

## Ship Report Transcript

Thursday, August 1, 2024

By Joanne Rideout

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Well, it's time for the ship report the show about all things maritime. I'm Joanne Rideout. It's Thursday, August 1st, 2024.

In our marine weather forecast, we're going to be looking at continued northerly winds and pretty benign seas, according to the National Weather Service through the weekend. We have north winds 10 to 15 knots today, gusting to 20 seas, 3 to 4 feet. Wave detail from the north, three feet high at 4 seconds apart and west three feet high at 9 seconds apart. So the weather is going to be beautiful this weekend and it will be a lovely time to be out enjoying our area.

And also today happens to be the beginning of the Buoy 10 fishery on the lower Columbia River, a very famous fishery that our area is known for. So people around town looking out at the waterfront from land will see lots of small boats this month. And through about the first half of September, lots of people will be out there fishing for salmon.

Buoy 10 refers to a buoy toward the mouth of the river that is the down river boundary for that fishery. Now, if you'd like to go fishing during this time, you can find a lot of information about rules and regulations and other information on the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife website, ODFW. England Marine here locally is also a great resource for fishing information.

But what I'd like to talk with you about today is safety. And you're probably not surprised if you've listened to the show for a while - I'm pretty big on safety. And when you have a lot of people out on the water here, the need for attention to safety just goes up. There's a lot of folks out there in small boats taking a certain amount of risk, going fishing, because what you want to do, of course, is to go out there and have a good safe time and not a nightmare.

So there are some things to know and remember for folks going out in boats on the river. So around this time of year, around Buoy 10, I always like to review this information, first of all, and very important during this time of year, really any time, but especially when the river is so crowded with small boats.

Stay out of the ship channel.

If you don't know where the ship channel is, it runs along the Astoria waterfront and curves around toward Warrenton, hugging the south side of the river corridor. You can get a chart of the river to see where it is. You can find it online for free. And you should, if you're going out. And its boundaries are marked with red and green navigational buoys. When you're out there, you can tell see where those bodies are in between. The red and green buoys is where the deep area is, where the ships go.

Now, the ship channel is very deep and it's the only place where ships can go. You and your small boat can go pretty much anywhere. The ships cannot turn to avoid you. In most cases, they just simply don't have enough room for evasive action. They're in the channel and if you get in their way, they can run. You and your boat down with bad consequences.

So folks on land tend to hear a lot of ship horns during the return as the ships sound their horns usually five consecutive blasts in a row to warn boaters who have allowed themselves to drift into the channel

while fishing. It's a source of real stress for pilots and crews on those ships because they see a lot of small boats scattered all over the river. They're very concerned with safety, but they can do very little to avoid you if you get in their way.

Ships also have a very large blind spot in front of them because the bridge where they steer from, is it the rear or stern of the ship? so there's a lot of area in front of the ship where they simply will not see you if your boat is there. Also, it can take a mile or more for a ship to even come close to stopping in the river. And a loaded ship heading downriver on an ebb current will often simply be unable to stop. So you up against a formidable adversary. If you tangle with a cargo ship. So watch out for yourself and stay out of the ship channel.

Another thing to be very mindful of is tides. I'm always saying this, but especially now for folks being out on the river quite a bit in beautiful weather, maybe focusing on the fish more than on the tides, especially the falling or ebbing tide.

The ODFW website in an advice page about ten, says that the incoming or rising tide will bring in fish. So that's a nice thing. So that's one reason fishermen pay attention to the tides, but the tides can really affect what happens to you, your ability to control your boat and the comfort, your comfort in the boat on the river, because you could get very turbulent on those ebbs. So the tide changes direction every 6 hours and the change from high slack tide to an ebbing or falling tide. While it's good for fishing, can be a dangerous time for boaters, especially on a large tidal exchange.

If the west wind is blowing. The boy ten area gets very rough during the ebb tide, especially in the shipping channel below the estuary, you make the bridge. So the second thing to look for, in addition to a chart of the lower river, is to look at tide tables and you can find them on your cell phone or you can find them online. You can buy a little tidal table booklet at some places like England Marine sometimes have them or hardware stores have them. Being on the river during a rough ebb is dangerous and it's a harrowing way to get a crash course in the overwhelming power of the river. If you have a smaller boat, this is a good time to stick close to the area where you launched your boat in case you need to head to the dock if conditions get rough.

If you see a day where there's a very high tide and a very low tide one after the other in the tide table, or vice versa, expect the ebb to be more turbulent because when there's a really high, high, high tide and a really low, low tide, it means that the amount of water being exchanged in the river over that same period is just greater than on days when the tidal exchange is lower. So there's a lot of water rushing down river between a high, high tide and a low, low tide. And that will make that ebb especially more turbulent.

ODFW advises fishermen and women to familiarize themselves with charts of the fishing area, as I said, and use a fish or depth finder for success and safety because there are dangerous shoals in the Buoy 10, fishing area and you should know about them before you get there. So a depth finder will help you avoid running aground on shallow shoals. Once you're out on the water and a fish finder will help you see how deep fish are suspended in the water column and where you should be fishing. But really, if you're new to fishing on the river here, consider hiring a guide. They know what they're doing. They can show you a great time and you'll probably catch some fish. Check the latest fishing regulations before you go. Fisheries can open and close on short notice. Columbia River Fisheries are managed on harvest guidelines and they protect populations of fish. So if it looks like too many fish are being caught, then they might shut it down and the final and perhaps most critical thing that I want to share with you today is wear a life jacket. If you're out on the river in a boat, it will buy you essential

and life saving time if somehow you end up in the water. If you do, you'll need that margin of safety, that a life jacket and only a life jacket. It's also called a PFD can give you as you wait for rescue, because if you've fallen, it's not that easy to get somebody out of the water once they fall in. And you'll need some time for someone to help you. And a life jacket can provide that for you.

So the bottom line with all of these things is be prepared, know what you're doing, Go out with a guide if you don't, so that they can help you and show you what to do and go out there and have fun. It's a wonderful time of year, but we do live in a very dynamic and potentially dangerous place and it's important to think about those things before we go out in a place like the Columbia River.

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