



# ODFW Field Reports

Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission  
October 11, 2019

## EAST REGION

Bruce Eddy, Region Manager

### Oregon Mid-Columbia Steelhead Recovery

Recently the Department summarized the first seven years (2010—2016) of implementing the Conservation and Recovery Plan for Oregon Steelhead Populations in the Middle Columbia (Mid-C) River Steelhead Distinct Population Segment (Oregon Mid-C Plan; Mid-C Steelhead DPS). Our review found 40% of Oregon's 10 Mid-C summer steelhead populations were meeting or exceeding viable status including those in the Eastside Deschutes River, Middle Fork John Day, and South Fork John Day. The North Fork John Day River has the only highly viable population in the DPS.



Mid-Columbia steelhead and unknown angler.

We found that the top limiting factors for many of Oregon's Mid-C populations was high tributary overshoot and subsequent loss of adult natural-origin steelhead in the mainstem Columbia River, and the lack of tributary habitat for juvenile rearing and migration.

The Department and its partners have been protecting and restoring tributary habitat as part of the Mid-C Plan. Approximately 1,715 partners have implemented more than 1,500 tributary habitat projects. Many projects focus on improving fish passage and screening at irrigation diversions and protecting/restoring streamside

riparian vegetation. Focused investment partnerships, such as the Deschutes Partnership and John Day Basin Partnership, continue to provide a useful framework for developing and implementing recovery actions and landscape restoration.

The full report is available at

[https://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/CRP/mid\\_columbia\\_river\\_Distinct\\_Population\\_Segmentplan.asp](https://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/CRP/mid_columbia_river_Distinct_Population_Segmentplan.asp).

### Annual Williamson River Cleanup

The Williamson River is located in south-central Oregon. The Williamson and its main tributary, the Sprague River, provide the majority of the flow into Upper Klamath Lake. They are renowned for trophy redband trout and bring anglers and recreationalists from all over the country.



Debris removed during the annual Klamath River and Sprague River cleanup.

In the early 1990's, Roger Smith, the Klamath Falls District Fisheries Biologist, noticed an increase in angler and recreational use of the Williamson and, unfortunately, an increase in trash and debris in and along their shorelines.

In response, he organized an annual river cleanup with local volunteers. He later handed organization of the event off to a Jim Walthers, a private landowner that cared about the river. Jim continued to organize the cleanup up until 2017 when Bill Tinniswood, the Department's Klamath Assistant District Fisheries Biologist, and the Lonesome Duck Resort took over organizing.

On August 3, the Department and Lonesome Duck Resort led this year's Williamson River Cleanup. Numerous participants from ODFW, Lonesome Duck Resort, US Fish and Wildlife Service, The Nature Conservancy, Trout Unlimited, The Klamath Tribes, Trophy Troutfitters, Yamsi Ranch, Bauer Fly Reels, and local anglers were involved. Volunteers used boats to ferry trash off the river. Sixteen river miles were cleaned during this year's effort. The Salmon Trout Enhancement Program provided everyone a BBQ lunch.

### **M<sub>YY</sub> Brook Trout**

Nonnative species introductions and invasions are widespread, and establishment of nonnative species can have significant negative effects on native species and ecosystems. Consequently, natural resource agencies and conservation organizations expend substantial efforts each year attempting to suppress or eradicate nonnative species.

Common methods used to suppress or eradicate nonnative fishes include chemical treatments and mechanical removal. Chemical treatments are often effective at eliminating or significantly reducing the abundance of nonnative fishes; however, they are not target-specific and may kill native or desirable species. Mechanic removal techniques are time and labor intensive but are often ineffective at eradicating nonnative species. Consequently, researchers are continually developing and evaluating novel methods for nonnative species eradication.

The Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) are coordinating a multi-state effort to evaluate the use of M<sub>YY</sub> brook trout to eradicate nonnative brook trout populations. The effort involves production of brook trout brood stock that will produce male offspring with two Y-chromosomes (male YY brook trout or M<sub>YY</sub>). If M<sub>YY</sub> brook trout released into a wild population, successfully mate with wild females, their offspring will all be males. Hypothetically, if this occurs over a long enough period of time the wild brook trout population sex ratio will skew towards all male. Modelling suggests that continued stocking of M<sub>YY</sub> brook trout into wild, stream-dwelling populations will result in extirpation of the wild population in 2 to 15 years.



