



Word on the Waves

a publication of the Fisheries Observation Science Program at the Northwest Fisheries Science Center

Observer Spotlight:

Morgan Golding

Observing since 2012
Currently stationed in Newport, OR

Observers “find” observing in various way: websites, job fairs, word-of-mouth. For Morgan Golding, the discovery came via the two mast tall ship, *SSV Robert C. Seamens*.

Morgan is a Brookings, OR native. She attended Oregon State University, earning a B.S. in Marine Biology. Her life took a pivotal turn during her senior year when she was accepted into the Woods Hole, Massachusetts’ Sea Semester program. This opportunity resulted in her first trip at sea. She spent 39 days aboard the *Seamens* sailing from San Diego to Hawaii. By the time she disembarked, Morgan was interested in working at sea.



Flash forward a few months to Newport, OR where Morgan took a land job post-graduation. Knowing she was a marine biologist, a co-worker introduced her to an observer. She was impressed by the observer’s enthusiasm and passion for the job. That it involved working with fish cinched it. She was in.

Morgan has spent the last three years on the ocean observing. She still gets a rush identifying fish, particularly those she hasn’t seen. Her favorites are rockfish, but “any new species gets me excited.” She’s a big fan of nearshore hook and line trips: “Its good old rod and reel fishing. They’re usually out hunting rockfish and lingcod which I love to see.” She finds the live-fish fishery off southern Oregon fascinating which increases these trips’ appeal. The hands-on aspect of this sector “reminds (her) of fishing off the jetty as a kid with (her) dad.”

When not observing, Morgan’s a self-proclaimed “crafting homebody.” Knitting, sketching, painting, beading, these hobbies absorb her time at home. Her home office doubles as a craft supply cornucopia. She’s also an accomplished cook, whose recent endeavors extend to canning and fermenting.



From the Program

Hello Observers –

It’s hard to believe 2015 is over. As usual, the year flew by. We’re still collecting year-end totals but it was a busy year. All thanks to you.

As program manager, I’m asked a lot of questions. “How does observer data get used?” is probably the one I answer most frequently, particularly from observers. The easy answer is to list out all our products: bycatch reports, management products and protected species reports. We produce these annually or biennially. They’re used by the Pacific Fisheries Management Council (PFMC) and other fisheries management groups to make decisions on quotas, species populations, and regulations for the commercial industry.

I also point to the data’s use by groundfish and protected species stock assessors. Their assessments of different stocks rely on observer data, particularly discard information. Accurate stock assessments are crucial to the responsible management of our nation’s fisheries, both to keep fishermen on the water and healthy stocks for the future.

However, these reports and the stock assessments aren’t the whole story. Observer data goes everywhere. We’re constantly responding to data requests from researchers, state and federal organizations, university students and other fish-minded organizations. It’s being used in electronic monitoring development, for quota accounting in the IFQ program and to help our NOAA surveys answer key

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Spotted Batfish Sighting

Corey Mead, AOI Observer • Stationed in Morro Bay

Observer Corey Mead had the good fortune to see a rare Spotted Batfish. Below is his account of the encounter.

It was a warm 75 degree day, flat calm sea's and fishing was good (over 150lb of California halibut caught so far!). As I sorted through the pile of haul #6, monotony sets in: skate, crab, flatfish, skate, crab, flatfish...then I see something I've never seen before. "Say hello to my little friend," I say to myself realizing I will need my ID books for this one. The captain notes that he has never seen anything like it in his net before, as well.

The fish is compressed, seems to be covered in little spikes, and looks like it walks on its pelvic fins. I take a couple quick photos and measurements and send him/her back into the deep blue to fight another day.

This mystery fish was easily identified as a Spotted Batfish, 17cm and 0.3lbs. The *Miller Guide to the Coastal Marine Fishes of California* states it's rare and that it's northern range is Pt. Conception. This fish was caught approximately 75 miles north of there. Maybe the "El Nino" brought it up the line a bit.

It truly is exciting to ID something new. It reaffirms our role as on-board fisheries observers and validates what we do.

If you have any questions for Corey, please let Rebecca Hoch know (rebecca.hoch@noaa.gov) and she'll help you connect with him.



Featured Observer - continued

tation. She enjoys hiking and exploring, as well, although she confesses the prospect of field sketching is usually what gets her out the door.

Morgan has one thing on her bucket list: international travel. She's never been out of the country. Egypt, Scotland, Ireland and a trip around the Mediterranean top her wish list. She'd also like to try roller derby, but only if she has a land job.

