

THE WILDSIDE

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December 2019

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CREATURE FEATURE

How about those salmon?

Carly Vester, Communications Specialist

On the note of this newsletter's *Science with Stena* article (inside!), one of the most commonly consumed fish in the Pacific Northwest are salmon. We have five species in the Pacific Northwest (Chinook, Coho, Sockeye, Chum, and Pink), and the two most often found on the menu are Chinook and Sockeye.

According to Monterey Bay Aquarium's *Seafood Watch* (which informs consumers about the sustainability status of their seafood), there are a number of sustainable methods for sourcing your salmon, fresh or frozen.

"Most salmon caught on the U.S. West Coast and in British Columbia, Canada, is a 'Good Alternative,'" says *Seafood Watch's* website as of December 2019. "However, check *Seafood Watch's* recommendations before buying Chinook or Coho salmon caught in the Columbia River, Puget Sound or on British Columbia's South Coast, because some sources are on the 'Avoid' list. There are two 'Best Choice' sources from Washington: pink salmon caught with lift nets and sockeye salmon caught during

the early summer run with lift nets. Also, look for salmon that's eco-certified by the Marine Stewardship Council and Aquaculture Stewardship Council."

The health of Chinook salmon in particular is dependent on location. According to the National Wildlife Foundation, stocks of Alaskan Chinook are very healthy

while those in the Columbia River tributaries are considered in danger, and they are listed as threatened in a range of rivers and streams throughout Oregon, Idaho, and Washington.

What's threatening Chinook in particular? A myriad of issues,

including overfishing, overuse of water resources, development, and habitat loss. The National Wildlife Foundation also states: "Dams also pose a threat if the speed of water flow is altered or access to natal streams is blocked."

We encourage everyone to make sustainable seafood choices! *Seafood Watch* is a great reference point for salmon, as well as many other seafood choices (like tuna and shellfish).



WHAT AM I?
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UPCOMING EVENTS

Pier Into The Night
January 4 at 5 p.m.
February 1 at 6 p.m.
March 7 at 7 p.m.

Annual Meeting
January 29 at 6 p.m.
Harbor History Museum

Cocktails & Fishtales
February 19 at 6 p.m.
Ocean5
Corvid Behavior with Dr. Kaeli Swift, *National Geographic* & *New York Times* featured biologist

March 18 at 6 p.m.
Gig Harbor Brewing
Environmental Trivia Night

seaStars & Beyond
Enrolling through January!

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Photo above: Stena, Science Specialist, leads a salmon tour with Sally the Salmon at the 13th Annual Donkey Creek Chum Festival.

Steward of the Year

Janet Shonk, Washington State Parks

For the past five years, we have announced the Steward of the Year award at our annual *Make Waves* benefit. The Steward of the Year award recognizes a Steward Club member's commitment to local environmental education, and is given to an individual who exemplifies the Harbor WildWatch mission and motto.

This year we are so excited to be celebrating our long-time partner Janet Shonk and our partnership with Washington State

Parks! We sat down with Janet for a quick Q&A to talk about her experience with Harbor WildWatch and the beautiful state parks in our area.

How long have you worked with Washington State Parks and in what capacities? I have been with Washington State Parks and Recreation for 22 years now. I started as a Park Aide at Kopachuck, was hired as a Ranger in-training at Cape Disappointment and promoted to Ranger 2 (1998-2001), worked as a Ranger 2 Assistant Manager at Jarrell Cove (2001-2006), worked as a Ranger 3 Assistant Manager, then Area Manager at Penrose Point (2006-2017). Currently (2017-present), I work as the Ranger 4 Area Manager for Millersylvania Area which includes Millersylvania, Tolmie, Rainbow Falls, the Willapa Hills Trail, and Nisqually State Parks.

How and when did you become involved with Harbor WildWatch? When I promoted to Penrose Point in 2006, I learned about a relatively new nonprofit called Harbor WildWatch that was doing educational programs during low tides in our parks.

I quickly became acquainted with Harbor WildWatch and their work as we partnered quite a bit presenting beach etiquette programs to local school groups before classes came out to the parks. We helped store equipment and collect water for the touch tanks that were initially used for beach programs, coordinated with Harbor WildWatch staff on scheduling and helped

advertised beach programs in our parks, and invited Harbor WildWatch out during events in the park such as Shellfest. Harbor WildWatch also graciously developed a short video for us about the beach at low tide to show at our small amphitheater in the campground.



Our partnership evolved over the years, adapting to new ways to deliver programs and promoting citizen science. I believe it is a great testament to the value of partnering with folks who have similar goals and vision.