**Brook trout captured in the upper Sprague River.**

As part of the WAFWA M<sub>YY</sub> Consortium, the Department has initiated a M<sub>YY</sub> brook trout case study in the upper South Fork Sprague River; a large dendritic stream system where brook trout occupy about 22 miles of habitat. Historically native bull trout and redband trout occupied the system. Bull trout are no longer present and redband trout occupy only the downstream reaches of this watershed, potentially the result of competition with the nonnative brook trout.

In the first year of this case study (2019), Department staff and our partners removed over 13,000 wild brook trout and stocked 19,000 fingerling and 19,000 small catchable M<sub>YY</sub> brook trout.

We will monitor the behavior and survival of the M<sub>YY</sub> brook trout, and the sex ratio of the entire watershed's brook trout population over time. We will also use an adaptive management framework to learn from these activities and adjust wild brook trout removal and M<sub>YY</sub> brook trout stocking practices based on results.

### **WEST REGION**

Bernadette Graham-Hudson, Region Manager

#### **Double-crested cormorant data analysis**

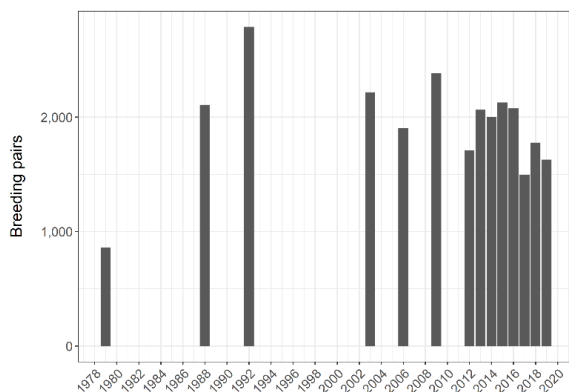
The double-crested cormorant colony on East Sand Island in the Columbia River apparently experienced a total failure this year according to a



recent statement by US Army Corps of Engineers. The proximate cause of the colony failure appears to be a high number of bald eagle disturbances throughout the nest initiation period, though the ultimate cause seems likely to be a decrease in the colony's resilience due to colony size reduction and disturbances associated with the recently implemented cormorant management plan on the island. This year's colony failure is likely to increase dispersal of double-crested cormorants to the Astoria-Megler Bridge. The bridge colony grew to about 3,500 breeding pairs this year, doubling last year's estimate of about 1,700 pairs.

Aerial photo and survey data analysis for coastal double-crested cormorant colonies was recently completed. An estimated 1,628 breeding pairs nested at 29 colonies along the coast during 2019. The trend in double-crested cormorant abundance along the coast indicates an apparent decline following a peak of 2,788 pairs in 1992.

Of note, the colony at Oswald West State Park continues to decline, and is at 58 pairs is now. This colony is about four times smaller than its average size during the period 1992–2003, when predation issues in nearby Nehalem Bay were of major interest to the public and researchers. The cause of the decline remains unclear, but is consistent with declines noted at other colonies along the North Coast.



**Number of breeding pairs of coastal double-crested cormorants over time.**

## Wolf Update & Predator Deterrence Workshop

Rogue wildlife staff held a Wolf Update and Predator Deterrence Workshop at the Bob and Phyllis Mace Watchable Wildlife building at the Jackson County Expo. The event, held September 7-8, had 67 attendees on the first day and 32 on the second day, which included a field

demonstration. The audience was largely livestock producers, but also included local hunters and community members.

Speakers included representatives from ODFW, US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Department of Agriculture Wildlife Services, the Working Circle, Bob Strosser, Jackson County Commissioner, and Mike Finley Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission Chair. Cameron Krebs, a rancher from eastern Oregon who is actively using non-lethal techniques, gave an excellent closing presentation.

Participants learned the status of wolves in Oregon, the benefits and challenges of non-lethal deterrents, case studies of successful non-lethal strategies, and resources for protecting livestock from predators in southwest Oregon. The workshop gave rural landowners the tools needed to protect their livestock, and the most current information from experts in both wolf and livestock management.



**Photos (above and below) from the Southwest Oregon Predator Deterrence Workshop.**



The event was successful due to the connections of Randy Wolf from Jackson County Stockmen's Association, and the County Wolf Advisory Committee, as well as our diverse partners including the Watchable Wildlife Foundation, Jackson County, Oregon State University Extension, the Expo, and Jackson County Soil and Water Conservation District.

