



What Is Going On in the Ocean; and What Does It Mean For Our Fishing?

By

**Brad Halverson, VP Conservation
Association of NW Steelheaders**

On October 1, 2015 Bill Kremers (Association President), his wife Diane and I attended the MidCoast Watersheds Council monthly meeting in Toledo, OR to hear Dr. Laurie Weitkamp, a salmon biologist from NOAA, speak on the “unusual conditions along the West Coast.” According to her bio, “She studies the ecology of young salmon in estuarine and marine environments to better understand why salmon survival is highly variable among years;” a study of abundant concern to our members.

We are presently faced with the residual effect of a large mass (over 500 miles wide, 300 feet deep and 2,000 miles long) of unusually warm ocean water (dubbed “The Blob” by scientists) intersecting with a developing El Nino expected to be the largest on record, possibly eclipsing the '97-'98 event. Since late 2013, the Pacific Ocean from Alaska to Mexico has been significantly warmer than normal. While it has not yet been causally linked to warmer West Coast temperatures and drought, what we do know with certainty is that these warm waters are nutrient poor and have disrupted the marine food web in this portion of the Pacific Ocean; while waters closer to Asia have remained normal and unaffected by this phenomenon.

“The Blob” was first detected in fall 2013 by scientists at the University of Washington as a large circular body of water that did not cool as expected. During late 2013 and early 2014, an unusually persistent high pressure region blocked storms and winds from hitting the West Coast; which is thought to have caused lower than normal heat loss from sea water into the atmosphere, and lower than normal water circulation or upwelling whereby cooler, nutrient rich lower waters replace warmer, nutrient poor surface waters. These sea surface temperatures now measure +4.5°F warmer than usual. Water that normally measures 50-55°F is now pushing 60° or more. According to Dr. Weitkamp, this magnitude of variance is “gigantic.” While this could be considered an anomaly, scientists are more inclined to view it as part of a rapidly changing ecosystem. In other words, the new normal.

What are the biological responses to these record warm Pacific waters in 2014 and 2015? Varied. Certain species are thriving, others are declining, and still others are just behaving strangely. Unusual species for this region are showing up, such as sunfish, thresher sharks, skipjack tuna, and tropical copepods. Brown pelicans are not mating in normal numbers, and Cassin's auklets (small

birds) are washing ashore at more than 100 times their normal mortality.

Offshore species are observed closer to shore as the warm water forces them to seek food and refuge in the narrow band of cold water along the Oregon-Washington coastline, which remained the one exception to the blob. One anomaly in particular that the author can personally attest to is the sightings of humpback whales not only offshore of the Columbia River, but actually within the confines of the estuary. For the Buoy 10 season, we moor our boat in Warrenton and spend several August days in the bay. On two separate occasions we observed humpback whales breaching in the channel on the Oregon side below the Megler Bridge, most likely following the anchovies. Grey whales are often sighted from shore. But, humpbacks are not known for swimming close to shore. In addition, anchovies don't fare well in warm water, but through personal experience, I can state the anchovy return this year was epic, supporting the existence of this cold water band near shore. Every day our Lorrance fish finder would reveal bait balls that took up almost our entire 12" monitor screen. And, while not having any gear near the bottom in 50' of water, our lines would quiver con-

stantly as the anchovies swam past our gear. On the occasions where we would need to gut and clean our catch rather than filet them dockside, it was not uncommon to open up a salmon and have as many as eight or nine full, undigested anchovies in their stomach. See photo at right showing the head of a salmon and the contents of his stomach:

Additional ecosystem responses to this blob show toxic algal blooms have spread rapidly, periodically shutting down commercial and sport fishing offshore; and causing a commensurate spike in domoic acid production, leading to the curtailment of shellfish harvest in Oregon and Washington.

Native plankton is breeding later and in smaller numbers, while tropical plankton is showing up on the West Coast for the first time. The latter is not as fatty as the former, and forage fish have been passing on it. It would be as though strange and undesired foods were now stocked on your grocery shelves. Krill has also been largely absent this year.

