

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.

Campaign encourages consumers to support Oregon fishermen



Photo by Tiffany Woods

The Oregon Department of Agriculture, Oregon's seafood industry and Oregon Sea Grant launched an initiative called [#EatOregonSeafood](#) to encourage people to buy and prepare locally caught seafood. The campaign is in response to restaurant closures, limited commercial markets and a steep reduction in seafood sales. The partners created a website called [Eat Oregon Seafood](#) that provides information on where to buy locally caught seafood from more than 100 businesses in Oregon and Washington, including at grocery stores and seafood markets and directly from fishermen. It also features recipes from renowned Oregon chefs and facts and videos about Oregon seafood and how it's harvested and processed.

Remote internships provide job skills

Oregon Sea Grant altered plans for some of its [summer 2020 internships](#) and made seven completely remote. With input from hosts, including state agencies such as the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and businesses such as Pacific Seafood, these professional development opportunities were adapted to respond to the pandemic but still provide critical experiences and skill development. Participants in the virtual internships are performing a range of duties, including assessing how visitors perceive Oregon's marine reserves and analyzing data on ocean acidification. Thanks to the flexibility of hosts and the determination of interns, [another 10 internships](#) are occurring on-site. Notable projects address pollution prevention and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's [Safer Choice](#) designation for chemical products made by Oregon businesses.



Photo by Brooke McIntyre

Webinars introduce students to careers in marine science



Photo by Lynn Ketchum

Oregon Sea Grant's marine education team converted its Careers in Science Investigation (CSI) day into [nine webinars](#) instead of holding the event in person, as it had done in previous years. Aimed at students in grades 6-12, the live webinars were led by 19 marine science professionals who talked about their research, travels and career and academic paths. There were over 375 registrations for the webinars. In-person CSI events typically only reach 30-60 individuals. One parent wrote, "Thank you so much for conducting these webinars! My daughter has attended each webinar you've put on in this series. It's so great for her to hear about the real-world careers for scientists!!"

Shop at the Dock goes virtual

In lieu of leading Oregon Sea Grant's planned Shop at the Dock tours in Garibaldi in April and May 2020, an OSG fisheries Extension agent created [10 videos](#). These included an introduction to Shop at the Dock, which has traditionally offered tours of docks and seafood markets to teach the public how seafood is caught and where to buy it. The videos also featured information about [seafood safety amid COVID-19](#), [what Oregon seafood was in season](#) and [where to buy it in Tillamook County](#). The Extension agent also interviewed the [landing supervisor at Fishpeople Seafood Market](#), the [owner of a seafood retailer](#) and a Garibaldi commercial fisherman (watch [part 1](#) and [part 2](#) of that interview). In another video, the local food programs coordinator for Food Roots spoke about adaptations the nonprofit made during COVID-19 to provide seafood in its FarmTable store (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 July 2020, the videos had been liked or shared more than 800 times on social media and had reached over 14,500 people, which is much more than the nearly 150 people who attended the in-person tours in Garibaldi in 2019.



Photo by Trav Williams/Broken Banjo Photography

Online training helps tour guides enhance customers' experiences



Photo by Justin Myers

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, Oregon Sea Grant made its online [Guide and Outfitters Recognized Professional \(GORP\) training program](#) free and added webinars to the training. Over 90 individuals, including international guides, enrolled in the training in spring 2020. Participants came away with knowledge about best practices for customer service and managing groups and risks. They also learned about Oregon's coastal towns, rivers and mountains and its timber, dairy and fishing industries. Additionally, they learned to identify 100 plants and animals. The instruction is based off of [voluntary guidelines set by the Adventure Travel Trade Association](#).