

Oregon Sea Grant's Response to COVID-19



Photo by Tiffany Woods

As the coronavirus forces people to stay at home and businesses to alter their operations, Oregon Sea Grant continues serving Oregonians. We share the following examples of how we are adapting to this new reality.

Survey assesses impact of COVID-19 on Oregon's seafood industry



Photo by Amanda Gladics

Oregon Sea Grant (OSG) [surveyed](#) 131 seafood harvesters, processors and retailers in April and May 2020 to understand how the pandemic was affecting them. Nearly everyone said they or their business had been impacted. When asked what would help them recover, business owners and managers most frequently said monetary assistance, followed by help with reaching new markets. Crew members and workers most often said they needed resources on filing for unemployment. OSG has used [the findings](#) to support the state's seafood industry amid the pandemic. Learn more about those efforts in this [video](#).

Campaign encourages consumers to support Oregon fishermen

OSG, the Oregon Department of Agriculture and Oregon's seafood industry [developed an initiative](#) called [Eat Oregon Seafood](#) to encourage people to buy and prepare locally caught seafood. In addition to launching a social media campaign, the partners created a website that includes [a map](#) of where to buy seafood from over 100 businesses in Oregon and Washington. It also features [recipes](#) from renowned Oregon chefs as well as facts and videos about Oregon seafood and how it's caught and processed. The website received an honorable mention from the AVA Digital Awards. The director of the Oregon State University Extension Service recognized the OSG team for its work in supporting Oregon's seafood industry.



Photo by Tiffany Woods



Photo by Amanda Gladics

First-aid training for fishermen goes partially online

OSG converted part of its [first-aid training for fishermen](#) into a live, online format. The course includes hands-on simulations, CPR training and a final exam. The in-person portion took place in the Oregon towns of Newport and Warrenton and in Westport, Washington, between October 2020 and January 2021. Thirty people have completed the hybrid course.

Shop at the Dock goes virtual

In lieu of leading OSG's planned Shop at the Dock tours in Garibaldi in April and May 2020, OSG created [10 videos](#), which included interviews with the [landing supervisor](#) at Fishpeople Seafood Market and the [owner of a seafood retailer](#). OSG also spoke with a Garibaldi commercial fisherman (watch [part 1](#) and [part 2](#) of that interview) and a representative of Food Roots (watch [part 1](#) and [part 2](#)). The series concluded with an interview with the [co-owner of the Garibaldi Portside Bistro](#), who offered ideas for cooking seafood at home. As of February 2021, the videos had been liked or shared more than 1,000 times on Facebook and had reached about 18,500 people, compared to the nearly 150 people who attended the in-person tours in Garibaldi in 2019.



Photo by Trav Williams/Broken Banjo Photography



Photo by Kimberly Jacobsen

Video teaches people how to can tuna

OSG and the Oregon State University Extension Service in Clackamas County created a [12-minute video](#) on [how to can tuna at home](#). Usually in the fall, Extension staff and volunteers in Clackamas County teach a five-hour workshop that combines discussion and hands-on canning. A video was an opportunity to reach a broader audience. As of February 2021, the online tutorial had been viewed about 700 times.

Online conference addresses coastal topics

OSG converted its annual [State of the Coast conference](#) into a free online format, which resulted in 500 people registering. Oregon Sea Grant's Leigh Torres gave the keynote speech about her lab's research on gray whales off Oregon. Others spoke on [a range of topics](#), including renewable marine energy, contaminants in coastal waters, COVID-19 on the coast, ocean acidification and hypoxia, and research on beach grass. The event included recorded presentations by students from Oregon State University, Portland State University, the University of Oregon, Reed College and the University of Miami. They talked about their research and coastal-inspired art. The conference also featured live Q&As with students.



Photo taken by Leigh Torres under NOAA/NMFS research permit 21678



Photo by Katrina Thomas

Home-schoolers connect via Zoom

OSG converted its fall 2020 [home-school day](#) for families into an online format spread out over five days, with each day aimed at a different age group. Fifty-six kids and 37 adults participated. They learned how researchers identify orcas, study plankton, monitor changing sea levels, and use underwater microphones to identify sounds of the sea. OSG mailed families instructions and supplies so they could participate in hands-on activities during the webinars.

