

RANCHO BODEGA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

DID YOU KNOW?

Exploding Boats

In 1953 the post-war fishing fleet had grown, the boats were powered by gasoline, not diesel. Fumes gathered in the vessels' holds, and were set off by a spark when they started their engines. "The explosions would wake us in the early hours. They rocked the town. You'd feel them even more than hear them," said Shirley Ames. "Men would be badly burned, and boats badly damaged."



The town knew it had to do something so it turned to Ames' father, the late Dusty Rhodes. Before moving to Bodega Bay to open a service station, he started a fire department in West Sacramento and served as chief. He did the same for Bodega Bay. The town began its first responder efforts by purchasing a used fire engine. The first firehouse was built by volunteer labor on land donated by the Aikens family. The town held dances and other fundraisers to buy the materials.

Honoring The Fishermen of Bodega Bay (Part 3)

by Andrea Granahan - 2022

There are some battles that can never be won because they cannot and should not ever be lost. They must be fought continually, over and over again.

Both environmentalists and commercial fishermen can give example after example of that type of battle. The battles to prevent dumping sewage into the ocean, the battles to save salmon runs in clean, unobstructed rivers, the battle to prevent the ocean floor from being stripmined, the battles to keep the oil industry out of fishery conservation zones at sea, and such, never end. Forces of greed or expediency are always ready to pounce.



A Steward of the Sea, is fisherman Dick Ogg, VP of the Bodega Bay Fishing Association.

Our fishing industry at first resisted joining forces with environmental organizations. The environmental groups began showing up at the Fisheries Forum in Sacramento, then began to attend other fishery related groups. (continued next page)

STEWARDS OF THE SEA IN BODEGA BAY

Honoring The Fishermen of Bodega Bay (Part 3)

Groups like the Sierra Club, National Resources Defense Council and others realized a vital, active industry already existed that needed such simple things as clean water, undisturbed streams and rivers, a pure ocean. Things environmentalists were already fighting for and where the fishing industry could add mighty force.

Both environmentalists and the fishing industry became uneasy but effective allies in many unending battles, but sometimes, like all good partnerships, they clash. To remain allies, they needed to work things out.

In Bodega Bay an important “steward of the sea” is fisherman Dick Ogg. Just as environmentalists attended fishery gatherings in the past, he represents the fishing industry at environmentalists gatherings. He is one of the Directors and the Vice President of the Bodega Bay Fishing Association (BBFA) led by President Loren Edwards. Ogg is a board member on the Cordell Bank Foundation, the Gulf of Farallones Foundation, and is an ecological liaison to the Pacific Fisheries Management Council, the federal agency that sets fishing seasons, and more.

Whale Entanglements. Lately, a huge concern has been a conflict between the crab fishery and migrating California Gray Whales. The fishing season has been seriously delayed



and shortened as a result. Ogg actively seeks solutions. At his own expense, he is traveling to Tasmania where a company is willing to use a gear design of his and test it to see if it will help avoid entanglement of whales.

Dick persuaded fishermen to voluntarily postpone a crab season opening even though the federal authorities approved it.

“There are a lot more whales of all ages than there were because they are protected. Immature adolescent

whales are like young human teens hanging out at convenience stores. That has led to many more adolescent whales, just hanging out along the coast where they find food,” Ogg says. Unlike older adult whales predictable mating migration patterns, “It’s those adolescent whales that are getting into trouble.

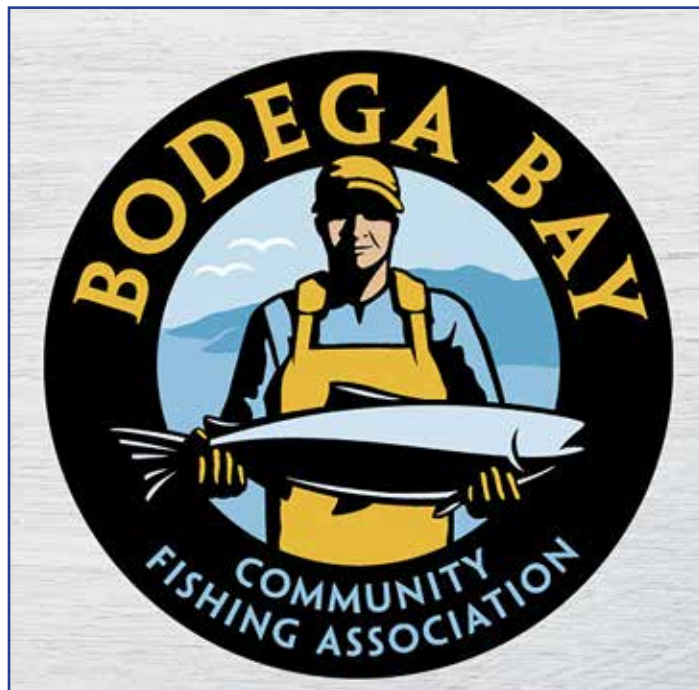
Think of our freeways. We can widen the roads, put airbags in cars, and all sorts of safety accessories, but there are still going to be some accidents and deaths. We have found

STEWARDS OF THE SEA IN BODEGA BAY

acceptable levels of deaths on the highways. But now, fishermen are being asked to do the impossible – 100 percent NO interaction with whales. We fishermen have to show all the action we can, try the hardest we can, to demonstrate we are doing our part,” Ogg says. “But accidents will happen. We just have to do everything we can to prevent them as much as possible.”

A few years ago, he persuaded fishermen to voluntarily postpone opening crab season, even though federal authorities had approved opening. Ogg saw there were more whales in peril than authorities counted. That was a major diplomatic move on the part of the industry impressing the government agency folks and the environmentalists.

Ogg says another major environmental problem that has arisen in recent years is **ocean debris**. The Great Pacific Garbage Patch which is larger than Texas horrifies most



people. Multiple agencies, governments and NGOs have tried to come up with clean-up plans. But ocean debris is also a local problem. Lost fishing gear is part of that debris. Whales become entangled in it. The Fishermen came up with a program to help fund efforts to retrieve lost gear. A California State program issues permits to groups and associations that retrieve gear.

“The state program had glitches to be worked out. I left it to work directly with BBFA on gear retrieval,” Ogg said.

Wind Generation Sounds Great! Or is it? Another environmental issue that Ogg foresees is one the fishing industry will need to educate the environmental groups about is – **offshore wind turbines**. Ogg who worked in electrical engineering for 25 years, sees them as potentially disastrous to fisheries.

“NGOs think they could be great but don’t recognize the potentially severe negative impacts: buried cables, a shadow effect of the interruption of winds, disruption of currents, even disrupting ocean upwelling that could change fishery migratory patterns.”

Offshore turbines are notoriously difficult to maintain and have short life spans resulting in more ocean debris.

There are a lot of challenges and always will be to keeping those valuable natural resources fish and people need. Stewards of Sea, if not Warriors of the Sea will always need to be on alert and ready to fight the next battle on the horizon. ■