## Partnerships with Washington County

North Willamette fish staff met with representatives of Washington County Road Department and the ODFW Fish Passage Coordinator to discuss the status of the Fish Passage Programmatic Agreement established in 2010. The Agreement allows the county to address and repair culvert/stream crossings on county managed roads without direct involvement from ODFW provided they adhere to specified conditions to provide passage for native migratory fish. ODFW and the County agree to coordinate on an annual basis to discuss projects and conduct a tour to monitor completed projects. The Agreement has been very successful in both reducing workload and improving fish passage across the county road system.

Staff also attended a work group to discuss concepts for promoting and managing recreational opportunities in western Washington County. Future opportunities may be available due to projects at Henry Hagg Lake, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Wapato National Wildlife Refuge, the Metro Chehalem Ridge Nature Park, and the Yamhelas Westsider Trail ( a newly proposed rails-to-trails system ). Staff provided input on concerns for wildlife and fish corridor connectivity, habitat retention and impact considerations, angling and hunting opportunities, traffic corridors and mass transit, and outdoor interests within a diverse population. Stakeholders included the County's Parks Department, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of Forestry, Clean Water Services, Oregon State Parks, Metro, and Washington County Visitor's Association.

## Coquille Valley Wildlife Area holds inaugural youth pheasant hunt

Charleston wildlife staff hosted the first youth pheasant hunt at the Coquille Valley Wildlife Area on September 7-8. The hunt was very successful in creating a positive experience for both kids and adults. The event brought out 25 youth hunters and resulted in 49 birds harvested.

The Tioga Chapter of Oregon Hunter Association (OHA) and the China Camp Gun Club were very helpful partners in the hunt. Volunteers checked kids in, brought snacks and drinks, and many brought bird dogs to help the young hunters. After the final hunt ended, OHA put on a pizza party for kids, adults, and volunteers and gave away several prizes for kids including two shotguns.



Pheasant release prior to the Coquille Valley Wildlife Area youth hunt.



Youth pheasant hunter at Coquille Valley Wildlife Area.

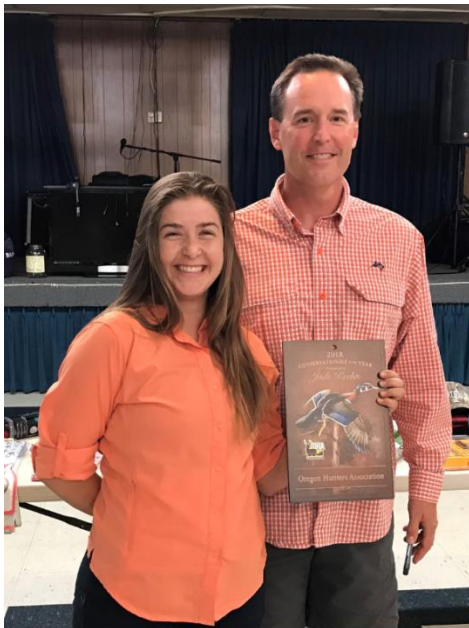
## OHA names Jade Keehn 2018 Conservationist of the Year

Central Point Habitat Biologist Jade Keehn was named OHA's 2018 Conservationist of the Year. Bryan Coggins, Rogue Valley OHA President nominated her and stated that despite Jade being new to ODFW and to Oregon, she was instrumental in supporting collaborative projects that greatly affected and influenced habitat vitality in Southwest Oregon. Jade is the Southwest Oregon habitat coordinator for the Access and Habitat Program (A&H) where she works to



improve habitat and promote hunter access to private lands.

In 2018, Jade worked to improve habitat on nearly 600 acres. According to Coggins, she played an integral liaison role in the Rogue Valley to obtain support for A&H funding and to get private landowners to donate hunts for both the A&H constituency and the local OHA banquet. She also helped establish the new Coos Mountain Travel Management Area which is helping reduce road erosion, limit damage to private property, protect fawning and calving habitat, and allow hunters to continue accessing private timber lands, which may have otherwise closed. Congratulations, Jade!



Jade Keehn with Rogue Valley Oregon Hunter Association's Bryan Coggins.

## INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

Roger Fuhrman, Information and Education Administrator

### African American Outdoor Alliance

On Saturday, Sept. 21, the Department partnered with Oregon State Parks to host a fishing event for the African American Outdoor Alliance at Honeyman State Park and Clewax Lake near Florence. The Portland-based Alliance promotes healthy living through outdoor activity.

The 24 participants who attended all seemed to have a great time catching trout and bluegill. Everyone left with smiles on their faces as well there were plenty of volunteers to assist in making this event successful; volunteers stepped up to show the younger participants how to bait a hook, how to cast, and how to reel in a fish and take it

off the hook. The Department plans to offer to make this event happen again next year.

### Feast Portland

The Department took part in Feast Portland, a multi-day event in September which draws thousands of people who are interested in food and drink unique to Oregon and the Northwest. The Department booth featured a camp-like atmosphere (thanks to donations from Sportsman's Warehouse), wild-food preparation demonstrations, and samples of duck and tuna dishes. Thousands of visitors sampled the food and learned more about wild food and foraging.

This year, visitors were asked to sign up via an electronic kiosk if they wished to learn more about hunting, fishing, foraging and food prep. Their names and email addresses will be added to the Department's customer relationship management system so they can receive updates about workshops and information to help them gather their own fish and game for the table. More than 200 people signed up to get more information.

As a prelude to Feast, the Department hosted a stop on a national/regional food writers' media tour in Garibaldi. Reporters were educated on crabbing, clamming, and preparing shellfish for the table. Many of them had never crabbled before and were reluctant to quit and move down the coast to their next stop. Many of them posted their outdoor adventures on social media, urging the world to come shell fishing in Oregon.



ODFW staff informed Feast Portland visitors and news media about the benefits of harvesting fish and game for the table.

### Hunter Outreach

This fall, the Department used its customer relationship management system to reach out to hunters prior to opening day of most big game seasons. The Fall Hunting compilation included information and links on a wide variety of topics

relevant to hunters; how to redeem Sports Pac vouchers, tech tips for Electronic Licensing System, cougar hunting, chronic wasting disease, the new Watch Out for Wildlife license plate and more.

The email reached more than 200,000 customers with 105,000 reading it within two days. The open and click-through rates were above industry standards, indicating a high degree of interest in the content. The most popular features were the big game and gamebird forecasts for the upcoming seasons.

In addition to broad, multi-topic outreach items, I&E is developing templates for announcements and breaking news bulletins. Communicating with customers is an important part of the agency's commitment to R3 (recruiting, retaining and reactivating hunters and anglers).



### The Fall Hunting Forecasts are Here

Hunting season is upon us and the fall hunting forecasts for big game and game bird are now posted. They are wonderful tools to help you assess the opportunities that you'd like to go after this year.

[Read the Big Game Forecast](#)

[Read the Game Bird Forecast](#)



**Sports Pac Holders Still Need to "Purchase" Your Tag Before the Deadline**

This applies for both controlled and general season tags. The tag won't cost



**Reminder: Migratory & Upland Bird Hunters Need to Buy a HIP Validation**

If you plan to hunt for migratory birds (i.e., Band-tailed pigeon, Wilson's snipe,

## OREGON STATE POLICE

Captain Casey Thomas, Fish & Wildlife Division



Umatilla County Deputy District Attorney Craig Russell was presented the 2018 Wildlife Prosecutor of the Year Award in front of his peers at the annual Oregon District Attorneys Association Summer Conference. The award itself consists of the wildlife print shown, which includes an engraved plaque that was underwritten by the Oregon Hunters Association. The award is sponsored by the Oregon Sportsmen's Coalition, and was Oregon State Police's (OSP) 12th annual presentation of the award.

The prosecutors who work with OSP's Fish & Wildlife Division play an integral role in helping combat wildlife crime and work hard to help bring those to justice who choose to disregard our state laws. Deputy District Attorney (DA) Russell was nominated and selected for his outstanding work in 2018 and on his ability to be a good communicator, his availability to our field force, his passion and persistence in prosecuting those who violate the fish, wildlife, commercial fish and environmental laws; and for his outstanding dedication to natural resource protection. Deputy DA Russell is described as a true professional, with a strong passion for the outdoors and preservation of Oregon's natural resources. He has taken time to educate peers, defense attorneys, and judges on how specific wording is important in prosecuting fish and wildlife crimes; and has played a vital role in the successful prosecution of the cases submitted by the Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Team, and members of the Pendleton Area Command.



