

River cruise giant breaks into Alaska waters



The cruise ship Viking Orion departs Berth 2 on Friday after its maiden voyage into Ketchikan.

Staff photo by Dustin Safranek

Ketchikan welcomes Viking Cruises

By SAM ALLEN
Daily News Staff Writer

Viking Cruises delved into Alaska waterways for the first time this past week with the Viking Orion — one of its six identical cruise ships.

"The soap tray, the pen in the stateroom is exact specifications on every single ship that we have," Viking Orion Cruise Consultant Michael Coleman told a group of Ketchikan borough and city officials during a tour last weekend.

The concept is to offer guests the same quality of experience every time. Coleman said guests will even request the same room number on future cruises.

About 70 percent of the people on board were repeat guests, according to Coleman. Some had been with the ship since in came to Alaska via

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Ketchikan Gateway Borough Mayor David Landis, left, and City of Ketchikan Mayor Bob Sivertsen present a Ketchikan gift to Captain Richard Svardmark during the Viking Orion's inaugural visit ceremony May 24 aboard the vessel.

Staff photo by Raegan Miller



Ketchikan Creek opens

KETCHIKAN (KDN) — As of June 1, Ketchikan Creek is open for sport fishing of all species until 11:59 p.m. on Dec. 31, according to a press release from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

Because the Deer Mountain Hatchery will not be collecting brood stock from the creek this year, there is an abundance of king salmon in Ketchikan Creek, according to the press release. The limit for king salmon caught from the creek will be two of any size, and will not count towards the nonresident annual limit.

The bag and possession limit for salmon other than king salmon, which are 16 inches or larger, is two per day in combination, and two in possession, according to ADF&G.

The only fishing gear permitted in Ketchikan Creek is one unbaited, single hook and artificial lures.

Kids Fishing Derby

KETCHIKAN (KDN) — The U.S. Forest Service, partnering with Alaska Department of Fish and Game and Southern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association, will host a Kids Fishing Derby on Saturday, June 8, at City Park.

Children from 3 years to 15 years of age are encouraged to attend. Children under age 8 are required to be accompanied by an adult.

There will be opportunities for children to fish for juvenile chinook salmon in the park's ponds, to make fishing lures, participate in a casting competition and to create fish prints.

Participants who would like to make a fish print will be provided with paper; alternatively, kids can bring a T-shirt on which to create their prints.

There will be a two-fish bag limit on fish, according to U.S. Forest Service staff. Single hooks sized eight to 10 are recommended.

Pre-registration is recommended, and registration forms can be found at the Gateway Recreation Center, located at 601 Schoenbar Road; at the U.S. Forest Service Ketchikan/Misty Fjords Ranger Station, located at 3031 Tongass Ave.; and at the Ketchikan Public Library, located at 1110 Copper Ridge Lane.

The Kids Fishing Derby will be held from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., Saturday, June 8, at City Park, located at 1600 Park Ave.

Atlantic salmon wanes

ST. ANDREWS, New Brunswick (AP) — A group that advocates for the conservation of Atlantic salmon says the North American catch has hit an all-time low, and signs are mixed about the salmon population's health.

The Atlantic Salmon Federation says the 2018 catch was a little less than 200,000 pounds. That's the lowest figure since record keeping began in 1972. The fish live in Maine and Canadian rivers and are caught in Canada.

While Atlantic salmon are ubiquitous in restaurants and supermarkets, those fish are raised on farms. The recreational and indigenous harvest is for personal use and subsistence.

Sea-running Atlantic salmon can't be legally caught in the U.S. because it's listed under the Endangered Species Act.

The group says the number of adult salmon returning to rivers increased for the first time since 2015. The returns of large salmon continued an ongoing declining trend.

Ferry strikes whale

SEATTLE (AP) — A ferry hit a humpback whale near Seattle and the Coast Guard initially searched for the animal after passengers reported it was injured and bleeding.

The whale surfaced Tuesday about five feet (1.5 meters) in front of the M/V Wenatchee during its morning trip from Seattle to Bainbridge Island across Puget Sound.

The crew at first thought the ferry had hit a log but later spotted the whale alongside the boat, ferries spokeswoman Diane Rhodes said. Passengers reported seeing the injured whale bleeding.

"The whale surfaced after being struck and gushing a lot of blood. It surfaced a few more times before sinking," Seattle resident Beth Andrus told The Seattle Times.

A FAMILY AFFAIR



From left, Morgan Wyatt and Eric Wyatt stand with Ben Crew and his family, Tymber Crew, Alexis Crew, Amber Merfeld and Macy Booth and the Crews' dog Chayer on May 7 in front of the Flupsy that Ben Crew built over a two-year period at the old pulp mill docks in Ward Cove. Not pictured are Eric Wyatt's wife, Cindy Wyatt, and his daughter, April Wyatt.