Dr. Weitkamp concluded her presentation by stating the largest El Nino ever recorded is expected to peak this winter and persist through spring 2016, causing low stream flows and higher stream temperatures at least through this fall. The ocean was unfavorable for those salmon juveniles entering it in 2015, and indicators look bad for 2016, so those returning classes of adults three and four years hence could show much lower survival rates than normal. The operative word, though, is could. We won't



know for sure until we can observe them. But, the silver lining in all this is that the Warm Pacific Blob is expected to fade as El Nino peaks; and El Nino's have a shelf life, and this one is expected to leave our presence late next spring.



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Newsletter Deadlines

December issue -- November 18

January issue -- December 16

February issue--January 20

March Issue---February 17



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Membership Meetings

When:

First Wednesday of the month
7:00 P.M. Sharp

Where

Sam Cox Building,
Glenn Otto Park
1102 E Columbia River Highway
Troutdale, OR

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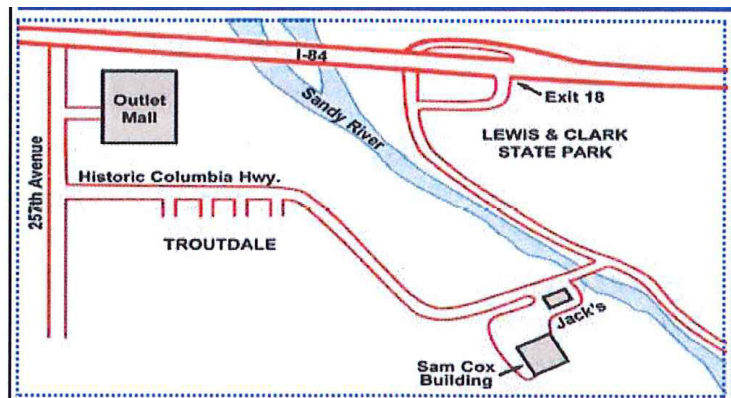
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At Our Meetings



Our members are our greatest asset. We welcome visitors to join the Sandy River Chapter, Association of Northwest Steelheaders.

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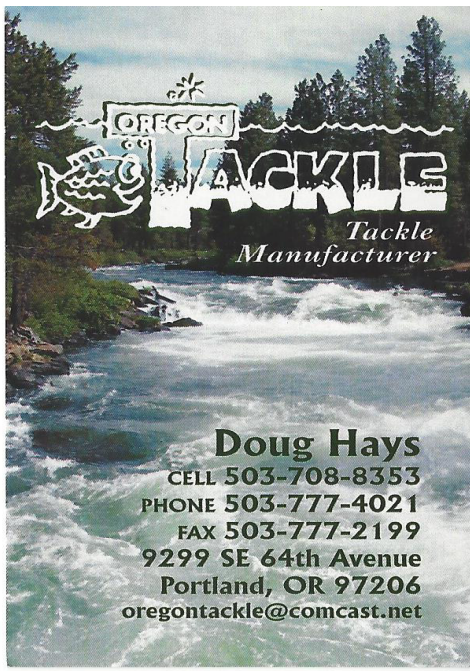


NOVEMBER

4 Chapter Meeting
7 Winter steelhead clinic
11 Board Meeting, Veterans Day
14 28th Hall of Fame Banquet

DECEMBER

2 Chapter Meeting
9 Board Meeting



Oregon Tackle Manufacturer

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Jeff Stoeger

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Winter Steelhead Clinic- Saturday Nov. 7 Sandy River Chapter

- Clinic will be held Saturday Nov. 7th I in the Sam Cox Building, Glenn Otto Park, and Troutdale. The subject will be especially oriented to those starting out for these great fish, and learning essential skills. The class will cover knot tying, selection of the proper rod and reels for various techniques, drift fishing, bobber and jig fishing, spinners and spoons.
- This will be another one of our clinics in partnership with ODFW.
- Cost for the general public is \$52. Cost for chapter volunteers is FREE.
- The clinic runs 9 AM to 5 PM. Setup time is 8 AM for all volunteers .
- All class attendees get a free lunch and snacks .
- Have friends want to attend ? Have them sign up with ODFW at -