More than 105,000 hunters opened this email in the first two days after distribution.





Successful pronghorn antelope hunters posing for OSP Trooper.

Fish & Wildlife Troopers from the Springfield Area Command departed from their assigned areas to assist Troopers from the Lakeview area with the 2019 rifle antelope season. During these long awaited hunts, most tag holders have family and friends to share in this once in a lifetime hunt. Due to the vast, remote, and rugged location, the troopers utilized several different tools such as ATVs, an OSP Airplane, as well as the first Fish & Wildlife K-9, Buck. During the two-and-a-half-day patrol, Troopers saturated four hunt units and contacted over 150 persons associated with the antelope hunts. Of these contacts, there were seven ATV warnings, which included expired registrations, no education cards, no helmet, and one loaded firearm. Three hunters were warned for various hunting violations and two hunters were cited for *Failure to Immediately Validate Antelope Tags*.

Fish and Wildlife troopers from the Tillamook, Astoria, Portland offices, and General Headquarters, participated in a four-day shellfish saturation focused on Netarts and Tillamook Bays. The saturation was planned during a series of early morning low tides, which brought hundreds of clam diggers to the area. During the four-day operation, Troopers issued 23 citations and 27 warnings. Charges included *No Shellfish License*, *Exceeding Bag Limit of Clams*, *Digging Another's Clams*, and *Failure to Use Own Container*.

## CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Andrea Hanson, Oregon Conservation Strategy Coordinator

### Oregon North American bat monitoring

Agency biologists and federal partners with the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, U.S. Forest

Service, and Oregon State University (OSU) recently completed annual monitoring of bats across Oregon.

2019 monitoring deployment

Agency/Org	No of Sites	Percent
BLM	16	13%
FWS	12	10%
NPS	3	2%
ODFW	53	42%
USFWS	7	6%
OSU	35	28%
<b>Total</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>100%</b>

The Department provides funding to OSU Cascades' Northwestern Bat Hub (NW Bat) to coordinate Oregon's bat monitoring as part of the North American Bat Monitoring Program (NABat) for the Pacific Northwest (PNW). NABat is a continent-wide program to assess status and trends of North American bat populations at local, state, and range-wide scales.

Since 2016, our wildlife district staff and federal partners annually deploy detectors to record bat calls in a statistically valid sampling design. NW Bat does the coordination work, acoustic call processing, data analysis, and publication. This monitoring picks up where a previous monitoring program, the Oregon-Washington Bat Grid program 2003-2010, left off.

Results to date have contributed substantially to the Department's understanding of the distribution of Oregon's 15 bat species, eight of which are Oregon Conservation Strategy Species. The Department and NW Bat researches compare distribution maps for certain species of concern. For example, the long-eared myotis appears to be experiencing a shrinkage in its distribution, and researchers are now exploring additional questions to try to figure out why. Unfortunately, a decline in hoary bats, a migratory tree-dwelling species highly susceptible to collision with wind turbines was also detected.

Sarah Reif, energy coordinator, is meeting with PNW agency partners to coordinate next steps for our NABat program, including discussions of additional research questions more directly focused on hoary bat decline and the correlation with wind energy. After the 2020 field season, we will have five years of data and the plan is to conduct a five-year assessment of bats in the PNW and develop recommendations for monitoring and management.

The Department is currently funding this work using Non-game Tax Check-off funds. Each year, federal agencies are contributing more funding, and ODFW funds were significantly offset in 2018 and 2019. We anticipate our contribution in 2020 to OSU Cascades will be further reduced.

### **Fish safe plan for emergency bridge repair**

Springfield fish staff is continuing to work with Pete Baki and Katherine Nordholm, Oregon Department of Transportation, and a contractor to develop a fish safe plan for replacing footings and riprap at the Barnard Bridge on the Middle Fork Willamette near Oakridge/Westfir. This is an emergency project and the bridge is closed as one footing has no support under it and is hanging in the water column.



**Barnard Bridge on the Middle Fork Willamette near Oakridge.**

The contractors plan will dewater one channel of the Middle Fork Willamette to allow most of the concrete work to be performed in the dry. Matt Collver and Amy Anderson of the Native Fish Investigations Program captured Oregon chub in the area that will be dewatered, and the group is looking at methods to relocate that population to other Oregon chub habitat upstream. Oregon chub are an Oregon Conservation Strategy Species in the Willamette Valley. The fish salvage plan is being coordinated by ODOT with ODFW guidance from the District and Salem.