What is a favorite Harbor WildWatch memory of yours? Seeing kids and adults get excited about finding a small octopus on the beach. We were all mesmerized in amazement!

Why are state parks so important to our communities? As the population of our state continues to grow and more land is developed, Parks serve as oases for people to decompress, play outside, gather and reconnect with friends and family, and learn about our state's beautiful natural environment as well as our cultural history. This is vital for advancing the mental and physical health of a community. Parks also attract a fair number of tourists from outside the local community, who then contribute to the local economy by patronizing local businesses. Just as importantly, parks also provide natural habitat and serve as much needed oases for plants, bugs, and wildlife too!

I have been fortunate to land in a career that allows me to work in splendid places while helping people enjoy and learn about our natural environment and cultural history. Working with Harbor WildWatch during my 11 years at Penrose is one of the most rewarding partnership experiences I have experienced. It was a pleasant surprise to receive the Steward of the Year award and makes me realize Harbor WildWatch values our partnership just as much!

Fresh or Frozen?

Stena Troyer, Science Specialist



If asked to choose between fresh or frozen, my guess is that most folks would answer fresh. Which is why I was surprised to hear a story on the radio reviewing a study concluding that frozen seafood is as good or better than "fresh." According to blind taste tests conducted by researchers at Oregon State University, lead sensory researcher Ann Colonna says, "What we found is that the frozen product was actually liked as much as — or significantly, statistically better than — the fresh." Not only is this report exciting information for people like my seafood-loving parents in landlocked Montana, delicious frozen seafood is also great news for sustainability efforts in the seafood industry!

Now you might be thinking, "Hold your fishes! (Actually, I'll be really impressed if you've ever thought that). There is no way a frozen fish will taste as tasty as a fish I reeled in this afternoon and am now about to enjoy grilled up on the BBQ." And you are probably right (and also very lucky if that is the life you are living!) which is why we need to define 'fresh'. In most cases, fresh does not mean caught that day. When it comes to seafood, one must consider that your catch has to be caught, processed, delivered, purchased, and prepared.

Depending on where you are in the world and where the seafood you are buying came from, that delivery may take many days. For a faster delivery, transporting your 'fresh' seafood takes many resources such as shipping by



airfreight. Flying fish from harvest sites to market has the drawback of a larger carbon footprint compared to other delivery methods. The logistics of getting fresh seafood, from remote places, in a "fresh" amount of time, at a reasonable price doesn't compute. By flash-freezing product at sea, harvesters can increase the efficiency of their operation by reducing the number of trips they make to port to deliver fresh catch. Reducing the carbon footprint of transporting seafood is one great reason to surpass the stigma against a frozen seafood feast.

Another reason to buy-in to buying frozen seafood, is the reduction of waste. In the interview, Colonna said, "One-third of all seafood is actually thrown away at the counter because people are not buying it quickly enough. I don't think we have time to continue to waste seafood in that manner. To have more acceptability around frozen product is just going to help everyone."

With freezing technology improving, fisherfolk can flash-freeze seafood either at sea or shortly after docking, maintaining a quality product that you can buy year-round! And with the research to back up that frozen seafood is just as tasty, choosing frozen seafood is a positive action to add to the list of ways you can support the global movement of ensuring sustainably managed fisheries.

What Am I? (Page 1):
Green False-Jingle (*Pododesmus macrochisma*)



KIDS CORNER

Knock, Knock...

Why was the marine biologist so happy?
She found her porpoise.

Why do seagulls fly over the sea?

Because if they flew over the bay they would be called bagels!

What kind of candy do whales like?
Blubber gum.



LOCAL SPOTLIGHT



This past summer, Ocean5's restaurant, Table 47, introduced their Harbor Happy Hour. From Monday through Friday from 2-6 p.m. and every day after 8 p.m., Table 47 serves up great deals on food and drinks, and Ocean5 offers half-off Game Room Play. Generously, they have donated a portion of Harbor Happy Hour proceeds back to Harbor WildWatch!

From June-November, Ocean5 and Table 47 have contributed \$23,794 to Harbor WildWatch through Harbor Happy Hour.

We thank both Ocean5 and everyone who has enjoyed Harbor Happy Hour for this significant, incredible donation!

If you haven't stopped in for Harbor Happy Hour, you still have time! Table 47 serves sustainable, farm-to-table food in a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Grab a bite to eat, relax, and have fun bowling, playing laser tag, or enjoying their game room. Hurry! This promotion will end on December 31, 2019.