



Long Form Fishing Community Profile

Depoe Bay, Oregon

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Marine Resources Program
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Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is a Long Form Fishing Community Profile (LFFCP)?

The LFFCP is an in-depth look at the fishing communities of the Oregon Coast. It is intended to provide the fishing community's perspectives on issues such as communication within the community and between the community and resource managers, changes within the community over time, the importance of fishing to the community and the town, the community's perception of the future, and what characteristics describe the fishing community.

2. What is the purpose of this profile?

The purpose of the LFFCP is to supplement the NOAA Short Form Profiles released in 2007. The LFFCP provides content to help interpret the information provided in these more commonly produced short form profiles. For example, the NOAA profiles may give information on the number of active fishing vessels and the change over time while the LFFCP will give the context (community's perspective) of the change in active fishing vessels.

3. Which profiles did Oregon State University produce?

Oregon State University produced the first profiles for three Oregon coastal fishing communities: Garibaldi, Newport, and Port Orford.

4. How are the profiles produced by ODFW useful to the state?

The LFFCPs are not focused on any one management issue and therefore provide general socio-cultural information on a fishing community. The information provided by the profiles can be used to understand the attitudes and perceptions of this stakeholder group and can be useful for understanding the possible response to regulation changes and agency communication methods.

5. What method was used to gather the information to develop this profile?

Ethnographic interviewing was used to gather the information to develop each profile. Ethnographic interviewing is defined as the collection and recording of human cultures. For the profiles, the interviews were conducted in person, recorded, transcribed, and analyzed by a researcher. The profiles were written from the community's perspective and reviewed by the community before being finalized. The recruitment method used to enlist community members in the interview process is referred to as the "Snowball Method". Like a snowball the interviews start with a small number of individuals and through recommendations the number of interviewees grows.

6. Does this method provide a representative sample of the fishing community?

The Snowball Method allows the population to be defined by the survey participants and results in a broader definition of the fishing community. For example, by the end of the survey we've interviewed commercial, recreational, and charter fishermen (retired and active) but also spouses, crew, processors, dock workers, marine mechanics, restaurant owners, etc. The participants are asked: "Who else do you consider part of the fishing community in (geographic location) that we should speak with?" Participants recommend a person that they feel validly represents their community. We know we've reached a representative sample when the researcher begins to hear the same recommended names from community members. For example, by the last interviews we usually hear names of individuals already interviewed or those we are scheduled to interview. The profile is then written from the perspective of the community and is reviewed by the participants for accuracy.

7. How is the information gathered analyzed and interpreted by ODFW?

ODFW has each audio-recorded interview professionally transcribed and then conducts a form of content analysis on each interview transcription. Using eight criteria the researcher looks for patterns in answers. The content and quotes are chosen in response to the frequency of answers in the content analysis and the quotes are meant to represent common themes seen in the content analysis. The researcher then writes the profile from the fishing community's perspective and has the study participants review the profile for accuracy.

8. What has the response of the fishing communities been to the profiles?

ODFW has experienced very positive feedback from the communities profiled. The communities like the chance to discuss their perspectives and appreciate the agency's interest. It has created better communication pathways and gives the agency a tool for building trust between the communities and the agency. The communities have also used the profiles in such forums as public meetings.

9. Will the ODFW continue to develop profiles for other coastal fishing communities?

The Marine Resources Program at ODFW plans to continue producing profiles for other Oregon fishing communities as part of ongoing monitoring efforts to support nearshore resource management.

10. If I have further questions about the profiles or other social and economic work being done by the ODFW, Marine Resources Program, who should I contact?

For more information please contact our main office in Newport, OR. The staff will be able to direct you to the appropriate person.

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Profile Overview

This profile was created as a result of a collaborative research project conducted during 2010. The project was designed and implemented with the help of the fishing community working in partnership with scientists from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and Oregon State University (OSU).

The idea for this collaborative project originated with existing profiles developed by scientists at OSU for other fishing communities along the Oregon Coast. ODFW found these profiles to be very informative and helpful during the marine reserves process and wanted to continue this work for other fishing communities. Depoe Bay was the first community chosen and interviews with the fishing community were conducted by ODFW staff over the 2010 winter season. With the help of a resident liaison, twenty interviews were conducted with various members of the fishing community. Using a trusted and respected member of the community to assist with introducing the study to participants and scheduling interviews was a very successful method and will be attempted again with future profiles.