Crew Enterprises owner Ben Crew credited members of both families for significant assistance throughout the process. "We would never have been able to start or complete the project without the help that we received from our family," Crew said.

Staff photo by Dustin Safranek

Shoes ashore:

Shoes that fell off freighter in 2018 to hit beaches

By BO PETERSON
The Post and Courier

CHARLESTON, S.C. (AP) — Looking to score a nice new set of flip flops or running shoes this summer? Head to the beach.

Scrape off the barnacles. Wipe off the slime. These beauties could be right off the boat — the Maersk Shanghai that lost containers full of gear like it off North Carolina.

The only real hitch is you'll likely have to find them one at a time. But the gear might well be out there — or headed this way.

Since the containers spilled last year, more than 100 flip flops and shoes have shown up on beaches across the Atlantic, from Ireland to the Bahamas.

There haven't been any confirmed sightings in South Carolina, but litter clean-up crews don't keep track of individual footwear or brands they find.

And they find plenty of footwear. The problem is, they find it all over the place. Howard Hogue, the Isle of Palms' Beach Santa litter collector, has found flip flops as far off the beach as the municipal parking lot.

"Flip flops have always been a problem. We typically get a lot clothing and shoes in litter sweeps. It's creepy how many people lose their clothing

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HS senior to sail across the southern Indian Ocean

By JOE WOJTAS
The Day

STONINGTON, Conn. (AP) — If his mother had not registered him at the last minute for a children's summer camp at Mystic Aquarium, Stonington High School senior Jay Christopher may never have found his calling.

And it has nothing do to with whales, dolphins or fish.

This coming September, Christopher will head to Darwin, Australia, for a 90-day, 7,800-mile training voyage aboard a two-masted schooner that will earn him not only college credits but also

the opportunity to sit for the licensing exam to captain 200-ton yachts.

And while his post-high-school plans are very much different from those of his classmates, so was his high school experience, as he was enrolled in an internship program the past two years in which he mixed time in the classroom with performing maintenance such as sanding and varnishing the schooner Brilliant at Mystic Seaport Museum during his junior year and working for an oyster farming business in Noank this year.

"It's hard work but good work. It's a different kind of work on the water than I've ever done,"

he said about the two jobs.

But back to his summer camp story.

When he was 8, his grandparents were unable to come up from Florida to take care of him during the summer while his parents, Cheryl and Jeff, were at work. So his mother enrolled him in the aquarium summer camp. What she didn't know was that campers spent the mornings at the aquarium and the afternoons at the Seaport's sailing center. Soon after, Christopher said, he ditched the aquarium part of the camp and spent all day at the sailing center.

He was hooked.

By the age of 10, he was sailing competitively with Thames Yacht Club, New England Science and Sailing and the Mudratz. He bought an Optimist, a small single-handed sailing dinghy.

Since he was 16, he has been the lead instructor for the Seaport's community youth sailing program. Most days in the spring, summer and fall, he can be found at the sailing center teaching.

"I'll sail anything," he said.

As for how he approached his post-graduation plans, Christopher admitted, "I'm not really the best student in school."

Link to stress, health of whales might be in giant mouths

By PATRICK WHITTLE
Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine — Whale researchers in New England believe they've found a new way to measure the amount of stress felt by whales when they experience traumas such as entanglements in fishing gear, and they say the technique could help protect the massive sea creatures from extinction.

The scientists, with the New England Aquarium in Boston, said the method involves measuring stress hormones by studying baleen, the bristly filter-feeding system in the mouths of the biggest whales on the planet. The baleen serves as a record that shows a spike in stress hormones when whales encounter threats such as a changing climate, ship strikes and entanglements, lead author Rosalind Rolland said.

Scientists can use the data to read

the stress levels a whale experiences over the course of many years, somewhat similar to reading the rings on a tree. The data is important because whales experiencing more chronic stress are less likely to reproduce, and they can become more susceptible to disease — a bad combination for populations that are perilously low.

"A whale responding to any type of stressor could be interacting with a ship. It could be fishing gear. It could be environmental changes that stress the whale out," Rolland said in a telephone interview. "This shows the stress hormones are related to what was going on with the whale."

The group published its research online in the journal Marine Mammal Science in March. The scientists reported the appearance of a whale's baleen reflects the adrenal glands

pumping out stress hormones as they fight a life-threatening circumstance. By analyzing the baleen after whales die, scientists can learn about spikes in stress hormones.

The scientists performed their work on a baleen plate from a bowhead whale that had been badly entangled in fishing gear. The whale was killed off Alaska in 2017 by

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In this undated photo provided by the New England Aquarium in May, Dr. Rosalind Rolland, Director of Ocean Health and a Senior Scientist in the Research Department at the New England Aquarium in Boston, stands on a boat next to a southern right whale taken during an expedition to the Auckland Islands, an archipelago of New Zealand.

Scott Kraus/New England Aquarium via AP

