



Word on the Waves

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

Observer Spotlight:

Ashley Kay

Observer since 2018
Currently stationed in Eureka, CA

You never know what a fishing trip will bring. In Ashley Kay's case, it opened the door to a new career.

Ashley is a native of Redding, CA. Her introduction to fisheries management was serendipitous. On a whim, she decided to go fishing with her dad. "It was instant love," she says. That trip set her on the path to a fisheries biology degree (Humboldt University) and towards what she assumed would be a position in fresh water fisheries.



She says:

"Becoming an observer was unexpected. My degree is for freshwater fisheries. I hoped to end up working on the river, where my passion for fish was born."

Lucky for us, she participated in a couple of research projects and discovered she enjoyed being at sea. That dove-tailed with several of her professors suggesting she look into observing. "It sounded like an incredible opportunity. I applied and the rest is history," she says.

Ashley loves everything about observing. She says, "I love the people I meet and work with, the stories they tell, how hard they work, and how creatively they work and face any issues that arise." Of course, she also loves the interesting fishes, marine mammals, and sea birds. The beautiful sunsets don't hurt either. She continues:

"I cannot express how much I enjoy working in this environment. It's why I stick with it, and it's also what surprised me the most. I knew I would enjoy it, but I didn't expect to enjoy it this much."

When she's not at work, Ashley's busy in the kitchen cooking or baking. Two hobbies she's been doing since she was very young. She says, "I enjoy making things. Whether it's culinary, knitting, sewing, etc. I always keep my hands busy." She also enjoys collecting houseplants, particularly orchids. She likes to spend "time tin-

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From the Program

Jon McVeigh,
Program Manager

Hello Observers and Friends,

Spring is here! I'm sure many of you are planning your gardens (or in CA maybe already planting!) and your recreational fishing trips. Food you grow and catch yourself seems to always taste best. Check out John LaFargue's recipe for California halibut on page 3 for some inspiration and motivation.

Spring is synonymous with renewal and resetting. Lately, I've found myself in that mindset. Last winter, I began taking graduate courses at the University of Washington. This has been really challenging as well as enlightening and rewarding. I admit it has been quite a while since I've undertaken this level of study. My student brain was more than a little rusty at first. But I'm glad I committed to it and now that I've gotten a number of courses under my belt, I'm starting to see changes.

One change I've noticed is that I'm approaching problems now more like a Rubik's cube than a stuck anchor; I'm seeing more facets and fluidity to issues and problems. Bringing that into my job, I'm also trying to think more critically about issues facing us as fishery biologists and data collection specialists.

Fisheries management is complicated and involves many stakeholders. As a fishery observer program, we supply some of the most critical data. Our work helps provide the unique economic and biological balance we all currently experience on the west coast. Through collaborative, cooperative management informed by quality data from sources such as the WCGOP and A-SHOP, our fisheries have become an example of what sustainability can look like. This is hugely exciting. It's also a great responsibility.

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Fisheries News

Need a reminder that your work makes a difference? In December 2018, NOAA highlighted the [West Coast groundfish resurgence](#) and how it's impacting both recreational and commercial fishing. Observer data plays a major role in this development. Keep up the good work.

NOAA released the [U.S. National Bycatch Report First Edition Update 3](#). The report provides information on overall bycatch trends for major U.S. fisheries for 2014 and 2015.

Those exempted fishing permit (EFP) trips work. According to the Curry Coastal Pilot (Brookings), the [rockfish fishery is booming](#) due to new trawl gear tested in EFP trips.

We know you know to call the [Marine Mammal Disentanglement Network](#) if there's a whale entanglement. How-

ever, we also know commercial and recreational boats are usually the first to discover whale entanglements. NOAA is offering an [online whale entanglement course](#) to teach captains and crews proper protocols for helping the animals. Spread the word.

Move over Shamu. An international team of scientists working off Cape Horn in Chile recently identified what they believe is a [new species of killer whale](#).

March is notable for many things: St. Patrick's Day, March Madness, spring. It's also the month for [Seafood Expo North America](#). Held in Boston, it's the largest seafood trade show in North America. [NOAA was there](#) engaging with industry and representing



A rare photo of Type D killer whales showing their blunt heads and tiny eyepatches. Credit: J.P. Sylvestre, South Georgia, 2011

fisheries management in the seafood story.

Thinking of taking a cruise? Lower your carbon footprint by using Norwegian cruise ship company, Hurtigruten. The company fuels its fleet with a bio-gas made from leftover processed fish. Get the whole story [here](#).