Each interview lasted between twenty minutes to one and a half hours and was conducted by a single ODFW scientist. The interviews were transcribed and then analyzed by an ODFW scientist. Participants were chosen in two ways; 1) their name was given to ODFW by other members of the fishing community as a recognized member of the community and someone we should interview; and 2) because they fell into one of our preset categories associated with fishing in Depoe Bay. These categories ranged from full-time charter fisherman to dockside worker to fisherman's wife.

This profile has eight sections and each section contains a summary of the perspectives and information provided through the interviews conducted in Depoe Bay. Some verbatim comments have been included to give more depth and color to the profile but no identities have been revealed. The eight sections laid out in this profile are:

- Importance of Fishing to the Community of Place
- Characteristics of Fishing Community Members and their Families
- Boundaries: Connection between the Fishing Community and the Community of Place
- Communication within the Fishing Community and between the Fishing Community and Others
- Perspectives on Management and Effects of Management
- Change in Fishing and Seafood: Economics and Fishing Effort
- Perceptions of the State of the Ocean and its Resources
- Perceptions of the Future

This profile has been reviewed by interview participants for accuracy and clarity.

Long Form Fishing Community Profile, Depoe Bay

Importance of Fishing to the Community of Place

Historically Depoe Bay relied heavily on a commercial fleet but over time and in response to certain ecological events and management decisions the town has experienced a shift to more tourism driven activities. Charter fishing, private sport recreational fishing, and whale watching are now the “life’s blood” of the town. Fishing has always been the personality of the town and as one community member stated, “Depoe Bay *is fishing*”. Aesthetically and geographically unique Depoe Bay is “one of the last *fishing villages* along the Oregon coast”. This public perception is important to the tourism industry that is considered the “economic driver” of the town. As many of the community members mentioned Depoe Bay is a “full service destination fishing town that caters to the whole family”. Whole families repeatedly visit the town and while some go fishing the others go shopping and eat at the local restaurants. The “ripple effects” of fishing and the allure of fishing impact the entire town.

“Without fishing Depoe Bay would just be another community stuck on the rocks with a nice view”.

Fishing brings jobs, both fishing and non-fishing oriented. A common sentiment was that for Depoe Bay “fishing is analogous to the heart in the human body” and that “it takes all the fishermen in port to keep the

town running”. It was mentioned several times that without fishing there would be no Coast Guard station which brings permanent residents to the town and prestige to the port.

Private sport fishing is an important economic activity for Depoe Bay and according to many of the community members this is due to the quick access from the valley, the easy launch conditions in the harbor, and the quick travel out of the harbor to good fishing grounds.

“There are probably 400 boats that occasionally fish here and call their home port someplace else. It’s a mix of salmon, rockfish, halibut, and tuna fishing.”

Characteristics of Fishing Community Members and their Families

The average Depoe Bay fisherman is a charter boat operator, male, and around fifty years old. Most own homes in Depoe Bay but all are considered full time residents. Some of the older resident recreational and charter fishermen, referred to as the “snowbirds”, leave town for the winter and head south to states like Arizona. None of the operators interviewed seemed close to retirement or even realistically considering it. Common sentiments when describing these fishermen were *fiercely independent, ambitious, outdoors men, and not the cubicle type*.

"It's getting to be a tough industry to be in - bottom line - but am I ready to get out? Nope, this is all I know".

There are very few commercial fishermen left in Depoe Bay. Those that still fish in the ocean off Depoe Bay actually live outside of town and those that reside in town spend the majority of their time fishing in Alaska. These Alaska fishermen also usually have family ties to Depoe Bay and come from multi-generational fishing families. The commercial fishermen are still very involved in the fishing community through public meetings and management discussions and interact with the charter operators on a regular basis.

The other prominent fisherman using Depoe Bay is the private sport recreational fisherman. Some of these fishermen live in Depoe Bay or spend a good portion of the year there but most come from other areas of Oregon or other states. It was implied that two types of fishing visitor is drawn to Depoe Bay. There are those that come to Depoe Bay for the full experience of navigating the harbor, spending time in town with friends and family, and in charter cases interacting with the boat captains. The other type was commonly referred to as the "meat fisherman" defined as a fisher that comes to fish and that's it. These fishers are motivated by the catch and the challenge.

