Steel Bridge) in the Siletz gorge is open to motorized vehicles, but is only open to public vehicles on the weekend. Anglers can walk/bike in the road during the weekdays. If anglers do walk in they can park at the one-mile gate and start from there.

WILSON RIVER: *Steelhead, trout, fall Chinook*

Very few Chinook have moved up into the Wilson River as of yet, and with the current low flows it will take a

significant rain event to move fish into the river in any real numbers. Bobber fishing bait, back bouncing, back-trolling divers and bait, and large plugs are all good river techniques for fall Chinook.

Hatchery summer steelhead are available throughout the system and there are some fish getting caught. Fall can actually be a great time to target summer steelhead, because these fish will get more active as water temperatures drop with the cooler nights and occasional rain freshens the river.

Concentrate on deep pools and riffles with some chop and cover to them. Drift fishing small presentations, spinners, and flies are good choices to target these fish.

Sea-run cutthroat are present in good numbers on the North Coast this year, and anglers will find them throughout the basin.

YAQUINA RIVER:
Cutthroat trout, fall Chinook

Fall Chinook fishing on the Yaquina river/bay has been slow but anglers are catching a few each day.

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