Morgan's passion for her job bubbles out of her. "I'm living my dream job working with fish," she says.

We're glad your dream job has you working with the Fisheries Observation Science program, Morgan. We're mighty lucky to have you. Thank you for your hard work, attention to detail and ongoing enthusiasm. It's greatly appreciated.

From The Program - continued

questions. Observer data is absolutely crucial to fisheries management.

I know it's difficult to maintain enthusiasm, energy and excellence when the fruits of your labor aren't on the front page, but rest assured that you and your work are a key component to NOAA's mission. You're the frontline, the eyes and the ears on the ocean. The science wouldn't happen without you. Fisheries management wouldn't happen without you. Thank you.

I'm excited for 2016. We have big projects in the works to help make your job more efficient and streamline procedures. Most importantly, we'll continue to safeguard our fisheries by collecting the data necessary to help responsibly manage our fisheries.

As always, thank you for your effort and dedication to our work and our program. Best wishes for the New Year!

Sincerely,



From the Galley

John LaFargue, CA Coordinator



The rains have come. Up and down our coast, mushrooms are popping up. Different species will flush through the winter, spring and, in a few secret spots, well into the summer.

The “culture” of mushroom hunters is diverse. The college students fresh out of mycology courses eager to find something they “know” they can eat. The hunter/gather/fisher type who grew up gathering mushrooms and value sourcing their own

food. Last but not least, the super-discreet, ethnic contingency from all over the world. What do they all have in common? Secrecy. Secrecy when it comes to their mushroom spots. Something to remember: if someone is kind enough to show you a key spot. Be respectful. Don't share the information.

I've run into many types of pickers while rooting around in the duff and undergrowth. On multiple occasions in Monterey, I smelled cigar smoke and heard an accordion deep in the woods. I eventually ran into the elderly musician who was originally from Lithuania. We exchanged pleasantries and started the inevitable talk of mushrooms. He told me he enjoyed nothing more than strolling through the pines playing music and smoking a cigar while his family picked boletes. I have to agree with him - at least on the strolling through the woods part. Foraging for wild mushrooms is the adult version of an Easter egg hunting. Not as easy as it sounds.

If you decide to try identifying mushrooms, have a good mushroom key. David Arora's *Mushrooms Demystified* is one of the best for the West coast. His pocket guide. *All the Rain Promises and More*, is also very useful and entertaining. Besides, who doesn't need more practice using a dichotomous key?

Once you discover where a certain mushroom species grows, you can return year after year and reap the benefits. You may also determine habitat patterns particular species prefer. Mushrooms are like many fish species in that they prefer specific habitat. Is it

any wonder fishermen and observers, are drawn to this pastime?

As a child, I remember roaming the coastal ranges behind Santa Barbara and in Big Sur looking for chanterelles. I especially remember the smell of chanterelles my mother sautéed after a huge harvest. Whenever I sautee chanterelles with a cast iron skillet, the first whiff transports me back to those simpler times.

One of my favorite mushroom recipes is loosely based on a dish I had at Toro Bravo in Portland, OR. Let me know what you think.

Chanterelles in Sherry Cream

- 2 slices good rustic bread
- 3-4 T butter
- 3 cloves garlic sliced thinly
- 5-6 oz. sliced chanterelles or other wild mushrooms
- 1-2 T olive oil
- 3 T sherry, preferable cream sherry or other sweet sherry
- 3 T cream
- 1T fresh thyme or parsley
- Juice of a quarter lemon
- Salt and pepper



Combine a tablespoon butter and a little olive oil in a skillet over medium high heat. Add sliced garlic for 30 seconds. Add sliced mushrooms and a little salt and pepper. Stir for a few minutes, until they release their moisture.

While the mushrooms are cooking, butter both sides of the bread and char on grill or brown in skillet. Set aside on warm plate.

Reduce the heat to medium under the skillet with the mushrooms. Add the sherry and cream. Remove from heat. Add the thyme or parsley and lemon juice. Stir, taste and adjust the salt, pepper and lemon if needed.

Top the toast with the mushroom mixture. Dive in.

Doings On Land: Carrie Yehle's Observing-Inspired Film-Making

Observers are a talented group. Usually, we focus on their sea-based acumen. During our August team meeting, A-SHOP observer, Carrie Yehle, surprised us with one of her non-observer-based skills: movie-making. She shared her latest creation, *A-SHOP: Life at Sea*, as her conference presentation. We loved it and want to share it with you (click the above link).