Fishing Families

Given the seasonality and unpredictable nature of charter fishing most of the

fishermen involved in the industry either have a second income or utilize unemployment in the off-months. Some charter fishermen have crabbed in the past over the winter but this is not prevalent anymore. In many cases wives of fishermen have jobs outside the industry that bring in not only a second income but also provide health benefits for the family. Some of the wives do work or volunteer at the charter offices and may help with bookkeeping and scheduling of charter trips.

"Most of the women and wives in Depoe Bay work outside the fishing industry and usually find work out of town like at the casino".

There are no schools in Depoe Bay so children of fishermen are usually bussed to schools in Lincoln City. There is very little for post-adolescent children to do inside the city limits. For younger children there is the "Kidzone" which offers families a place to interact. The church offers a preschool for pre-kindergarten age children.

One fisherman describes the fishing community as having "three definable groups: 1) the newer, younger generation who are learning the business but haven't established themselves as homeowners or family men yet, 2) people (homeowners) who have lived in town a long time and consider Depoe Bay their primary residence and place of employment, and 3) people who are only fishing and living in town during the busy seasons".

Changes over Time

Fishing, in general, has changed in Depoe Bay over the last fifty years. Change in regulations, costs, and species abundance have changed the focus of fishing in Depoe Bay from a predominantly commercial fishing port to a port supported by recreational fishing. This change, over time, has affected the family structure and demographic make up of the town. Today the common theme seems to be that wives work outside the house, children are not interested or involved in the family business, and recruiting a new generation of fishermen seems to be difficult due to the personal and financial risks. In contrast, one fisherman remembers when “kids used to be all over the docks, playing and helping out. The kids would fillet and deckhand and the moms would be down there too. That doesn’t happen today.”

Most children of Depoe Bay fishermen go to college or look for work outside of fishing or out of town instead of going into the family business. Due to the “unstable” nature of the fishing industry “there are fewer guys and less families getting involved in the fishing business.” The common view is that a lack of younger people are entering the industry or attempting to learn the skills.

“If my son came to me and said I’m interested in getting into fishing I would tell him you’re crazy”.

The change from family run business has brought other cultural changes for the fishing community specifically in the area of

vessel crews. Historically, vessels were run by the male head of the family and children, cousins, and siblings worked as crew members and had a personal connection to the rest of the crew. In contrast, community members describe the situation as, “always looking for good crew” and the relationship is now “more of an employer/employee” rather than familiar one.

“Boat owners are very respectful to their crew members, but don’t seem like they share as much together.”

Modern societal problems have played a part in the relationship change between captains and crew members. A commonly mentioned issue is the increase in drug and alcohol use and the requirements of charter captains to test their crew. Community members expressed frustration with the lack of reliable and consistent crew members due to drug and alcohol use but also mentioned the added cost of the drug tests and the increase in insurance costs. In addition to this issue captains also find it difficult to retain reliable crew members due to economic conditions. It is difficult to fish consistently year-round due to weather, migrations, the shallow bar, and regulations which effects personal income. It is additionally difficult for young and inexperienced fishermen to establish themselves as a charter or commercial captain due to the financial expectations. Most charter captains in Depoe Bay will not retire until they are physically incapable which results in less opportunity for new entry into the industry and community. This reality coupled with a port that has

little room to grow, both in space and resources, has forced some to relocate to other ports for work.

"I would encourage people trying to get into fisheries to get into the management end of it".

Boundaries: Connection between the Fishing Community and the Community of Place

Depoe Bay is a small port and has limited services available to the charter and private sport fishermen in regards to provisions such as ice, repairs, supplies, and processing. A common sentiment among community members is that "in the past Depoe Bay was a viable offloading and processing port but regulations on salmon and other things shut this down". The feeling is that when the opportunity to fish salmon left Depoe Bay so did the commercial fleet. Without the commercial salmon trollers using the harbor for offloading and processing there's not enough product moving through the port to warrant a private processor or city-run fish plant. With a limited commercial fishing fleet utilizing the port, Depoe Bay has seen a major increase in charter operations and private sport boat use over the last fifty years. This opinion is also expressed when asked about ice facilities or repair and supply opportunities: "We don't have anywhere local to get ice or supplies. Everyone goes to Newport for that stuff". Without an ice facility most fishermen buy bags from grocery stores in and out of town or use Newport's ice facilities.

