



**Sandy River Chapter**

**November 2021**

*The Association of NW Steelheaders Anglers is dedicated to enhancing and protecting fisheries and their habitats for today and the future.*




**Wednesday November 3, 2021 - 7pm** - Sam Cox building, Glenn Otto Community Park in Troutdale, Oregon. The chapter has scheduled our first in person meeting since Covid restrictions began. Our guest speaker is ***Dave Harding of Dave's Tangle free weights***. Dave plans on sharing his new line of stick weights and inline weights. This meeting is MASK REQUIRED no exceptions. Please make sure you have your mask. So, we hope to see you at this meeting and for you to share your fish stories. Dave will be also selling his weights at the meeting.

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## **New Sandy River Chapter Facebook Group**

We invite you to visit the new Sandy River Chapter Facebook Group at "**Sandy River Chapter NW Steelheaders**" - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/451895135882897> . Our previous Facebook page did not permit posting by anyone but the Administrator. The move to a "Group" is for public viewing, meaning anyone can visit, like, and follow. As set up, being a "joined" member only adds the ability to post to the site.

Even as a non-joined visitor you can suggest postings through "Messenger" (  Logo in upper right section of home page) at any time and we will review your input for publishing.

We are trying to initially keep those with "joined" membership to this Facebook group to current ANWS members. This is due to the difficulty in managing large numbers of participants, and our need to ensure joiners follow the rules and regulations of the Sandy River Chapter and the ANWS related to fishing conservation.

If you are not already a member of the ANWS consider joining for as little as \$30.00 per year. We would be happy to have you as a member and you can join the Association of NW Steelheaders at : <https://nwsteelheaders.org/get-involved/membership/> . Any further questions, please ask.

Note: There will be redundancies between the Chapter Newsletter and our Facebook Group page in our attempt to share items to followers of both. Due to limited space in our Newsletter there may also be more posts on the Facebook group page than in the Newsletter.

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# Federal rule gives states, tribes flexibility to kill cormorants

- By Katie Frankowicz, The Astorian
- Dec 23, 2020
- [https://www.dailyastorian.com/news/local/federal-rule-gives-states-tribes-flexibility-to-kill-cormorants/article\\_512210ec-452b-11eb-9971-1b512d5a0a44.html?fbclid=IwAR23\\_49ETA0Q\\_yKtm6wvzTrL6hthSO8xtqaAlkQgmjFMNiDS4\\_KrujD1MYU](https://www.dailyastorian.com/news/local/federal-rule-gives-states-tribes-flexibility-to-kill-cormorants/article_512210ec-452b-11eb-9971-1b512d5a0a44.html?fbclid=IwAR23_49ETA0Q_yKtm6wvzTrL6hthSO8xtqaAlkQgmjFMNiDS4_KrujD1MYU)

Cormorants perched on the Astoria Bridge.  
Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

A new federal rule gives states and tribes greater flexibility to kill double-crested cormorants for management purposes.

Under the new rule, up to 121,504 double-crested cormorants may be killed per year nationally in areas under the jurisdiction of state and federally recognized tribal wildlife agencies that may have been off limits before. Conservation groups worry about the overall impact to the population. Others say the permit is necessary to deal with problem birds and protect state resources and salmon.

Agencies interested in the permit must show they tried other, nonlethal methods first. The permit will allow the fish-eating birds to be killed at sites in the 48 states where cormorants are shown to pose a danger to endangered or threatened species, where they impact health and human safety or are damaging state or tribal property and assets, among others factors.



“The Trump administration is providing tools under this coordinated approach for managing conflicts and economic damage associated with double-crested cormorants while minimizing the regulatory burden on federal, tribal and state agencies and individual citizens,” Aurelia Skipwith, the director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, said in a statement.

“This special permit will help minimize human-wildlife conflicts while maintaining sustainable cormorant populations as required by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act,” she added.

In comments the Fish and Wildlife Service received on its proposal earlier this year, some organizations and state agencies suggested the model the federal government used to evaluate allowable annual take was politically driven and not based on science.

“Similarly, states also commented that regional and continental cormorant populations should be managed sustainably and adaptively, potentially at lower levels,” the Fish and Wildlife Service noted in a summary of the public comments.

The agency had earlier determined it could allow upward of 160,000 birds to be taken nationally, but went with a lower number as a precaution.

Along with proponents of the new rule, the agency also argued that research demonstrates “cormorants can negatively impact fish at certain locations and times, thus there has been a demand among fisheries biologists for management options.”

### **Five-year review**

Under the new rule, the agency will conduct a five-year review of the take limit — something others voiced concerns about in their public comments, saying such reviews should happen more frequently.

On the North Coast, cormorant management has been a fraught undertaking. New developments continue to emerge following intensive and lethal federal management of a colony that nested seasonally on an island near the mouth of the Columbia River.