http://www.dfw.state.or.us/education/outdoor_skills/online_registration.asp

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	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th colspan="4" style="text-align: left; padding: 5px;">Sandy River Chapter Volunteer Hour Report</th> <th style="width: 15%; padding: 5px;">Name:</th> <th style="width: 15%;"></th> <th style="width: 15%;"></th> <th style="width: 15%;"></th> <th style="width: 15%;"></th> <th style="width: 15%;"></th> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 15%; padding: 5px;">Event:</td> <td style="width: 15%;"></td> <td style="width: 15%;"></td> <td style="width: 15%;"></td> <td style="width: 15%;"></td> <td style="width: 15%;"></td> <td style="width: 15%;"></td> <td style="width: 15%;"></td> <td style="width: 15%;"></td> <td style="width: 15%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Date:</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Hours:</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Event:</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Date:</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Hours:</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Event:</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Date:</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Hours:</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Sandy River Chapter Volunteer Hour Report				Name:						Event:										Date:										Hours:										Event:										Date:										Hours:										Event:										Date:										Hours:									
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	<p><i>Remember to include your travel time to and from the event. If you have any questions about your how to report your hours, contact the event coordinator. Turn this form in at the monthly meeting or by e-mail to Robert Wisher (rjwisherstix@gmail.com).</i></p>																																																																																																				

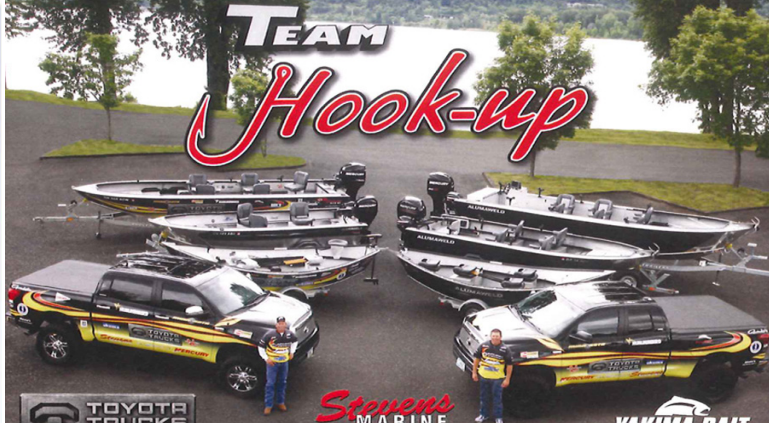
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TEAM Hook-up



Best Ever Tillamook Fish-Along By Norm Ritchie

The weather was great. The remodeled dorm is great. Most importantly the fishing was the best this event has ever seen. We had 22 members sign up but with last minute cancelations we ended up with 16 participants. Additional boaters for the event were Bill Hedlund, President of the North Coast Chapter and Association E.D. and fishing guide Bob Rees. Joli Ritchie and Kathryn Israelson were the non-fishing part of the group who spent their time (from about 3 am to nearly 9 pm) preparing meals and housekeeping at the Dorm. A few of us got an early start on Friday to get crab for the Saturday dinner and of course we did some

fishing while the crab traps soaked in the ocean. It was a productive way to spend that time as all of us (Art Israelson, Steve Rothenbucher, Robert Wisner, and Norm Ritchie) also each caught a salmon. Everyone met at the local pizza parlor Friday evening to have dinner and discuss the weekend fishing. We all returned to the dorm for a Tillamook fishing clinic, coordination for the next day's fishing, and making up bag lunches. Robert Wisner made apple turnovers which quickly disappeared into lunch sacks.

Everyone was up by 4:30 Saturday morning for a breakfast of egg and smoked ham English muffin sandwiches, fried potatoes, and fruit after which all the anglers headed to various boat ramps. We had five boats from the ocean bubble to the mouth of the Trask River in the upper bay. Five salmon were landed before ev-

eryone returned to the dorm to start the evening's dining experience with smoked salmon pate' and Dungeness crab. That was followed by a grilled salmon and flank steak dinner. Desert included a chocolate mousse cherry pie and strawberry shortcake. Everyone prepared their lunches for Sunday's fishing before heading to their bunks. Robert had prepared Chocolate Brownies to go along with the sandwiches and fresh fruit. We were a smaller group on Sunday but those who stayed enjoyed a pancake, sausage and fruit breakfast. Fishing was even better than on Saturday with at least seven fish landed. (Not everyone checked in before heading home after fishing.) There were at least 16 salmon landed for 16 participating anglers!