Carrie's always been interested in film-making. She spent a year studying the craft in college, before opting for biology. In that year, Carrie learned film editing, film theory and began making her own films. She's honed her skills via self-study over the ensuing years.

A-SHOP: A Life at Sea is the first film Carrie's made for purposes other than her own enjoyment. Usually she uses film-making as a memory-capturing tool. This film will

be used for training purposes by our At-Sea Hake training team. The hope is to integrate Carrie's work into the Program's training curriculum.

Carrie's plans for future projects include films of her bike trip from Seattle to San Diego and her hike along the Appalachian Trail. She also plans to keep documenting observer life: "Observing... (gives) me material to capture and inspiration to produce videos. Before I was observing, I wasn't inspired much to create anything video-related." She's already at work on a project capturing life on longline vessels.

Is your work as an observer inspiring your creative endeavors? We'd like to know! Drawing, painting, writing, sculpting, music... if you'd like to share your creative endeavors, please contact Rebecca Hoch at rebecca.hoch@noaa.gov.



Hunky Dorey in Newport Beach

Toby Shewan, Alaska Observers, Inc. • Stationed in Los Angeles

The Newport Beach Dory Fleet has been in operation since 1891. It's named after the sharp bow, flat-bottomed boats traditionally used in the fishery. Historically, the boats were launched from the beach, rowed to and from the fishing grounds, and hauled up the beach by horses to the market. The market, now a public landmark, is still in operation today providing fishermen the unique opportunity to sell their product directly to the public.

Over the years, the fleet has undergone many changes but remains an active and integral part of the local fishing community. Launching vessels from the beach is now a rare sight. Nevertheless, the Dory Fleet remains an active fishing port. It's adapted to keep up with ever-changing fishing regulations and consumer tastes. The market opens on weekends from 6am until the last of the fish is sold around noon. Each fish is processed to the consumer's specifications: in the round, gilled and gutted, filleted, etc. Sablefish, Thornyheads, Rock Crab, Spot Prawns, Sculpin, Sanddabs, Whelks and rock-fish can all be purchased from the Dory Fleet.

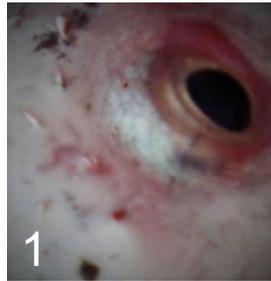


Name the Mystery Creature

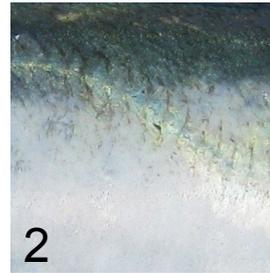
How are you at species identification? Was your annual fish test a breeze? Feeling like you can handle something more challenging? Here's your chance to kick your ID skills up a notch.

Debriefeer Toby Mitchell challenges you to correctly name these nine mystery creatures. Think you can do it? The answers are below.

Enjoy!



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2



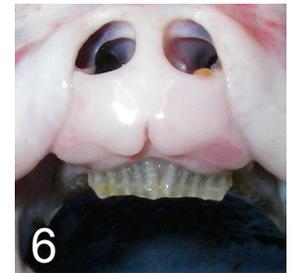
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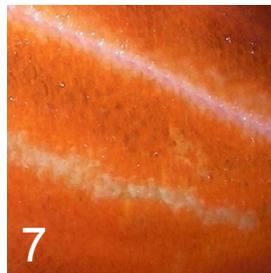
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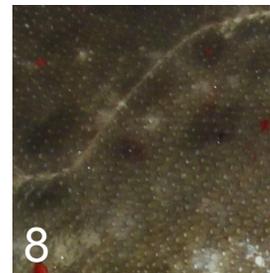
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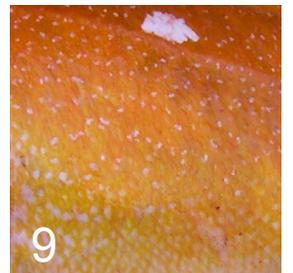
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Answers: 1-Blob Sculpin; 2-Jack Mackerel; 3-Mantis Shrimp; 4-Sperm Whale; 5-Spike King Crab; 6-Spotted Ratfish; 7-Yelloweye Rockfish; 8-Pacific Halibut; 9-Starry Rockfish

Capture the moment!

Please remember to use your camera to document unusual species. Not only is it precious data, but it also allows us to share your finds with the Program and your fellow observers.

