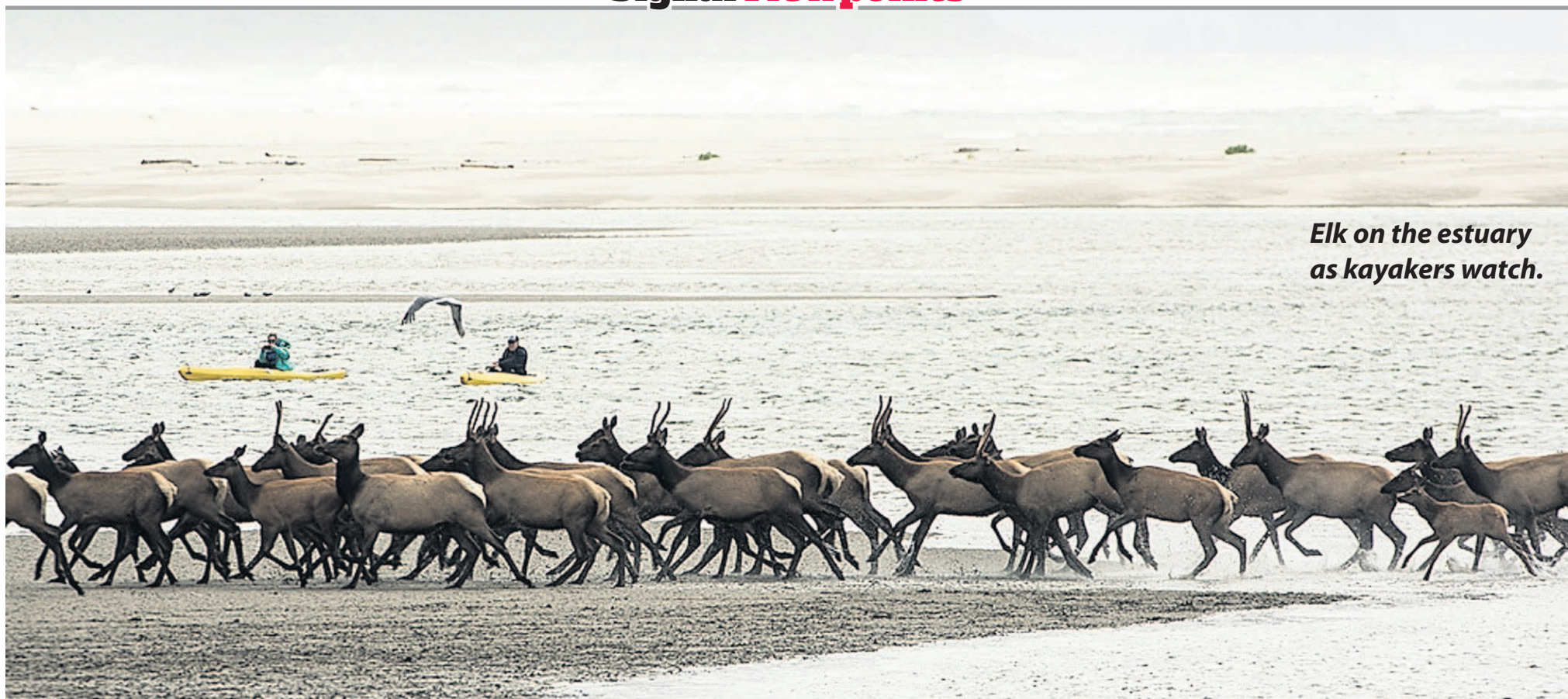


# SignalViewpoints



**Elk on the estuary as kayakers watch.**

JOHN DUDLEY

## When elk call, he listens

For North Coast officials seeking answers to health, safety and property concerns caused by elk, wildlife biologist Herman Biederbeck the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife is the first point of contact. This year, Gearhart officials and residents again seek to find solutions to a growing herd and what they say is a health, safety and property damage issue for visitors and residents.