President Steve got his nose out of joint because Stevie Parsons got a bigger fish.



The Sunday Crew on Norm Ritchie's boat with the day's catch.



Happy Thanksgiving



A sunny evening with fresh Dungeness Crab.



Conversations stopped with the only sound being that of silverware tapping plates when everyone sat down to eat.

Our Next Clinic- all about steelhead

I coming up very soon! In fact it's Saturday November 7th, in our regular meeting place the Sam Cox Building at Glenn Otto Park, Troutdale.

Volunteers will get to learn right along with the ODFW students, and also will be in a drawing for a free fishing trip "somewhere in a boat" with Larry Palmer. Naturally their admission to the class will be free. Not signed up to volunteer already? Contact Larry Palmer at palmerlarryd@yahoo.com to do so.

Setup time for the clinic is 8AM, and the clinic lasts from 9-5.

Class will cover rods and reels, knot tying and drift fishing, bobbers and jigs, bobbers and worms, spinners and spoons. A copy of the newly improved class manual will be yours also, featuring rigging diagrams, knots, maps and smoking recipes. All attendees will get a free lunch and fresh baked snacks done by our food pros, Kathryn and Art Israelson and Robert Wisher.

All in all it's a hard deal to beat, especially for free. Sign up today! palmerlarryd@yahoo.com

A special kind of support

We all read Bill Monroe's column in the Oregonian. There's always useful information, and naturally every outdoor group wants to get a mention in it. I imagine he receives dozens of requests a month for that privilege. I just want to say "Thanks" to Bill for again putting news of our fishing clinic in his column. It really helps to direct potential students to them and help the clinic fill up.

Support such as this is truly priceless and deserves a bit of recognition, so thanks again Bill!

Larry Palmer

In appreciation for those members who are always there when needed, this weekend was for them. Once again under the guidance of Norm Ritchie's organization skills, securing meeting space, lodging as well as boats and boating assignments. The faithful kitchen crew Jolie Ritchie, Kathryn & Art Israelson, planning menus, collecting ingredients and preparing Breakfast (3:00AM), Lunches & Dinner. Desserts for meals prepared & baked by Robert Wisher.

Friday started off with Norm at the helm accompanied by Steve Rothenbucher & Robert Wisher along with six well baited Crab Pots. Shad & Salmon Heads were on the menu for the Crabs. Fishing poles were also included in the search for ingredients for the Saturday Feast. Crab Pots were dropped near the West Channel in the Bay due to rough bar conditions in the morning. While the pots were left to do their thing the crew set off for more stimulating action.

As the day proceeded and the pots were pulled, emptied and relocated outside the South Jetty. Two large Coho's and 36 very healthy looking Crabs were secured for the Saturday Feast. That afternoon the crabs were processed by Norm and volunteers who had arrived during the day. The kitchen crew was already making preparations for tomorrow's Breakfast and lunches. Robert was busy baking fresh Apple Turnovers to go with Ice Cream for the evening dessert after pizza. Pumpkin Chocolate Chip & Walnut cookies as well as Triple Chocolate Brownies for the Saturday & Sunday Lunches were also being baked at this time.

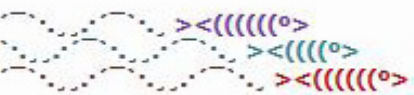
Jolie & Kathryn headed out to

make arrangement at the Pizza Parlor approx. 5:30, Pizza was being served shortly after 6:30. On return to the Hall at Tillamook Fair Grounds, Norm held a Seminar on how to rig-up and fish Tillamook Bay.