Libraries distribute free science activity bags to kids

Libraries in Lincoln County distributed about 1,000 free bags of [science activities for kids](#), thanks to a grant provided by Georgia-Pacific to the Oregon Coast STEM Hub. OSG staff, who coordinate STEM Hub activities, stuffed the bags with supplies and [instructions](#), which were in English and Spanish. The activities teach kids to think critically and to observe, make, draw and deconstruct things.

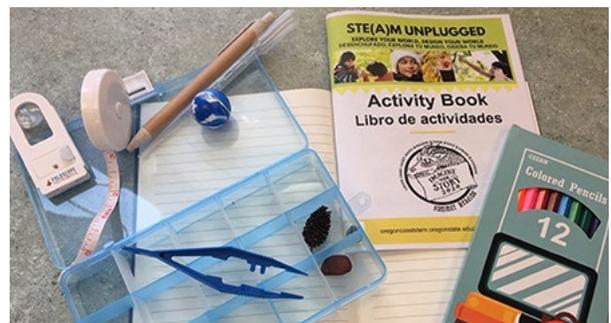


Photo by Carol Rasmussen Schramm



Photo by Lynn Ketchum

Webinars introduce students to careers in marine science

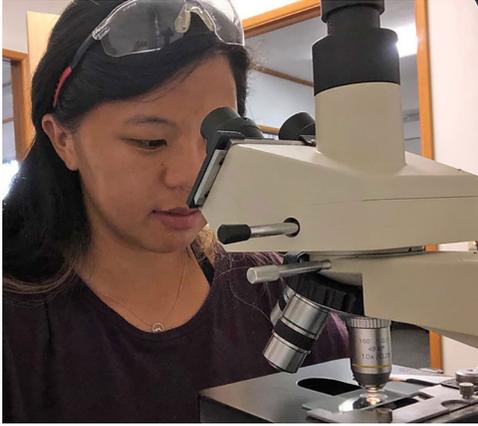
OSG's marine education team converted its in-person career day, traditionally held once in the spring and again in the fall, into live webinars in 2020. Aimed at students in grades 6-12, [the webinars](#) were led by 35 marine science professionals and graduate students who talked about their research, travels and career and academic paths. Over 650 people attended the webinars, with many watching more than one. An in-person career day typically reaches 30-60 people.

Summer camps pivot to mix of online and in-person activities

OSG added an online component to its in-person [day camps](#) in 2020, allowing it to connect with about 70 kids ages 8-18 across the United States, 61 of whom were from Oregon. OSG mailed participants materials and instructions for activities, which included making a foil boat, a hydraulic device and models of plankton. OSG also led physically distanced [activities on the beach](#) where families explored tide pools, searched for mole crabs and measured ocean currents.



Photo by Michelle Stowell



Modified internships provide job skills

OSG made eight of its 10 paid [Summer Scholars internships](#) in 2020 completely remote. Interns' duties included assessing how visitors perceive Oregon's marine reserves, collecting burrowing shrimp, coordinating science camps at an estuary, and translating into Spanish outreach documents on shellfish and estuarine ecology. OSG's eight [sustainability internships](#) were a mix of on-site and online arrangements, with safety protocols in place for the internships that were in person. Interns worked for hosts that included Good Clean Love, Defunkify and Oregon Soap Co. [One intern](#) was named student of the year by the National Pollution Prevention Roundtable for her

work in creating a plan to reduce energy and water use at Hood River's Tofurky. [Another intern](#) was offered a job at Pacific Seafood because she gave the winning presentation in a contest with 20 other interns at the company. [A third intern](#) became the head of business operations at Port Orford Sustainable Seafood thanks to his internship.

Online resources help tour guides enhance customers' experiences

Oregon's coastal tourism industry has taken a hit as people stay home amid COVID-19. Although people are not traveling as much, it's still important for tour guides to develop their professional skills for when tourism picks up. With this in mind, OSG has been offering webinars for tour guides on topics that have included fishing regulations, liability insurance, interpretive skills and social media. OSG also eliminated the cost of its online [Guide and Outfitters Recognized Professional training](#). Fifty-one people completed the entire four-part course in 2020. Content includes information about marketing, group management and Oregon's natural attractions and timber, dairy and fishing industries. Additionally, participants learn to identify 101 plants and animals. OSG also created a free, online, 30-minute [customer service training](#) for workers at restaurants, hotels, tour guide companies and other hospitality businesses.



Photo by Justin Myers