**SEEN FROM SEASIDE**  
R.J. MARX



JOHN DUDLEY

**Elk in a Gearhart backyard.**

**Q: What can the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife do to manage elk in Gearhart?**

**Biederbeck:** We're looking at all the options before us to deal with elk damage issues on the golf courses. As you can imagine, with public opinion on the elk divided and somewhat polarized, it makes it very difficult to come up with a cohesive universal strategy that everyone will support. We're trying to work with individuals that have problems with the elk in light of that. We're working with the golf course interests. They have some very specific thoughts on how to deal with the elk issue. We want a more comprehensive approach, so we're at a little bit of a standstill there.

**Q: What would a "more comprehensive approach" entail?**

**Biederbeck:** We came up with a suggested list of different options that could perhaps help deal with this issue. They tend to emphasize precluding access by the elk to the golf courses, because we believe the

golf courses present a large attraction for the elk. It's one of the reason they're hanging around there. The golf courses are considered by the elk as large forage areas. If we could get the golf courses protected so that the elk aren't going in there any more, we believe there's a reasonably good chance the elk will leave, because there isn't the forage base to support them.

**Q: What do you consider to be a property owner's best option?**

**Biederbeck:** We're not saying it's the most viable, but we're putting fences out as an option for consideration.

**Q: Could you fence off the golf course greens?**

**Biederbeck:** The city has a 6-foot fence ordinance. We've talked of a

double fence. The concept is to use horizontal distance instead of vertical height to preclude the elk out of the golf course areas.

**Q: Wouldn't the elk get stuck between the fences?**

**Biederbeck:** The thought is to have the fences the right distance apart so the elk couldn't negotiate both fences with a single leap. Elk have the ability to look at a fence situation to determine if they can clear it or get over it.

**Q: How has the fence suggestion been received?**

**Biederbeck:** The golf course interests lean to trapping and relocating, which has a number of challenges. If we start looking at things that affect the public in Gearhart, like removing the elk, we have to involve the public in any process like that. They have to make a decision on how they feel about a larger public process to even consider something like trapping and relocation, which, again, I cannot stress enough, has major challenges.

**Q: How did the herd grow so fast?**

**Biederbeck:** Five or seven years ago, it seemed like another 50 or so elk showed up from somewhere. My guess is from the north where more development has been occurring. While we have no way to prove that — we didn't have elk radio-collared or deer tagged — we have noticed the number of elk complaints from further north dropped about the same



**Golf course planners were unaware in 1963 when they installed foliage that it would prove an invitation to elk.**  
FILE PHOTO

time the elk showed up in the Gearhart/Seaside area.

**Q: Could we see a shift?**

**Biederbeck:** A lot of it depends on what kind of land use goes on there. There could be something that changes, that draws the elk away from Seaside and Gearhart and reduces the number of elk there. A lot of it depends on what kind of land uses occur in and around that area.

**Q: How do you track the elk?**

**Biederbeck:** We did an experimental drone project with Oregon State University last winter in the Youngs River area to look at the efficacy of using drones to survey elk. For some surveys, what you buy off the shelf works pretty well. For other types of survey work, you need something with better optics. It turned out to be pretty much of a mixed bag. This was our first investigation here in western Oregon to use drones to survey elk. We didn't have any notion that this project would answer all our questions. As usual with an issue like this, some additional

questions and follow-up are required.

**Q: Do you have numbers on the elk herd?**

**Biederbeck:** Our wildlife management unit manages our elk herds. Clatsop County, Columbia County and part of Tillamook County are in the Saddle Mountain unit. Our management goal is 7,800 elk in that area. We're a little below that. We have had some excessive antler-less elk issues that have just been addressed, so the expectations that the elk population will recover and be closer to that 7,800 figure.

**Q: Is it likely that wolves or other predators will return?**

**Biederbeck:** That's a good question. Wolves have shown themselves to be pretty adaptable. They do get into trouble, especially with livestock operations, but it's hard to say. They may end up inhabiting the North Coast. They just have to get through some barriers, like the Willamette Valley and I-5 to do that. We have no confirmed sightings of wolves anywhere near the North Coast yet.

## The risks and rewards of Valentine's Day

By the time you are reading this, Valentine's Day will be over, finished, done for, yesterday's news. Unless, like me, you're not hung up on the actual date and are more inclined to extend any Valentine celebrating into the weekend. Or perhaps you're the forgetful, not-quite-organized partner in your relationship and you just plumb forgot. Never fear. Luckily in Seaside, they sell candy and cologne all year.