"Limited dock space creates self imposed limited entry (however) Newport gets all the business because it has all the facilities and stores".

There is one remaining fueling station for vessels, which was funded by the county, but historically the harbor supported three at any given time. As one community member states, "We used to have three fuel stations but today there is only one that the city had to take over to keep boats running out of Depoe Bay. It has restrictive fueling hours for the commercial guys but without it fishing out of here would be tough." Another community member expressed, however, that, "the fuel facility is an indicator of the success and importance of the charter guys to the town". However it is important to realize that the port facilities are primarily funded by collected fees because the town has no real tax base. This restricts the amount of growth and improvements that could happen within the harbor.

"It costs more to operate out of Depoe Bay than it does to operate out of Newport".

Boat repair is available through a mobile repair truck that comes through town and there is one marine repair shop by the harbor. The owner of the marine repair shop has long standing family ties to the community and is active in harbor issues. Unfortunately these options can only offer minor or basic repair and maintenance work and the fishermen must go elsewhere

to get any major repairs done. Most go to Newport or attempt to do the work themselves. The other variable is that Depoe Bay's harbor has no "haul-out" facilities which force the fishermen to take their boats to Newport or Garibaldi if they need to haul out of the water for any major repairs or maintenance. This is also an issue for getting gear in the water.

There is currently a processing facility that could be leased through the city and there is an available hoist that in the past has mainly been used by urchin fishermen. Some community members felt the hoist was too expensive to use and that the manpower to run it wasn't available. The commercial fishermen (crab, groundfish, and urchin) that still operate out of Depoe Bay can and do sell directly to the public from the dock but this is a very limited activity and most of the product caught goes through Newport.

The majority of community members also use services out of Newport for taxes, accounting, and legal needs. The church seems to be a source of support for the community through offering a foodbank, preschool, and personal counseling to those community members that need it. The pastor of the church is involved in community events such as the blessing of the fleet. The major socializing among the fishing community happens on the docks and at the charter offices, community center, and the various restaurants, cafés, and bars.

Depoe Bay supports a few major tourist events a year that bring the fishing community together and allows opportunity for fishing members to interact with other residents. These events are the Blessing of the Fleet, The Salmon Bake, The Fleet of Flowers, and The Wooden Boat Parade.



Table1. Services and Accessibility

Service	Accessibility
Gear	No gear or supplies stores exist presently in Depoe Bay. The last hardware store that catered to the fishermen shut down and now it is necessary to go to Newport for any gear or supplies.
Fuel	There is one remaining fuel facility that is managed by the city of Depoe Bay. The hours are restrictive for commercial fishermen and cause some congestion among the different types of fishermen (charter, private sport, and commercial).
Ice	There is currently no ice facility available. With the lack of commercial fishing in Depoe Bay an ice facility is not a major priority but it makes it necessary for charter and private sport fishermen to utilize Newport and Lincoln City facilities and stores.
Boat Repair	There is one boat repair shop in Depoe Bay which has a long family connection to the town and the fishing community. There is also a mobile repair option that comes through town every once in a while. Both of these options only cater to smaller, or not as major, boat repair and maintenance. For major repairs or maintenance it is necessary to go to Newport or Astoria.
Processors	There are currently no processors or operating fish plant in Depoe Bay. The only processing taking place is on the docks by filleters that work with the charter operators. There is an empty fish plant that is used mostly for storage.
Bookkeeping	No known professional bookkeeping is available. Most people either go to Newport or do their own bookkeeping (wives are involved in this aspect of the business).
Legal Services	No known legal services are available. Most people use legal services out of Newport or another major city.
Social Contacts	The church provides support to the community through a foodbank, preschool, counseling, and involvement in community events such as the blessing of the fleet. There are no schools but a “Kidzone” activity place is available for parents and children. The community center and charter offices provide space for fishermen to meet. There are also several restaurants, cafes, and coffee shops where socializing happens.

Fishing Community Communication

Communication within the fishing community

For the fishing community communication primarily takes place at some very public and convenient places such as charter offices, the harbor parking lots and docks. It is also common for interactions to take place in local coffee shops, taverns, and on the street. The most prominent venue for communication between the fishermen is over vessel radios. Radio communication has a fast effect on spreading information such as weather reports, where the fish are hitting, or important activities and events taking place on shore and in town such as a family event.