Featured Observer - continued

Ashley's advice to new observers:

Talk to your fellow observers. They're an incredible resource as are the debriefers. They're all happy to help.

working with (her) plants and keeping them happy."

Ashley's bucket list includes one word: travel. She wants to see Alaska and travel around Southeast Asia. "I'd really, really love to see the Mekong River

during monsoon season when the waterfalls are at their full glory," she says.

We're grateful to have you in the program, Ashley. Thank you for all your hard work, dedication, and enthusiasm.



From the Program - continued

I'm committed to keeping us at the forefront of this positive wave by being flexible and responsive to the needs of management and the fishery. I'm looking forward to another year of working hard to meet these goals – even if it means doing more homework.

As always, thank you for your hard work. Stay safe.

Cheers,



From the Galley

John LaFargue, CA Coordinator

As spring approaches, I'm put in mind of the schools of sardines, anchovies and smelt that will soon fill our bays up and down the coast. Right on their caudal fins will be predators: sea lions, harbor seals, cormorants, and in Cali, my favorite, the California halibut.

I grew up fishing for California halibut along the sandy stretches of central and southern California. I spent hours and hours casting into channels and edges of grass beds hoping to land a keeper. I'm not sure which was more fun the pursuit, the catching or the eating.

California halibut is a nice flaky, mild, white fish. It has a little more flavor than Pacific halibut with a touch more fat. The fat keeps it from overcooking as easily as Pacific halibut. It's a great fish for any cooking method. I fry, grill, and pan roast it. It holds together well for soups and stews. Goes well with bacon...But come on now? What doesn't go well with bacon?

Turns out our Santa Barbara observer, Rachel Mahler, is an avid cook. This is my adaptation of one her recipes. Thanks for the inspiration Rachel!

Rachel's Bacon Wrapped Halibut with Jalapeños and Shallots

Serves 1

One portion of halibut (any firm white fish can be substituted)

2-3 pieces of blanched bacon

½-1 jalapeño

1 large shallot chopped

Cooking oil (vegetable, canola, grape seed, avocado)

Butter

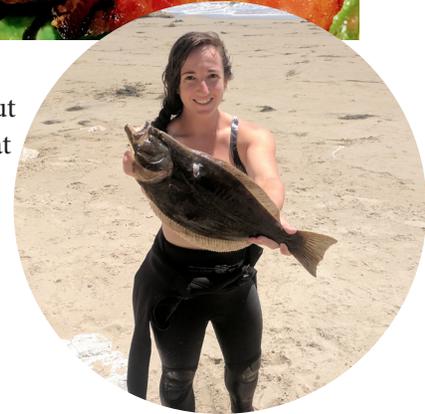
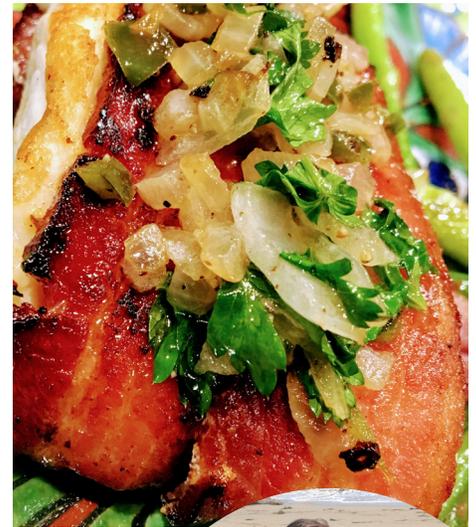
Splash of white wine, Vermouth, stock or water

Parsley, cilantro or other fresh herb

Lemon

Salt & pepper

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Blanch bacon in boiling water for 2-3 minutes. This helps it crisp.
3. Season fish with salt and pepper. Wrap blanched bacon around the fish neatly keeping the seam on the bottom of the piece of fish. Cut the bacon if necessary. Secure bacon with toothpicks (optional).
4. Heat pan over medium/high flame. Add a dash of oil and place fish in pan. Cook until bottom bacon is crisp: 3-4 min or so. Flip and place in preheated oven for 4-5 minutes or until fish is cooked through and bacon is crisp. This depends on how thick your bacon and fish are. Thin bacon actually works better here.
5. When fish is almost cooked through, remove from oven and pan. Add a pat of butter if there isn't much fat left in the pan.
6. Add chopped shallot and jalapeño to pan. Sauté for a minute or so over medium heat.
7. Add a splash of liquid (white wine, vermouth, stock or even water). Scrape all the fond (brown bits) off the bottom of the pan with a spatula.
8. Add a squeeze of lemon and your fresh herbs. Stir and then pour over your plated fish.



