

A Guide to Oregon Fisheries



Oregon State
University



A short guide to some of the commonly caught
commercial seafood species in Oregon.

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Last updated 5/13/2020
with 2019 landings data
from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife



Albacore Tuna

Management

Inter-American Tropical
Tuna Commission

Season

~July-Sept depending on when
the tuna arrive off Oregon

Fun Facts

- Swim in schools up to 19 miles wide
- Caught young, so have low levels of mercury

Habitat & Life History

- Ocean fish that swim in large schools
- Migrate across the ocean
- Top predators
- Warm blooded
- Broadcast spawners
- Live 11 to 12 years

Gear & Fishing

- Trolling (pulling hooks and lines through the water)
- Jigs
- Individually landed and bled

Pounds & Value 2019

- Oregon: 6,566,851lbs
worth \$10,846,389



Pacific Halibut

Season

June-July (very short- 1 or 2,
1-day openers)

Fun Facts

- The left eye switches to the right side while the fish grows! Only 1 in 20,000 are lefties

Habitat & Life History

- A “flat fish” that lives near on the bottom of the ocean
- Oregon is the edge of their range, most are in British Columbia and Alaska

Gear & Fishing

- Long-lines

Management

- International Pacific Halibut Commission
- 32-in minimum size to protect juvenile halibut

Pounds & Value 2019

- Oregon: 252,096lbs
worth \$ 1,249,953



Dungeness Crab

Season

- Dec 1 – Aug 14, bulk of the landings are Dec-Feb

Fun Facts

- A female crab can carry up to 2.5 million eggs!
- Oregon has a “State Crustacean” It’s the Dungeness Crab.
- Crabs walk side-ways, and if they lose a leg, they can grow a new one.

Habitat & Life History

- After a planktonic larval stage, crab settle to the bottom
- They are scavengers
- They molt to grow larger, and can molt up to 6 times a year when young
- Live up to 10 years, harvested at 4 years

Gear & Fishing

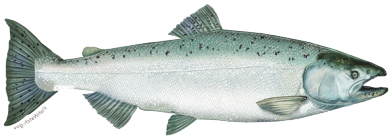
- Crab pots

Management

- 3 S’s:
- Size – Their carapace must be over 6.25”
- Sex – Only males can be kept, allowing females to carry eggs and reproduce
- Season – December through August, with most caught in the first 8 weeks
- Limited entry (set number of permits) and pot limits up to 500 pots

Pounds & Value 2019

- Oregon: 19,000,433lbs worth \$67,671,967



Chinook Salmon

Management

- Pacific Fisheries Management Council
- Closures vary widely by location

Season

- Spring, summer, fall

Fun Facts

- Salmon returning a year earlier than the rest of their year class are called “jacks”

Habitat & Life History

- Anadromous: from stream, to ocean, to home stream to spawn.
- They spend 4-5 years in the ocean
- All salmon harvested in Oregon is wild-caught, there are no salmon farms in Oregon. Hatchery fish are released at a young age, spend the rest of their life in the wild, and are considered wild-caught.

Gear & Fishing

- Trolling (pulling hooks and lines through the water)

Pounds & Value 2019

- Oregon: 858,155lbs worth \$3,915,913



Rockfish

Management

- Part of the “groundfish” group - 90 species that is managed together because they are frequently caught together.
- Pacific Fishery Management Council

Fun Facts

- In 2013, someone caught a 200 year old rockfish!
- Fish are aged using their ear bones, or otoliths, which put on seasonal rings like a tree trunk.
- Rockfish have live young, which is rare for fish. Older, larger females have larger numbers and healthier babies.