“Really we’re like a family. We argue but stand by each other...come together for big issues.”

Charter offices seem to be a popular and comfortable place for fishermen, both charter captains and private vessel fishermen, to gather and catch up on the latest news and information. Conversations range from family, jobs, and fishing to regulations, research and upcoming public meetings. However according to the fishing community “there is poor communication between the charter companies”. Reasons for this vary depending on who is asked within the community. Regardless of any rift existing between charter offices the charter captains within Depoe Bay seem to respect each other greatly but would like better communication between captains.

“The big problem right now is that the charter boat guys used to get along real well...now the communication between one office and the other is not good.”

Communication with fisheries managers

Fishermen in Depoe Bay, for the most part, feel comfortable interacting with the scientists and port samplers working out of the harbor. There seems to be a less formal relationship with these onsite individuals but communication or connection to the agency as a whole seems impossible to those interviewed. Community members expressed frustration with the lack of stakeholder involvement in fishing regulations and felt formal public feed back was not listened to.

Another issue raised was how challenging it is to keep up with regulation changes and understanding the policy behind these changes and implementations. A need for more agency outreach was expressed.

In addition to feeling separated from the agencies controlling the resources and their livelihoods’ the fishermen also expressed disappointment in the lack of involvement by community members in such government programs as marine reserves, stock assessments, or hatcheries.

“The problem isn’t getting the issues out there, it’s getting people to participate and respond to them.”

Communication with the City and others

Overall the sentiment concerning communication with the local government was positive. However, many community members feel city council sometimes doesn't understand fishing or the importance of fishing to the town. Two entities were recognized as best representing fishermen, the Harbor Commission and the Near Shore Action Team (NSAT), which is made up of local fishermen and other community members. The Harbor Commission acts as a conduit between fishermen and the local government where as NSAT represents fishermen with state level agencies and takes on varying issues that may affect the fishing community.

Communication with the Coast Guard was mentioned quite often and opinions were mixed as to whether the interactions with the Coast Guard are more formal or informal. The Coast Guard presently meets with the fishing community two or three times a year which some fishermen feel offers a "good pipeline of information between the Coast Guard and the local fleet" while others would like to see a more "open door" policy between the two. A common sentiment was the interactions with the community and the *personality* of the Coast Guard depending greatly on the current Chief. Regardless the opinion held all community members touted their respect for the Coast Guard and appreciation for the station placed in Depoe Bay.

Perspectives on, and the Effects of, Management

A common conflict for fishermen is balancing the actions of management and their opinions and knowledge of the ocean and fisheries. In Depoe Bay many of the community members expressed an understanding and even support of regulating fisheries for conservation but struggled to support the data or information these management decisions are made with. Some feel more data could actually lead to more closures. The community members realize the importance of regulating fish stocks but fear the ramification of the regulatory decisions given the effects on the community in the past.

"Fishermen are conservationists too...we don't want to catch the last fish either."

Three main management issues were mentioned more than most by the community as having the largest effect on the fishing community and the town. First and probably the most impactful was the "salmon disaster" of the previous decades where salmon stocks dropped dramatically and fishing was highly regulated for years after. Second is the management of fish hatcheries and the state's "unwillingness to open the hatcheries and release more fish". Third was an overall distrust of the data collected by the agencies and how that data has and will be used to regulate their use. A common example mentioned was the implementation of marine reserves on the coast. Depoe Bay lies in close proximity of two of these reserve areas and some fishermen in Depoe Bay will have to shift their fishing efforts to avoid these areas.

Salmon disaster and hatcheries

Commercial salmon fishing was a significant economic driver for Depoe Bay until the late seventies and early eighties when the stocks began to falter. By the nineties Oregon was experiencing what would be described as the “salmon disaster”. The west coast in general experienced this phenomenon but in Depoe Bay the weakening stocks coupled with strict regulations, including closing whole seasons, and ultimately stopping production and release of hatchery fish led to the demise of the commercial fishing industry in this port.

With no salmon to commercially harvest many of the commercial fishermen moved away from the area to fish from other ports for different species. Some got out of fishing all together and some moved into Charter fishing. Those commercial fishermen that still live in Depoe Bay primarily fish in Alaska most of the year, which can be a challenge for families and their connection to the local fishing community.

“Better be a player because they will make these rules without you and you will get left behind.”