I have a love/hate relationship with Valentine's Day. For starters, it's not a pretty backstory. St. Valentine was a martyred Roman temple priest who, because he broke Emperor Claudius II's ban on Christianity by helping couples wed, was beheaded. Then there was the St. Valentine's Day Massacre, which occurred in 1929. On a more positive note, Oregon officially became a state on Valentine's Day in 1859; Arizona followed suit and became a state on the same date in 1912. Wearing a red wool dress, in 1962, Jackie Kennedy showed off the White House to CBS newsmen Charles Collingwood on Valentine's Day. Someone told me this morning that Valentine's Day this year falls on Ash Wednesday, which is also the start of Lent. If you're an observer, depending on what you chose to give up, you might have to forgo that chocolate.

On a ladies' only closed Facebook page of which I am a member, quite a few women expressed their Valentines' Day frustration. Mostly they're peeved when their husbands buy them candy after they've

**VIEW FROM THE PORCH**  
EVE MARX



already been clear they don't want candy because they're on a diet. A woman on her second marriage said she suspected her husband buys her whatever he bought his first wife, as if all wives want the same things. Some women expect to be taken out to dinner. I get that since unless it's a joint effort and you're cooking a romantic meal together, what woman on Valentine's Day wants to bang those pots and pans?

It's long been my contention Valentine's Day means more to the unmarried. My son, for example, used to spend weeks agonizing and emailing ideas back and forth to me what to get his sweetheart. They're getting married next month. So far, I haven't heard a peep from him.

Admittedly I am not the easiest person to shop for on Valentine's Day. I've received chocolate (meh), flowers (I like roses but they better not be red), jewelry (risky) and once a Coach handbag I picked out in advance. My husband is so fearful of giving me something I don't like he often ignores the holiday altogether. And that also annoys me.

This year I have no plans whatsoever for Valentine's Day. I'm thinking I might bake a cake, or break open that bottle of cham-



EVE MARX/FOR SEASIDE SIGNAL

**Valentine's Day wishes to all.**

pagne that's been in the refrigerator for six months, waiting for a special occasion. Maybe my husband will surprise me, which would be a surprise. In the interest of full disclosure I've already told him what I want, which is a bottle of Tokyo Milk No. 10, Honey and the Moon. Hint hint, they sell it at Sesame & Lilies in Cannon Beach. I haven't asked him what he wants, but that's only because men always want the same thing.

## Officers thank community

On behalf of the Seaside Police Department, we would like to thank those who attended the remembrance gathering on February 5, 2018 to reflect on the two-year anniversary of Sgt. Jason Gooding's line-of-duty death. Several members of the community came out and braved our coastal drizzle, while paying respect to Sgt. Gooding's life and legacy. We would also like to thank those police officers from other communities who were gathered with us. We thank you for your continued dedication and service to others.

The SPD knows and appreciates the support our community has shown over the years. Our department would not have been able to begin the healing process without the help of many professionals and the overwhelming support our citizens have given to us. Your understanding and patience has allowed us to know that your support is always there, even when we cannot see it.

As a member of the department which had to personally face this horrific event, the shock and recovery thereafter, I know that our journey is far from over. However, we will continue to grow from this and become even stronger in our service and dedication to our profession, and to those we swore to protect. Thank you to our community for being there for us. We do need you and greatly appreciate your unwavering support.

**Bruce Holt, Lieutenant**  
Seaside Police Department



**PUBLISHER**  
Kari Borgen

**EDITOR**  
R.J. Marx

**CIRCULATION MANAGER**  
Jeremy Feldman

**ADVERTISING SALES**  
April Olsen

**CLASSIFIED SALES**  
Danielle Fisher

**PRODUCTION MANAGER**  
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**SYSTEMS MANAGER**  
Carl Earl

**STAFF WRITER**  
Brenna Visser

**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS**  
Skyler Archibald  
Rebecca Herren  
Katherine Lacaze  
Eve Marx  
Esther Moberg  
Jon Rahl

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