

LEARN. HAVE FUN.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Time Sensitive Material
Spring 2019
Issue #9
Issue Date - March 2019
Published Quarterly


253.514.0187 | WWW.HARBORWILDWATCH.ORG


Prefer to go paperless? Sign up for the online newsletter at Carly@harborwildwatch.org


THE WILDSIDE

Spring 2019


OUR STAFF

 Lindsey Stover
Executive Director
Lindsey@harborwildwatch.org

 Rachel Easton
Education Director
Rachel@harborwildwatch.org

 Stena Troyer
Science Specialist
Stena@harborwildwatch.org

 Carly Vester
Communications Specialist
Carly@harborwildwatch.org

 Jennifer Beard
Bookkeeper (Volunteer)
Jennifer@harborwildwatch.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

Cocktails & Fishtales
5:30-7 p.m., 21+, FREE for
Steward Club members

March 20 - National Geographic
Recognized Filmmaker Matt
Mikkelsen at Ocean5

April 20 - Hood Canal Salmon
Enhancement Group at Gig
Harbor Brewing

May 15 - Puget Sound
Restoration Fund, at Gig Harbor
Brewing

Spring Break Camp
April 16-19

Volunteer Training
May 18 at Penrose Point State
Park

Gig Harbor Maritime Parade
June 1 (join us in the parade!)



WHAT AM I?
ANSWER ON PAGE 3

When you shop at smile.amazon.com, select Harbor WildWatch as your charity of choice and we will receive a donation. Thank you!

WHAT'S INSIDE

CREATURE FEATURE
KIDS CORNER
SCIENCE WITH STENA



THE WILDSIDE



GET YOUR FEET WET

Volunteer of the Year

The Gig Harbor Branch of HomeStreet Bank encourages their employees to become involved with their local community through an organization they are passionate about. When Kendra Darnell, Customer Service Supervisor, first heard about Harbor WildWatch, she immediately wanted to become involved. "All of my coworkers agreed: this was the volunteer opportunity for me," she laughs.

As part of their volunteer initiative, HomeStreet offers a \$500 grant to the organization if their employee volunteers 30 hours or more. Kendra not only exceeded this with 32.5 hours; she also volunteered the most hours of our adult volunteers! We sat down with Kendra, our Volunteer of the Year, for a quick Q&A.

Why did you choose Harbor WildWatch?

I've always loved biology; it was one of my favorite classes and I have a keen interest in marine biology. I also really enjoy working and teaching kids, so this was right up my alley. My team teases me for being such a nerd, but it's a

great fit. I also feel that there's always room to learn new things. I've learned so many different things at every program I've volunteered at — from assisting Stena in the classroom, to touch tanks at the Farmer's Market and Chum Festival.

Over the summer, I took my Sunday school class that I teach out to the local beach for our own beach walk. We found a moon snail and anemones, and I had the opportunity to show them around the beach. Both the kids and I had a great time, and I was able to apply what I learned from volunteering!

Can you talk a little bit about HomeStreet Bank's commitment to volunteering?

HomeStreet encourages employees to volunteer individually by picking their passion and volunteering for it. They realize that it's good for their employees to get out in the community and be part of something that's bigger than them, and it's especially important to participate in

something they're genuinely passionate about.

Do you have any advice for future volunteers?

Even if you think you don't know that much about marine biology, or you're not an expert in the field, just do it anyway. Don't let that stop you from volunteering. You're going to learn so much! Just be willing to put yourself out there – be willing to be embarrassed, silly, and talkative.



Kendra Darnell and Lindsey Stover, Executive Director, with HomeStreet Bank's volunteering grant for \$500.

2
2
3

CREATURE FEATURE

Fish That Rock: Year of the Rockfish

Carly Vester, Communications Specialist

WildWatch highlights a local species and 2019 is officially the Year of the Rockfish!

The Puget Sound is home to 24 different species, two of which (bocaccio and yelloweye) are listed on the Endangered Species Act. These fish are shaped similar to bass, can range from 6 inches to 3 feet in length depending on the species, and come in a range of colors and patterns: speckled, striped, pink, brown, blue... the list goes on.