Habitat & Life History

- 60 different species of rockfish (22 landed commercially in Oregon), that have a variety of different habitats and behaviors.
- Generally, these are long-lived fish that do not reproduce until they are 20+ years old.
- Live in rocky-reef habitats
- Average market size is between 2-5 lbs

Gear & Fishing

- Hook-and- line, longline, and trawl

Season

Year round

Pounds & Value 2019

- Oregon: 25,103,376lbs worth \$8,121,058



Lingcod

Management

- Pacific Fishery Management Council
- Lingcod were declared “overfished” in 1999, meaning populations dropped below sustainable levels. Management changes were put in place, and by 2005, lingcod populations increased and they were declared “rebuilt” and are now fished today.

Fun Facts

The fillets can be blue! (but turn white when cooked). Nobody really knows why, but it is likely linked to their diet.

Habitat & Life History

- Groundfish, found on the bottom near rocky reefs
- Voracious predators that let their prey come to them, and lie in wait for unsuspecting fish, crab, and octopuses
- Spend most of their adult lives within a three square mile area

Gear & Fishing

- Hook-and- line, longline, and trawl

Season

- Year round

Pounds & Value 2019

- Oregon: 876,484lbs worth \$1,272,016



Sablefish

Management

- Pacific Fisheries Management Council.
- Each separate gear type comes with its own rules and regulations, including permits and catch limits.

Season

- Year-round, but higher quantities between April and November

Habitat & Life History

- Deep water fish, 650-9800 ft
- No air swim bladder, they use oil to maintain buoyancy.
- Can live almost a century!

Gear & Fishing

- Longline, sablefish pot, trawl

Pounds & Value 2019

- Oregon: 5,837,485 lbs worth \$9,419,459

Fun Facts

- Most are exported to Japan
- Sperm whales eat sablefish, and will dive into very deep waters to eat them. Some sperm whale have even learned how to pick them off fishermen's longlines.
- Sablefish have very high levels of Omega-3s, up to 50% more than salmon!



Spot Prawn

Management

- Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

Season

- April- June

Fun Facts

- There is only one commercial fisherman in Oregon who fishes for spot prawns

Habitat & Life History

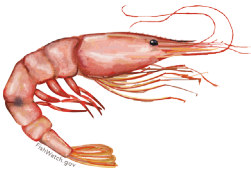
- The largest of shrimp caught in OR, can live up to 6 years
- Can grow to over 12 inches!
- Reddish-brown in color, they have distinct white spots on each side of the body
- Live in very deep water, especially on rocky habitat
- Protandric hermaphrodite: they change sex from males to female.

Gear & Fishing

- Traps (pots). No shrimp or prawns are farmed in Oregon.

Pounds & Value 2019

Not available because of landings data confidentiality.



Pink Shrimp

Management

- Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Must be over a certain size (<160-per-pound) so only older shrimp are harvested
- Not fished during the reproductive times in the winter

Fun Facts

- “Doors” keep a trawl net open as it’s pulled through the water. Wooden doors are for shrimp, metal doors for groundfish
- It is a very “clean” shrimp fishery, there is very little bycatch, due to the Bycatch Reduction Devices (i.e., excluder devices)

Habitat & Life History

- Small cold-water shrimp that live to 4 years
- Lives on soft ocean bottom in fairly shallow water
- Protandric hermaphrodite: they change sex from males to female.

Gear & Fishing

- Trawl caught, sometimes with a “double rigger”, meaning it pulls two nets, one off of each side.
- Shrimp migrate up off the bottom at night to feed, so vessels don’t fish at night.

Season

- April- October

Pounds & Value 2019

- Oregon: 26,851,713lbs worth \$19,939,784



Hagfish

Management

- Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Open access (no permit required), but 200 trap limit
- Traps have an escape mechanism in case they are lost at sea, to prevent “ghost fishing”

Fun Facts

- Most are shipped to South Korea

Habitat & Life History

- Bottom dwelling
- Ancient, jawless fish
- Began as a fishery for the skin, but now is for consumption.