After the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began shooting adult double-crested cormorants and destroying nests on Oregon’s East Sand Island in 2015, thousands of birds abandoned their nests multiple times and flocked to the Astoria Bridge.

This year, state biologists recorded around 5,000 breeding pairs nesting on the bridge — up from roughly 3,542 in 2019, which itself was already a significant increase from the 333 pairs noted annually in prior years.

The Army Corps has argued that the East Sand Island colony, once the largest in North America, threatened runs of young endangered and threatened salmon and steelhead. However, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife now estimates that the growing bridge colony may have more of an impact on salmon mortality than the former East Sand Island colony did.

The number of birds nesting on the bridge also complicates federally required inspections of the structure. The proliferation of nests and the accumulation of bird guano make it difficult for inspectors to examine the bridge.

### **Hazing**

The state attempted to haze birds off the bridge ahead of inspections earlier this year to mixed results. A depredation permit from the Fish and Wildlife Service allows the Oregon Department of Transportation to take up to 1,500 nests from the bridge, but as the colony swells, it could be a challenging and “perhaps unlikely task” to conduct inspections without taking more nests than permitted, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife staff concluded in a report to the state fish and wildlife commission.

They recommended implementing a hazing plan to dissuade birds before they had an opportunity to nest. Cormorants are seasonal visitors to the the Columbia River estuary. The hazing could also provide an opportunity to attract the birds back to their abandoned colony on East Sand Island, state staff noted, though such a plan may be cost-prohibitive.

This year, the state approached the Army Corps and asked the agency to attempt to attract cormorants back to East Sand Island while bridge inspections were underway and again during bridge maintenance scheduled to begin next year. The Army Corps declined to help.

“Further, the Corps has previously stated it has no authority to address the cormorant issue on (the Astoria Bridge) in general and thus could not assist (the Oregon Department of Transportation) to attempt to push cormorants back to East Sand Island,” a fish and wildlife report from earlier this year states.

“The available data suggest moving double-crested cormorants back to East Sand Island would appreciably reduce cormorant consumption of federal and state (Endangered Species Act)-listed salmonids, the primary goal of the original federal management plan for East Sand Island,” the report continues.

With the cormorant dispersal to the bridge, fish and wildlife staff said they estimated the original federal plan “may have resulted in no change or even an increase in cormorant consumption of salmonids in the Columbia River estuary.”

The state hopes to implement a hazing plan this year ahead of the nesting season. Details have yet to be finalized. The new permit would not provide any additional tools, but may allow for a higher nest take if necessary, said James Lawonn, a biologist in charge of avian predation for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. Hazing, however, is the department’s preferred approach for now.

“We would rather not have to take any birds,” Lawonn said. “Best practices are to try to reduce take as much as you can and we stand behind that. We don’t want to be taking birds if we don’t have to.”

The Army Corps is no longer conducting any active cormorant management on East Sand Island, but has provided nesting habitat that could support approximately 6,000 nesting pairs of cormorants.

The agency continues to monitor the island using Civil Air Patrol photos.

According to a spokesman for the agency, those photos have shown a “mostly empty island with occasional eagles and gulls scavenging on the tidal flats.”



# Reflecting on this Year's Accomplishments

**By Tamsin Fleming, Operations Coordinator**

October 25, 2021

**W**ith your nose to the grindstone, it's easy to lose track of the progress you've made. As we work toward the next goal and solving the next problem, it is important to look back on what we have already accomplished in the past year. Working hard to advocate for conservation efforts that have meaningful impacts on the angling community and our access to fishing isn't easy, but when progress is made it's incredibly rewarding.



Our main priority has always been creating angling opportunities for everyone. Now, more than ever, that priority hinges on restoring salmon and steelhead populations to the healthy, abundant runs that historically swam in Pacific Northwest rivers. We believe that restoring the Snake River to its former glory will be the pivotal shift that allows salmon and steelhead to flourish once more. When wild populations have fully rebounded from their nose-dive, angling opportunities will rebound with them. Here are some of our accomplishments and on-going campaigns that get anglers closer to abundant fish runs and increased angling access:

Hosting our Rally for the River gained national attention by showcasing the devastation to our salmon runs since building the four lower Snake River dams. It was a great way to get out on the Willamette River to educate Portlanders about the importance of salmon and steelhead to the Pacific Northwest. The impact of declining salmon runs are

felt all over the region, prompting rallies with counterparts from Seattle, Washington to Boise, Idaho. While the dams provide irrigation, energy and transportation for goods, there are alternatives that are less costly to our salmon, steelhead, and the ecological integrity of the region that should be considered.