### **Gail Achterman Wildlife Area culvert removal project**

The Dalles screen shop staff removed an old, exposed 10-foot diameter culvert that was no longer functioning from the Gail Achterman Wildlife Area (GAWA). The culvert was a barrier for administrative access and while it did not directly impede flows, it occasionally held water in its base, creating potential for entrapment.

The Trust for Public Lands funded the removal with funds secured by the Friends of Gail Achterman, a non-profit group formed in her memory to support the purchase of GAWA and ensure permanent conservation of the site's natural values. A Willamette Wildlife Mitigation Program property, GAWA may serve as a "habitat stepping stone" and provide cold-water refuge and critical life history functions for listed species and species of conservation concern including Chinook salmon, winter steelhead, cutthroat trout, Oregon chub, and Pacific lamprey.



**Culvert replacement, prior to removal.**



**Culvert replacement, during removal.**





Culvert replacement, post removal.

## MARINE RESOURCES PROGRAM

Caren Braby, Marine Resources Program Manager

### Ocean sport fishing has been great

Recreational ocean coho salmon fishing in 2019 has been pretty darn good. Through mid-September, we have estimated landings of 65,500 fish, which is the highest total catch since 2014 when 99,500 coho were landed. The non-selective coho season in September was scheduled for 15 days, but four additional days were added to the final week; projections indicate the fishery will finish well below the allowable quota, with the additional days.



Successful Oregon albacore fishers display their catch.

Albacore fishing for the recreational fleet was hot! Hot! HOT! this season. Hot fishing, hot water, and hot pressure canners and barbeques! This year we have far surpassed any prior year of recreational albacore landings. As of September 15, landings were already over 100,375 fish. And the observed catch per angler was also the highest on record at 6.6 albacore per angler trip. The prior highest landings year was 2012, when 63,167 albacore were landed; the prior highest catch per angler year was

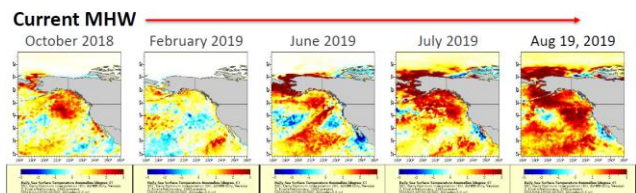
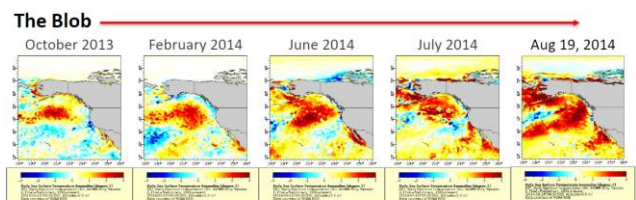
2007 with 4.9 albacore per angler. Of note, the 2019 recreational albacore also have been the smallest on average since we have been tracking lengths in 2004, but this may be good news as this indicates a strong younger year class that should be available to fisheries next season.

### Return of the “Blob” – marine heatwave developing

Starting in 2014, the West Coast experienced “*The Blob*”, the first marine heatwave that made headlines in our area. The impacts of this high-temperature anomalous event included fishery closures, sightings of usually rare warm-water species, and blooms of harmful algae and “sea pickles” (pyrosomes) that lingered in our waters for years following the event. In 2018 and early 2019, the Pacific seemed to have been on track to return to our more normal state – cold-water, summer upwelling, highly-productive system.

Then, very warm waters settled into Oregon’s offshore areas by late July and have persisted. Albacore have been available most of the summer within 25-40 miles of shore. Other species have made somewhat unexpected appearances on albacore trips including bluefin tuna, yellowtail, dolphinfish, short fin mako shark, thresher shark, and striped marlin.

What now? Scientists are watching to see if these warm months are the beginning of another heatwave or if the warm water will dissipate with winter storms. If it lingers, 2020 may be a year of harmful algal blooms, pyrosomes, and warm-species fishing.



Satellite maps of sea surface temperature anomalies (SSTa) in the development of the 2013-2015 “Blob”, and the SSTa of what is now known as the marine heatwave (MHW) of 2019.

**END OF FIELD REPORTS FOR  
October 11, 2019**