Populations began to dwindle in the 1980s due to overfishing; unbeknownst to fisherman, rockfish reproduce at a glacial pace. The species doesn't reach sexual maturity until they are 17



China Rockfish, Puget Sound. Photo: David Hall

years old and can live 100 years. Although they can be found in depths up to 2,000 feet, they depend on multiple habitats for survival. For more on this, check out the *Science with Stena* article.

Rockfish have a litany of cool factoids, fresh for impressing friends at trivia night. They've mastered the technique of hovering motionless in the water column, but also enjoy resting on the bottom of reefs. Rockfish eat fish, shrimp, crabs, squid, jellyfish, plankton, and algae. They are ovoviviparous, meaning they are amongst only a few species of fish that give live birth rather than lay eggs. Some species of rockfish, like the China Rockfish (*Sebastes nebulosus*), are very territorial and are homebodies, sometimes staying at their 'home site' for years. Other species, such as the Blue Rockfish (*Sebastes mystinus*), school in large groups.

Interested in learning more about rockfish? Our July *Cocktails & Fishtales* presentation will take a focus on rockfish research in the Puget Sound with Paua Marine Research. Divers are also welcome to join our community science rockfish SCUBA surveys, in partnership with Tacoma SCUBA Dive Club and NOAA.

Rockfish SCUBA Surveys

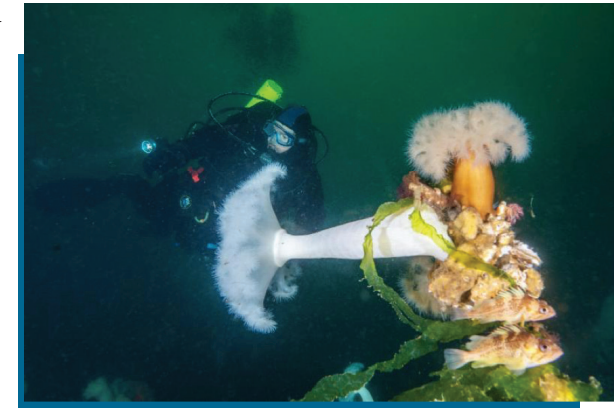
Stena Troyer, Science Specialist

Exciting things are happening with Harbor WildWatch's Community Science programs in 2019! Wait... what's that? "Community" not "citizen" science? The term "community science" is being used more frequently by organizations around the globe in place of "citizen science." This shift in terminology encompasses the place-based nature of the collected data and is also more inclusive to residents and visitors alike. You can look forward to the many upcoming "community science" opportunities from beach monitoring to bird counts!

With Harbor WildWatch declaring 2019 as the year of the rockfish, I have the pleasure of highlighting a rockfish focused community science effort.

Rockfish remind me of salmon in the sense that both fish species depend on many different habitat types throughout their life history... and they are both delicious! Being a tasty, and thus economically important fish, is great because to protect and preserve these species, it is important to take care of each different habitat type. This, of course, makes conserving these species complicated because it is important to take care of each different habitat type. For rockfish, name any marine habitat (eelgrass beds, kelp forest, sand bottom, rocky reef, open water, etc.), and they will have used it during one of their life stages. Because of their unique life-history, past over-exploitation, and currently degraded habitats, unfortunately some rockfish species in the Salish Sea have declined.

To better understand how to restore endangered rockfish populations, specifically bocaccio and yelloweye rockfish in the Puget Sound, some really cool work is being done to learn more about the complex life of rockfish. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and NOAA Fisheries have been using remotely operated vehicles to survey adult rockfish in waters up to 600 feet deep. This research will help elucidate population patterns and assess the performance of rockfish conservation areas.



Scientific Diver Jamey Selleck conducting a young of year rockfish survey near Vashon Island. Photo by Adam Obaza, Paua Marine Research

While ROV's are successfully adding information about adult rockfish in deep places, data is lacking when it comes to juvenile rockfish in the shallow nearshore environment. This is where community science comes in.