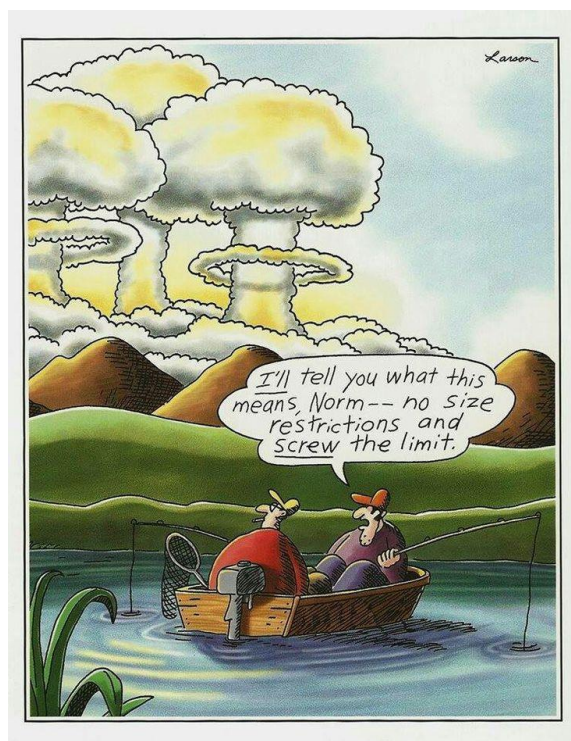
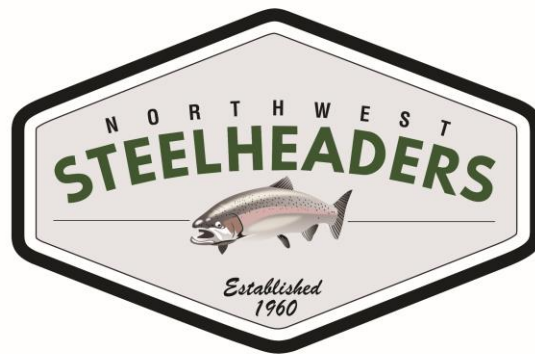
*Photograph from our Rally for the River*

A key win for the Northwest Steelheaders came from amending the Columbia River endorsement bill, [SB59A](#). This amendment incentivizes the commitment to keep non-tribal commercial gill nets off the mainstem of the lower Columbia River by removing the Endorsement Fee from angler license holders if the ODFW Commission places them back on the river. Despite the fact the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission has broken its agreement with Oregon and allowed non-treaty gillnets back on the Columbia River, if Oregon deviates from the [Columbia River Fisheries Policy Reform package](#), anglers will be refunded. We at the Northwest Steelheaders consider this to be a real win for recreational anglers as it motivates the ODFW commission to act in the best interest of salmon, steelhead and the angling community by keeping non-treaty gill nets off the Columbia River.

Earlier this year, the incredible work of Northwest Steelheaders volunteers and organizational leaders, Tim Lenihan and Bob Olson, to champion [SB 320](#) finally paid off. Their incredible leadership advocating to allow group fishing licenses for nonprofits serving veterans will significantly reduce the cost barrier that can discourage people from

getting involved in the angling community. By eliminating the need for many veterans and active-duty military to purchase the cost of an individual [Oregon fishing license](#), which can cost more than \$100 for out-of-state visitors. Our events are many veterans first experience fishing. They allow veterans to learn a new skill while fostering a sense of community among service members. By reducing the financial burden to angling, we'll be able to host events that reach a wider range of veterans and invite those who wouldn't have been able to get involved in the angling community otherwise.

While calling attention to the importance of restoring and conserving our salmon and steelhead populations is important, it means nothing without action. That is why we will continue working just as hard to encourage our legislators to come together on the issues we care about most, that will make the biggest difference for wild fish populations and for recreational angling opportunities. We are proud of our accomplishments over the past year and we are excited at all that is to come. A future with increased fishing seasons is not out of reach, and we are here to make sure that we reach it.





## Sandy Chapter Board Members

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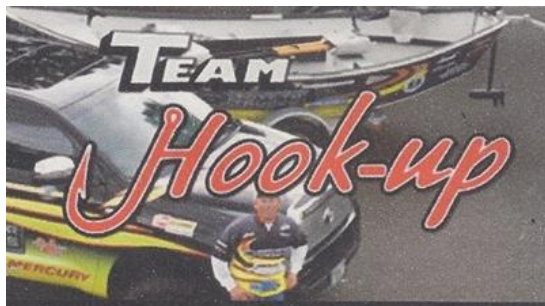
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Co-President	Greg Reed	503-869-1795
Vice President	Jeff Boughton	
Secretary	Terri Boughton	503-307-2546
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<b>River Cleanups</b>	<b>Vacant</b>	-
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Angler Education	Jim Cathcart	503-287-9616

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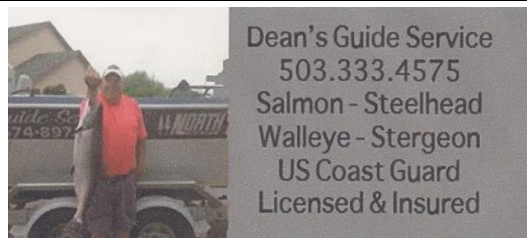
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