Rachel Mahler with a speared halibut ready for cooking.

Welcome Observers of 2019

Each year, our Training Team briefs or trains close to 100 observers. It's a big undertaking. We're extremely proud of each group who "graduates." Here's this year's roster.

Annual Briefings



December

Front L to R: Michael Lindley, Colleen Marcus, Antonia Barela, Michael Findley, Rachel Mahler, Kristen Duncan **Back L to R:** Kenneth Grimes, Kevin Stockmann, Steve Todd, Steve Samana, Toby Shewan, Garrett Edwards, Woody Venard, Tori Liles, Robert Bettin, James Grunden, Brad Laird, Joseph Dunigan



February

Front L to R: Monica Falcon, Natalie Rowell, Robert Adams, Dylan Tauzer **Back L to R:** Matthew Ruwaldt, Salvador Ramirez, Camille Ayrea, Amanda Zygutis, Sheila VanHofwegen



March

Left to Right: Conner Emenhiser, Tom Holland, Cody Carouthers, Joshua Doehling, Brian Matson, Ryan Shanaghan, Bob Bettin, Phil Lockton, Gabriella Kurz, Woody Venard, Colton Zondervan.

January (no photo)

In attendance: Matthew Amberg, Steven Behmke, Toni Chandler, Tyler Dettmann, Robert Duffy, Vanessa Fleming, Ashley Kay, Gabriella Kurz, Kitt Lee, Kelly Nichols, Sean Rogers, Claire Rosental, Mark Winscher.

Training Classes



February

L to R: Keenan Washburn, Tristan Tackman, Rosie Connors, Jacob Porter, Lloyd Petrunaro, Bernie Rolf, Adam Crow, Nathan Adams



March

Standing L to R: Mitch Loman, Victoria Sheldon, Andre Tsvivis, Sam Bissonnette, Robert Guiffre, Drake Adkins, Mackenzie McCoy, Nikolai Carroll, Sean McGurk **Front L to R:** McCall Barney, Vanessa Jimenez, Morgan Murphy Cannella, Cassidy Pierce, Ashlee Mitchell, Vanessa Villanueva



Your Data at Work: Using Infographics to Create a Snapshot

Jason Jannot, Data Analyst

Infographics are incredibly handy and surprisingly versatile. Their ability to convey data and information in a quick, memorable way makes them applicable to practically any industry, including fisheries management.

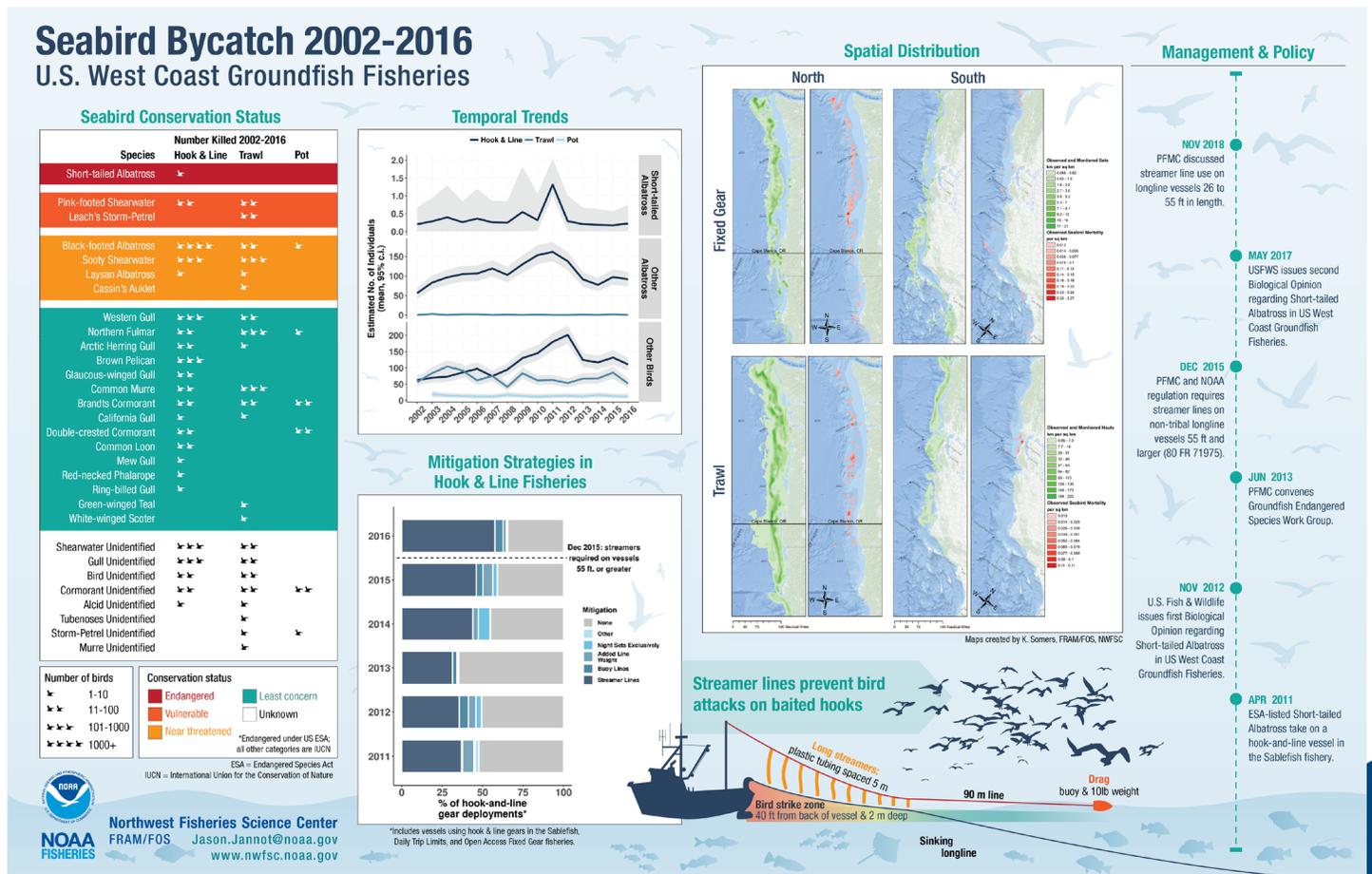
We're in the process of developing a number of observer-related visuals. This seabird infographic is our latest. It's designed to tell the seabird bycatch story as seen in the U.S. West Coast fisheries observed by the NWFSO Observer Programs (includes both WCGOP and A-SHOP data). We also wanted to summarize and generate interest in our recent [seabird mortality report](https://doi.org/10.25923/qeyc-0r73) (https://doi.org/10.25923/qeyc-0r73).