Saturday early five boat teams set out in hot pursuit of the catch. Team one was headed up by Norm. Team two at the helm Ron Cheswick. Team three guided by Mike Myrick. Team four under the guidance of Ron Johnston. Team five Bill Hedland President of the Coast chapter guided this team. Eight Salmon and nineteen Crabs were brought in by their worthy efforts. Stevie Parsons brought in the King at over thirty pounds. Steve Rothenbucher lost his head over the disparity in size compared to Stevie's. His fish had a tag located in the head, the fish counter performed a frontal Lobotomy on his fish, which made it look almost headless.

Sunday found us going out with Norm who included James Stengle, Steve & Robert. With Norm's guidance these hardy souls collected four more Salmon which two of them were over 25 pounds by midafternoon.

All toll for the outing 16 Salmon, 20 hardy souls and 55 very large Crabs. Our own ART ISRAELSON, sold \$700.00 in BOAT & TRIP TICKETS in Garibaldi at the boat launch while fishermen waited in line to launch. WELL DONE ART... by Robert wisher

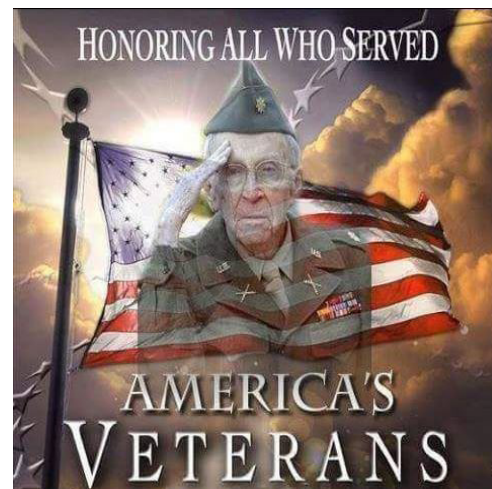


This month's program - Bobber Fishing

Learn hands-on about the subtle but effective "ways of the bobber" from chapter experts. Bobbers can be used for everything from 40 lb. Chinook to 8 lb. Steelhead, and of course for trout and pan fish too.

This month we'll be focusing on those techniques for Chinook and Steelhead, **so get out your bobber gear and rods and bring them to the meeting.** We'll go over what you have, help you rig it up properly and make any needed adjustments to put you on the right track. The bite may be light, but often the fish aren't, so learn how and go get hooked up! Please bring to the upcoming bobber oriented meeting-

- Bobbers
- 20-30# Dacron line for line stops or the rubbery kind
- Small beads for line stops
- 3/0-5/0 hooks
- 30-40# leader
- Fishing fluffy yarn
- 1/4" hollow core lead or in-line weights
- Barrel Swivels
- The rod and reel you intend to use



**Sandy River Chapter
Association of
NW Steelheaders**



In
conjunction
with



**Want to catch fish like this?
Learn how at our “How To” Steelhead clinic!**

**9 AM-5 PM, Saturday November 7th at the Sam Cox Bldg., Glenn Otto Park,
Troutdale , 1102 East Columbia River Highway**



Subjects covered

- Choosing the right rod and reel
- Drift fishing
- Knot tying and hook sharpening
- Bobber fishing
- Using spinners and spoons
- Rigging baits and how to cure baits
- Where to go
- **On stream fish along the following week!**

**Register for this clinic online at the ODFW website
http://www.odfwcalendar.com/?tribe_events=summer-steelhead-workshop-2-2
Or contact Larry Palmer at 503-286-2093**

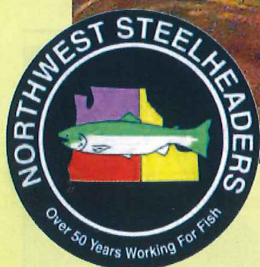
**Adult Steelhead Fishing Workshop
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(Includes 2 bottles of wine and a framed art print)
- ☐ Other: ___ Seats - \$___

Regular Pricing (After November 1st)

- ☐ 1 seat - \$70
- ☐ Half Table of 5 seats - \$300
- ☐ Table of 10 seats - \$600
- ☐ Premium table of 10 seats - \$700
(Includes 2 bottles of wine and a framed art print)
- ☐ Other: ___ Seats - \$___

NAME

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EXP. DATE

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