With the loss of commercial fishing in the port, Depoe Bay also experienced a slow change in offered services such as fuel, ice, processing plants, and fish markets. The port and the fishermen that remained had to diversify and over time and Depoe Bay has primarily become a charter fishing port and tourist destination for private

recreational fishermen. The lack of hatchery fish, however, has also had an impact on the charter fishing industry, according to the community. With no salmon season to rely on, fishermen have shifted effort to mainly groundfish and now assert that a balance is needed to remove the pressure being put on these species. “Open the hatcheries! Release fish to lower the pressure on the groundfish population,” one community member emphatically exclaimed.

Distrust of data

As mentioned previously the majority of fishermen understand the need for regulation of fishing to preserve stocks. The consensus among community members is this is a needed management activity. However, it is also believed that management does not have the correct or complete information or regulation schemes to make efficient decisions. A comment heard often was “the agency needs better maps, better science, better stock assessment”. Most individuals would follow this comment with a qualifying statement referring to the lack of funds and resources to acquire the data needed, once again showing their effort to understand the management process.

Frustration with the lack of stakeholder input into fishery management schemes was also expressed. There was a consensus among the community members that, for their fishing grounds, regulated stocks such as yelloweye and canary rockfish were rebounding faster than management could assess and that the rules for deciding season and ground closures unfairly effected ports such as Depoe Bay. Many of the fishermen expressed a feeling of being

“lumped in with California and the whole coast” when it came to regulation decisions.

“Not listening to stakeholders has had a negative effect on management of the stocks.”

Other issues raised by the community had to do with the implementation of marine reserves, protected areas, and wave energy along the Oregon coast. The comment of one community member, “the marine reserve scares the hell out of me,” speaks to the community’s uncertainty of the fishing future in Depoe Bay. These areas are considered restrictive and another regulation on fishermen regardless of the purpose or goals.

Change in Fishing and Seafood: Economics and Fishing Effort

The need to diversify brought a change in the type of fishing practiced in Depoe Bay. Commercial fishing was replaced by charter fishing operations and private recreational boat fishing which shifted fishing pressure to other species. With no commercial salmon season, fishermen targeted crab, urchin, rockfish, halibut, and tuna. The loss of salmon had led to the loss of needed resources and facilities to support commercial fishing in Depoe Bay such as fueling stations, processing plants, and fish buyers. Many fishermen left to fish from other ports like Newport or Astoria and some moved their families to Alaska and become large scale commercial fishermen.

“Customers are more families now, not so many trophy guys...not as many walk-ins...harder to fill the boats.”

Over time the charter fishing industry in Depoe Bay has struggled to adapt and survive. Economic downturns in the national and state economy coupled with the increasing cost of operating a vessel has led to changes in the community and the port. Community members acknowledge a sharp increase in the number of personal sport boats used for private recreational fishing being moored in the port and using the port for day trips. This increase in competition, the rising cost of operating a vessel, and the restrictions on number of fish that can be caught per angler has resulted in fewer charter trips and passengers than in previous decades.

Depoe Bay has not been able to adapt quickly enough to this change and lacks sufficient parking, moorage space, and facilities to accommodate the number of private boats wanting to use the port. Tourism has become focused on travelers stopping in town while on their way to another destination and on whale watching. Depoe Bay has titled itself the “Whale Watching Capital of the World” and does not deny the importance of this activity to the town’s economy. Charter fishermen claim whale watching “kept us afloat” when fishing got scarce and more difficult.

“Whale watching, in large part, is what enabled a lot of the charter guys to survive during the times that the salmon fishery collapsed.”

The increase in cost to operate a charter vessel has changed the community as well. A common statement expressed was that now that it cost so much to go fishing, (due to the increased cost of things like inspections, drug testing of crew, permits, and insurance), there are more owner/operator vessels (instead of a separate owner and operator) with less crew, a more diversified gear set, and captains that are waiting to retire. The community expressed a lot of concern over the lack of a younger generation getting into charter fishing: “The uncertainty of the industry and fishing in Oregon keeps most young people at bay and it is expensive to invest in.” Charter captains don’t have the family option to leave their business too and must try to sell when they are ready to retire. Retiring later in life mostly has to do with the income generation ability of the industry. Retirement isn’t an option for many of the captains due to the lack of income coming from the business.