Almost all the data used to create this graphic was collected by observers from both of our programs. This very valuable and rich dataset provides information about species, mortalities, mitigation strategies used, and timing and location

of interactions. From this, we can derive information about the conservation status of bycatch species, temporal trends in mortality of albatrosses and other birds, the adoption of mitigation strategies by the hook and line fleet, and the spatial distribution of seabird bycatch.

For context, we also include a graphic of how streamer-lines (one type of mitigation) are properly deployed as well as the recent management actions taken to protect seabirds from fishing vessels. In this way, the infographic serves as a quick, but insightful, resource for managers, fishers, and scientists, both here on the US West Coast, as well as partners in other regions and around the world.

If you have questions about either of these products or ideas about how to improve them, please feel free to email me at Jason.Jannot@noaa.gov. I always like hearing from observers. Don't be shy!





A Fond Farewell

We're sad to announce debriefer Kate Guthrie resigned from the program in January. Kate was with us for 15 years. During that time, she helped create the numerous manuals and forms, developed the trawl practical (yes, she sewed sand in all those toy sharks), and worked with countless observers. She's been an invaluable member of our team and will be missed.

Kate's post-NOAA adventure is becoming a small business owner. If you find yourself in downtown Edmonds, WA, stop by her shop, Glazed & Amazed. She's always happy to see her fisheries family.

Oregon Sea Grant's new Seabird Research Project

Oregon Sea Grant is starting a new collaborative research project with the At-Sea Hake fleet. The research will characterize albatross and other seabird interactions with trawl cables, 3rd and 4th wires. The work will expand on the foundation of knowledge that At-Sea Hake Observer Program observers have helped build during the seabird special project over the last three years. Observations will help us better understand seabird interaction rates during all phases of trawling (setting, towing, haulback).

The seabird observers will be deployed on the F/V Alaska Ocean, F/V Northern Jaeger, and the F/V Seattle Enterprise during Spring 2019 with a fourth vessel added in Fall 2019.

Want to learn more? Interested in joining the project for Fall 2019? Contact Amanda Gladics, amanda.gladics@oregonstate.edu, (503) 325-8573.



Contact Us

Word on the Waves is published quarterly by the **Fisheries Observation Science Program** at the Northwest Fisheries Science Center to maintain communications with current observers. Please send submissions, suggestions and questions to our newsletter editor, Rebecca Hoch, at rebecca.hoch@noaa.gov. You can also contact your debriefer.