Gear & Fishing

- Barrel pot traps

Pounds & Value 2019

- Oregon: 1,587,588 lbs worth \$ 1,654,272

Season

Year Round



Sole

Management

- Pacific Fisheries Management Council, as part of “groundfish”, a group of 90+ species that live on or near the bottom and are managed together because they are often caught together.
- Petrale sole was declared “overfished” in 2009, but with management were considered recovered by 2015.

Season

- Year round, more abundant in winter

Fun Facts

- Petrale sole move into shallower waters for spawning, (still pretty deep) in huge aggregations in January
 - All flatfish are born swimming upright and with an eye on both sides of their head. As they grow, one eye migrates to the other side, and the fish starts to swim on its side on the bottom.
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Whiting / Pacific Hake

Management

- Pacific Fisheries Management Council

Fun Facts

- Whiting is made into *surimi*, the fish paste used to make imitation crab meat “Krab” and other products

Habitat & Life History

- Most of the ~10 species of sole landed in Oregon are Dover or Petrale
- Petrale sole:
 - Small flatfish with an olive top side and a white underbelly.
 - Two rows of teeth on their top jaw, but only one on the bottom.
 - Live in deep waters.
- Dover sole
 - Medium size flatfish
 - Very slippery skin (otherwise known as slime sole)
 - Very small mouth

Gear & Fishing

- Trawl

Pounds & Value 2019

- Petrale:
 - Oregon: 3,689,401lbs worth \$ 4,471,355
- Dover:
 - Oregon: 8,965,968 lbs worth \$3,662,569

Habitat & Life History

- Mid-water pelagic schooling species, found in the California Current.
- Little is known about their reproduction, but they are very abundant.

Gear & Fishing

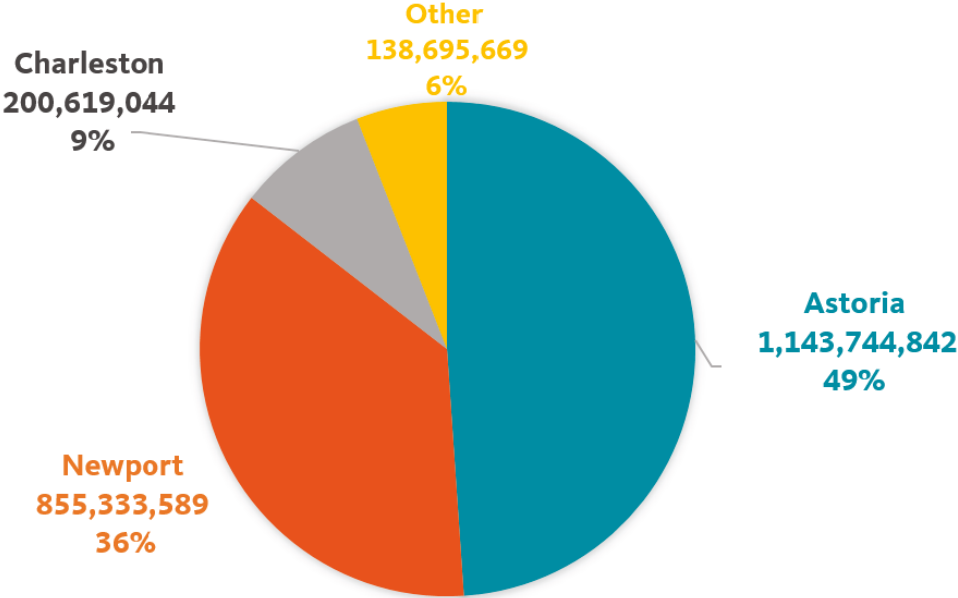
- Mid-water trawl
- At-sea catcher-processors, also known as factory trawlers, out of Newport and Astoria

Pounds & Value

- Oregon: 222,201,520 lbs worth \$21,684,753

Landings in Oregon's 3 major ports 2012 - 2019

SEAFOOD POUNDS LANDED 2012-2019



SEAFOOD EX-VESSEL VALUE 2012-2019

