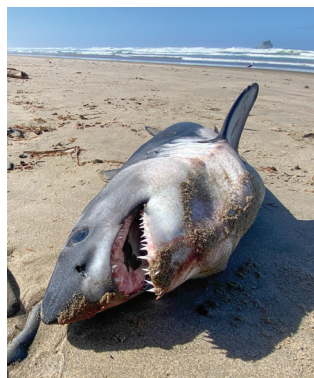


# Shark, Mola mola found off coast

**SEASIDE AQUARIUM**  
TIFFANY BOOTHE



Photos by Tiffany Boothe/Seaside Aquarium  
**ABOVE: The Mola mola, an ocean sunfish, found off the Oregon Coast. RIGHT: A salmon shark found on the beach in Arch Cape.**

Not exactly something you find everyday along the Columbia River. This 6-foot Mola mola, also known as an ocean sunfish, was brought up river by the high tide early last week. Mola mola are often found off of the Oregon Coast, especially in the summer but they tend to linger further offshore. These gentle giants can reach at least 8.9 feet in length and weigh over 5,000 pounds! There was also a report yesterday of one on the beach in Manzanita.

So what's with all of the dead animals on the beach lately? As fall begins and the weather starts changing things that have died out at sea get pushed around by heavier winds and surf. It is not unusual to come across a few dead animals on the beach after a storm.

A four-foot salmon shark washed ashore yesterday in Arch Cape. The little shark

had died before washing in. Luckily, it was still in great condition and we were able to recover the shark. It will be dissected by a local school group and samples will be taken to help scientists learn more about these amazing creatures.

Did you know 17 species of shark reside in Oregon's coastal waters? From the legendary Great white to the large basking shark and the innocuous spiny dogfish, Oregon's sharks are part of the complex ocean food web. During summer and fall months, Oregonians may notice juvenile sharks stranded on the beach. The salmon shark species is one of the most common species to wash ashore. Named for their diet

preference of eating salmon, the quick-swimming salmon shark can become stranded throughout the year, but are most commonly found during summer months. Salmon sharks give live birth to two to four pups off the southern Oregon coast in the spring and the juveniles follow ocean currents and prey. While this species is able to thermoregulate (control their body temperature up to 15 degrees Celsius above surrounding water temperature) and navigate vertically throughout the water column, some juveniles end up outside their ideal temperature range and are unable to thrive. With an average length of seven feet and weighing

in at 300 pounds, mature salmon sharks are quick enough to catch salmon, birds, squid and herring. With grey bodies and white bellies salmon sharks are often mistaken for the great white, but major differences in size, diet, and teeth patterns set the salmon sharks apart. Salmon shark teeth are notably pointed and smooth while white shark teeth are triangular and serrated.

While the salmon shark may look fierce, there has never been a reported incident of a salmon shark attack on a human. If you have a question about a stranded shark or other stranded marine life, contact local experts at the Seaside Aquarium, 503-738-6211.

## Author Ratty takes fresh look at Native traditions

By CHLOE SKAAR  
COAST WEEKEND

Lighthouses, coves, beaches and trails have long been a main attraction to the Oregon Coast. They are a testament, often named after the Native American tribes who first shaped the culture of Oregon's coast.

They are also a main attraction to the Astoria area for historical fiction author Brian Ratty and his latest book, "Broken Arrow."

"I'm not an expert or historian ... at my very best, I've just got a great curiosity about our local history," Ratty said. "We all know the Indians really got screwed by the government ... I wanted to mention that, for the most part, the Indians were very welcoming to the (white men) who came here."

Ratty spent 34 years running the production company Media West out of Portland. He has written and published 10 books, mostly historical fiction, in the 15 years since he retired, drawing on the rich history of the Astoria area and Oregon coast for inspiration.

After Ratty's recent book, "Tillamook Rock Lighthouse: History and Tales of Terrible Tilly," he noticed tourists were interested in Oregon's North Coast history, especially through an informative book at the right length and price point from a local author. By extension, the book helped inspire "Broken Arrow," which was released in July.

It also piqued interest in area bookstores, who wanted to make local history more accessible. Ratty said Karen Emmerling, owner of Beach Books in Seaside, "planted the seed" for "Broken Arrow."

Emmerling said customers at Beach Books were showing an increasing interest in the Tillamook Rock Lighthouse and the early Native American tribes of Oregon's coast region. She said she felt there wasn't a reliable source for information from a local perspective.

"These were suggested topics that we felt, as a bookstore, there was a need for and an interest in," Emmerling said. "Brian has taken those on and done a great job with creating these two books, which have been very beneficial for us to have."

Emmerling has carried Ratty's books in her store since at least 2014, and said the relationship between local authors and local booksellers is important to preserve history.

"I think it's important that (authors) have an outlet where their works can be

seen by a larger audience," Emmerling said. "There is definitely an interest from tourists in books that are written either about the local area or by local authors."

Ratty also said that part of a local author's job is to write books that can educate and interest tourists and locals who are curious about the roots of their community.

"Booksellers wanted to do the same thing (as 'The Tillamook Rock Lighthouse') with local Indian tribes," Ratty said, adding that the Native American names of Oregon's geographical regions and landmarks often spark curiosity in both tourists and locals. "They wanted to know, 'where do these Indians come from and where are they now?'"

Answering these questions posed unique challenges to Ratty, and conducting research during a pandemic didn't help. Because in-person interviews and physical copies of documentation were hard to come by, Ratty needed to vet other sources. He turned to the internet and a few rare books to fill in the gaps.

"My golly, you couldn't go to a library, you couldn't go to a museum, you could hardly get any face-to-face with any experts," Ratty said. "My wife and I really did enjoy writing it, but it was awfully hard to (talk to) anyone. ... What you read on the internet, that doesn't make it right. An out-of-date book doesn't make it right. But it's better than most."

He put an emphasis on the history, myths and legends of the Native American tribes, wanting to focus on taking a look into their culture and how they told their own stories.

"It was fun to research and we wanted to write a book ... my goal was to keep the story moving," Ratty said. "But really it's a story of many voices. ... I knew that everything was not 100% right or wrong, it is full of myths and legends."

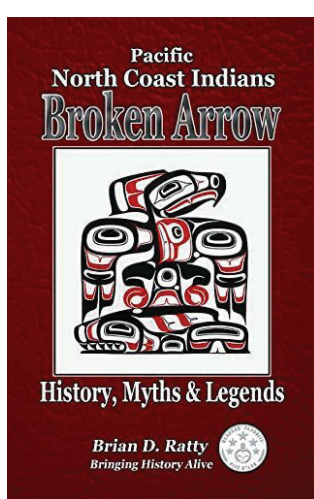
One of those legends was the Thunderbird, an important symbol to Native American tribes along Oregon's North Coast, Ratty said.

He worked with artist Douglas Zilke, based out of British Columbia, to create the cover art for "Broken Arrow," a Thunderbird and whale symbol. Though Zilke isn't Native American himself, he specializes in Native American art. Ratty said the title for "Broken Arrow" came from a movie he watched as a child.

"I remember as a kid seeing a movie where they had a fictional tribe, and the movie was called 'Broken Arrows,'" Ratty said. "Our

government uses 'broken arrow' as a term for nuclear activity and chaos. To Indians, 'broken arrow' means conflict and distrust."

Ratty said he has seen the history of local tribes gain a lot of respect, both in the importance of their culture and the integration of Native American tribes and white settlers. He noted that the tribes' skills in canoe making, frontier justice and dance can still be seen in traces of Astoria and other coastal communities.



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