In 2017, Harbor WildWatch embarked on a collaborative venture with NOAA scientists and recreational SCUBA divers to make observations about year of young rockfish, or YOY. YOY are rockfish that are less than one year old (~10cm) that happen to also use the same habitat as many recreational divers. To fill the data gap, NOAA developed an easy to use protocol that can be added to any dive. Essentially divers count the number of YOY they see in a certain habitat type at a certain depth and

then report these findings to NOAA. These additional observations are the crux of why community science is so important. There is no way that fisheries scientists could accomplish such a large-scale look at rockfish recovery on their own. With more observations, in more places along the Puget Sound, scientists are more likely to gain a better understanding of what conditions lead to the success of young rockfish and assess overall rockfish recruitment and recovery. The more eyes in the water, the merrier!

While the amount of survey time is on the rise, community scientists collectively surveyed for 791.5 minutes in 2017, which rose to 1394 minutes in 2018; we are hoping that we can encourage more divers to add a twist of science to their next splash. Contact Stena Troyer if you, or a diver you know, is interested in getting involved at stena@harborwildwatch.org. Not a diver? Check our calendar for other community science opportunities.

Special thanks to Tacoma SCUBA Dive Club and our NOAA collaborators Adam Obaza, James Selleck, and Dan Tonnes who have helped make rockfish surveys possible!

KIDS CORNER

Community Science Camaderie

Every winter we gear up for series of night time beach adventures, known as winter community science beach monitoring. Nine public and state park beaches around the south sound are surveyed in both winter and summer, rain or shine. Beach monitoring requires low tides -- hence why hardy volunteers join us in the middle of the night! All ages are welcome, and we always love chatting (and sometimes caroling) with those who join us.

The Arrazolo family, who live in Texas, stopped by our Farmer's Market booth several times during their summer visit with family in Gig Harbor. Fast forward several months and we were so delighted to have them join us for beach monitoring on December 23, 2018. We reached out to Laura, Ellie, and Julie to talk a little bit about their experience. You all are welcome to join the team again any time!

Laura Arrazolo (Mom): Thank you all SO much for including my water-loving Texas team in your Beach Monitoring adventures! I grew up in Gig Harbor, spent all kinds of time on the beach as a kid, and now have a husband and 3 water and critter-loving girls who join me in my biannual migration back to the Northwest every year. The girls were so fascinated by your table at the

Farmer's Market this summer that I signed up for your mailing list - and that's how I learned about the Christmas week beach outing. When else do tweens and teens get to sneak out of the house and go exploring?! The girls were all in! I was eager for them to see what real marine biologists do. Thank you for the shared gloves, knee pads, and explanations. We will definitely be back.

Ellie Arrazolo (14): It was so cool to feel a part of the Harbor Wildwatch team, even for one fun night! Stena was so patient and friendly; everyone could not have been more welcoming. When my mom told me about the beach walk, I expected to be shown a couple of starfish, maybe some crabs and seaweed. Wow! I picked up rocks, and saw creatures I never knew existed. Stena taught us their names. Then, towards the end of our time there (everyone else stayed 'til after midnight, probably) my sisters and I went with JoAnn to measure starfish. Not only did we find I think three healthy starfish, but there was a big surprise! There on the beach were a whole lot of pinky, whitish squid eggs. I had never ever seen or heard of someone seeing those! As we walked away from that cool group, we could hear lots of laughter and, "jingle-shells, jingle-shells, jingle all the way!"

Julia Arrazolo (10): It was so cool to see and touch creatures that I never even knew were there. It was like being in a different world. It was really fun!

Save The Date: Volunteer Training

This year volunteer training will take place on Saturday, May 18 at Penrose Point State Park. Volunteers can spend the afternoon learning on the beach while getting hands-on experience with Harbor WildWatch staff. Times will be announced soon, and volunteers are welcome to stay and camp overnight for free in the group camp site with Harbor WildWatch!

BEACH TREASURE