

For Immediate Release – May 2, 2019

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GIG HARBOR, WA – Harbor WildWatch is excited to continue their monthly science-social series on Wednesday, May 15 with the Puget Sound Restoration Fund (PSRF).

Stuart Ryan, biologist with [PSRF](#), will be discussing the organization's restoration of three iconic species in the Puget Sound: Olympia oysters, pinto abalone, and bull kelp.

Olympia oysters are the state's only native oyster and were harvested to near depletion more than 70 years ago. PSRF works to rebuild Olympia oyster populations by restoring native oysters and providing shell habitat to support population recovery. The group focuses their efforts at 19 priority locations throughout Puget Sound identified in Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife's (WDFW) [updated Olympia oyster Stock Rebuilding Plan](#). PSRF maintains a 10-year, 100-acre goal to restore the oysters.

The pinto abalone is the only species of abalone found in Washington waters. This native species has cultural and ecological significance; grazing rock surfaces and maintaining the health of the rocky reef habitat and kelp beds. Population declines have been precipitous; WDFW has documented a nearly 98% decline from 1992 to 2017, leading to WDFW initiating the process of listing the pinto abalone to a State endangered species. PSRF's goal is to raise and outplant hatchery-reared abalone using state-of-the-art techniques to recover a vanishing species and maintain the health of rocky reef habitat.

Major declines of kelp abundance have been documented throughout the Puget Sound. These species of large brown algae are an essential component of coastal rocky reef habitats in temperate oceans throughout the world. In Washington, the bull kelp (*Nereocystis luetkeana*) and the giant kelp (*macrocystis spp.*) form extensive forests in shallow, rocky habitats. Because of their fast growth rates and large sizes, these algae are thought to contribute greatly to the productivity of shallow coastal marine ecosystems and as habitat for a diversity of fishes and invertebrates. PSRF's goal is to reverse declines in canopy kelp beds in Puget Sound and develop viable solutions to recover the essential habitat they provide.

The 21 and over series, aptly named *Cocktails & Fishtales*, is held once a month and features guest speakers on various ecological topics. The 2019 series brings local and national scientists, researchers, and environmental artists to Gig Harbor Brewing's taproom in the Harbor (3155 Harborview Drive). These programs are an opportunity to enjoy an evening out in Gig Harbor in a lively and social learning experience.

Doors will open at 5:30 p.m. and the presentation will take place from 6-7 p.m. with time for a short Q&A afterwards. Harbor WildWatch's Steward Club members have free admission; a suggested donation of \$5/guest is requested at the door. Individuals who are interested in joining the Steward Club may purchase membership at the door or on Harbor WildWatch's website.

The full *Cocktails & Fishtales* schedule for 2019 can be found on Harbor WildWatch's website: www.harborwildwatch.org.

Cocktails & Fishtales are educational events. As such, Harbor WildWatch does not endorse any speaker, service, or product represented at Cocktails & Fishtales.

Harbor WildWatch is a 501(c)(3) non-profit environmental education organization based in Gig Harbor, WA. Their mission is to inspire stewardship for Puget Sound, and greater Salish Sea, by providing equitable learning opportunities about the environment to our local community and beyond. Through more than 600 fun and interactive programs each year, Harbor WildWatch hopes to inform residents and visitors about local marine life and elicit their involvement in preserving our natural resources. To make a donation or learn more about Harbor WildWatch, visit www.harborwildwatch.org.