Fisheries News

Our Fisheries Observation Science (FOS) analysts are diligent about ensuring that observer data is well presented in our annual data products.

If you're curious to see what these reports look like, visit the [Northwest Fisheries Science Center's website](#). The FOS section provides access to [sector data products](#), [protected species reports](#) and [management reports](#).

Observer data has also been used in this [article](#), featured in *Ecological Society of America's* recent publication, as well as this [feature](#) in the *Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences*.

Remember the record-setting toxic algal bloom from our last issue? Here's information on **"the blob"** that's been causing it. Although the warm patch of water is mostly gone, its effects will be long-lasting.

If you've participated in the green sturgeon tagging efforts, here's [a great story](#) about how one found its way back to NOAA.

And finally, from NOAA's Alaska Fisheries Science Center, [a great feature](#) on the relationship between the Alaska fleet and the North Pacific Groundfish Observer Program observers.

Photo credit: Vern Fisher of the Monterey Herald.



Observing in the Dory Fleet: An Eyewitness Account

Steve Todd, Alaska Observers, Inc. • Stationed in San Diego

It's Friday at 2300. I'm on my way to the dory fleet for a 0000 departure. Even at this late hour, Newport traffic is busy. It's a summer night and small groups of pedestrians ignoring crosswalks weave through traffic as they cross the boardwalk and streets, bar hopping. The parking lot at the Newport Pier is full. There are lines of cars waiting for spots. Twenty minutes later, I get a parking space.

I meet the captain in front of the market. Our vessel, a 20' panga, is on a trailer. I check the safety gear. The captain reports the tide is changing. He wants to wait. He has a crew member coming with us tonight. I won't have to help push the boat into the surf this time. This is good news. I was dreading wearing the hot hip waders all night.

When the tide is right, the captain drives his truck across the sand to the surf line. The trailer carrying the dory bounces along behind it. He backs into the shore break. I stand by while the captain and crew member get the boat off the trailer and into the water.

We quickly turn the boat around, pointing its bow seaward, and load up. The tide is in our favor. We punch through the 2-3ft swell and head to the fishing grounds.

It's dark. We're in the shipping lane with no radar. My survival suit is close by. I rest easier knowing my personal locator beacon (PLB) is attached to the PFD I'm wearing.

Around 0130 we pull in longline gear that was set the previous morning. Our target is thornyheads and sablefish. Our bycatch consists of brown cat

sharks, California slickheads, pacific flatnose, hake, and hagfish among other species. I weigh specimens in a bucket with my spring scale. The dory's size and weight limitations prevent me from bringing the digital scale. Fishing is decent. Pre-baited gear is set to be pulled the following day.

I haven't really moved during this trip. The space allocated to me is approximately 4-5 square feet. Just enough space to sit. The pre-dawn temperature rises to the mid 50's. I'm fully exposed in this little, open-bow skiff. With the outboard motor reaching speeds over 30 knots, it's cold.

It's still dark. Lights from the Newport Pier guide us home. This trip is all but over. However we have one final hurdle to cross before we're back on terra firma: crossing the surf line.

I lean back against the center console and position my feet against the bulkhead. I'm anxious, excited, and a little scared. Timing the sets of waves is critical. The captain pauses outside the surf line to assess the conditions.

The early morning surfers who frequent Newport Pier know the drill. They move out of the natural channel running next to the pier so we can pass through. With a gap in the surf, the captain pushes the throttle wide open. We power through the surf line, jumping and bouncing over the waves and cruising over the shallows. Finally, we slide to

a jarring stop on the Newport Beach sands. We're back.

I jump over the boat rail onto the strand. My feet and legs sting. It takes a few minutes for my body to regain normal feeling, for my circulation to kick in, to finally warm up.

I help the captain unload the fish as his customers, also early risers, eagerly examine his still twitching catch. They've been waiting for the boat since 0500; it's now past 0530. "Fishing good?" asks the first man. Fish doesn't get any fresher than this.

I load up my gear and meet the captain at his locker for the fish ticket. It's just after 0600. The public market is bustling with people queuing up to buy the various seafood species. At approximately 200 lbs. of retained catch, our haul is average. It's mostly Channel Cod (a.k.a. Shortspine Thornyheads), and Sea Trout (a.k.a. sablefish, black cod).

The captain tells me we'll go again that evening, same time. "I'll see you then," I tell him. I leave the market behind heading to my car, thankful for the good trip.