Depoe Bay has transitioned over the last fifty years from a thriving fishing village that offered tourist attractions to a full service tourism destination against the backdrop of a fishing village. There is a growing population of retirees moving to the area but fishing isn’t the main reason people visit or move to the town.

Perceptions of the State of the Ocean and its Resources

When talking about the state of the ocean and the health of the fish stocks the community had, overall, supportive comments on management. Most fishermen believe that the worst impact to Depoe Bay fishing came with the loss of salmon and the lack of hatchery fish being released. However these same fishermen expressed a common understanding of the need to regulate groundfish and the number of boats on the water. That being said they didn’t always agree with the techniques or science used to do this.

The overall sentiment was that the “ocean is the ocean, it’s cyclical, changes, but (is) pretty healthy”. When talking about fish stocks the opinion most often expressed was that certain stocks were healthier and in such abundance that the fishermen should be allowed to fish them. Species such as canary and yelloweye rockfish and cabazon were mentioned quite often as indicators of management’s inability to keep up with what is happening in the ocean. According to the fishing community in Depoe Bay these stocks have rebounded faster than scientists can track which is hurting ports like Depoe Bay.

“The oceans are changing faster than science can keep up with...hard to feed that into the fisheries management.”

For the fishing community presently in Depoe Bay, it is hard to understand how their activities could be having a detrimental impact on the fish stocks in their area. There was agreement that certain management decisions have had a

positive effect on the fish stocks near Depoe Bay and larger issues that affect other ports don't seem to affect Depoe Bay fishermen as much, like dead zones or the Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA). Depoe Bay is primarily affected by changes in fishing regulations for stocks found within state territorial waters such as marine reserve closures.

There were some community members that mentioned the possibility of rising ocean temperatures having an effect on fish species and weather changes keeping vessels off the water longer or at different times of the year. There was also concern expressed about unchecked populations of predators like the seals and sea lions. One individual asserted "the seal population absolutely decimated the flounder population" and another stated "the pinniped population is changing and currently out of balance" with the ecosystem.

"The canary rockfish are over-spilling their historical reefs and being caught in our shallow reefs in the summer. We should be allowed to keep one or two in our daily bag limit."

Perceptions of the Future

The fishing community members were asked to describe the future of Depoe Bay and their community in the next five years. First they were asked what they imagine the actual future would be like and then were asked to describe the future they would want to see if they had control.

Imagined future

The overall opinion of the community is that nothing will really change in Depoe Bay or the fishing community in the next five years. There will probably be an increase in private sport boats using the harbor, no change in the number of charter boats or companies, and whale watching and ecotourism will continue to grow as a focus of tourism.

Many of the community members thought commercial fishing would disappear from the harbor all together and that the city would have to install more parking, restrooms, showers and moorage for the increase in recreational sport fishing.

There was some hope that stocks like canary rockfish would become available and that more money and effort would be put toward stock assessments. Marine reserves were approached with hesitation by most of the community members as to the extent of their effects on the community.

"Marine reserves will have a lot of impact on whatever happens in Depoe Bay over the next five years."

Desired future

The future that most community members spoke of when they had complete control was surprisingly humble. The underlying desire of the community members was to preserve the fishing culture within Depoe Bay and increase tourism to keep the town a viable fishing village.

"I liked to see both (charter) offices communicate better."

The common desired future most expressed was a working waterfront with fish markets, processors, a crane and more facilities for tourists and recreational fishermen. Upgrading and repairing the port facilities, like the docks and parking lots, to accommodate a livelier waterfront that would draw tourists to the harbor and hopefully increase charter business. For this future to happen the community felt changes in fisheries management would be necessary, specifically opening the hatcheries, releasing more salmon and allowing harvesting of other species like canary and yelloweye. There was also a common desire to see more commercial fishermen back in the port.

This goes hand in hand with the desire to see upgraded facilities and options like more fueling stations and processing plants. Throughout the interviews there was concern expressed about lack of a new generation entering the charter industry but interestingly when asked about their desired future this concern was not addressed. It may be that the desire to see fishing in Depoe Bay stay viable and grow intuitively includes the introduction of a new generation of fishermen to the charter industry. Or that when asked this question the fishermen may have not been able to imagine a future without them-selves in it and didn't feel the need to make room for a new generation of fishermen. The question was only for the next five years which has a limiting factor on how it may be answered. If framed over a longer time period, like twenty years, the common desired future may be very different.





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