Oregon Commercial Fishing Industry Economic Impacts Were Modestly High in Year 2025
June 12, 2026

The Oregon onshore commercial fishing industry's economic contributions were modestly high in Year 2025. Harvesting and processing businesses generated $369 million income (including multiplier effects) to households in Oregon last year. This is slightly more income than the previous 5-year average (2025 dollars) $359 million (income). The 2025 generated income represents about 5,400 jobs in Oregon. Business total economic activity (defined as harvesting and primary processing business output) was $863 million in 2025. The economic contribution income trend for a 50-year period is shown in Figure 1.

While total landings were up in 2025, commercial and recreational fishing participants are subject to catch and access variability as well as volatile market conditions. For example, seafood demand surged during the 2020, 2021 pandemic years. This drove up prices causing domestic seafood sales to wane in 2022. Processors and distributors were stuck with the freezer stockpiles and were forced to cut prices to move the inventories in 2023. Offerings to harvesters reflected the new lower price levels in 2023. Since 2023, prices have largely recovered to pre-pandemic year conditions with the exception of pink shrimp. There are increasing biophysical effects from climate change that will exacerbate harvest variability. There will be other conflicting spatial uses of the ocean, such as wave/wind energy generation, telecommunication seabed cables, and whale migration routes. Also facing the industry are agile foreign market competitors, increased regulation, changes in consumer tastes, new technologies, and changing societal values toward natural resources protection.

The findings are from an investigation completed by The Research Group, Corvallis, Oregon for the Oregon Coast Visitors Association (OCVA). Marcus Hinz, Executive Director OCVA says: "it's welcome news among the doom and gloom heard about our natural resources. It shows this industry's significance in Oregon's blue economy and the importance for supporting associated businesses and workforce." The OCVA is actively engaged in promotion programs to increase local consumer demand and higher utilization of local harvests. Marcus continues: "the commercial and recreational fishing opportunities are draws for increased tourism on the Oregon Coast. Eco- and culinary-oriented travelers are attracted to destinations that demonstrate strong natural resource assets and stewardship."

A contributing author to the investigation Hans Radtke, Ph.D. from Yachats says: "there were ups and downs in particular fisheries, but overall 2025 was a great year for multi-fishery participants. Unprecedented high beef prices combined with the health benefits are driving consumers to think about using seafood as a substitute." Higher demand, which can maintain harvest prices, is returning after a big drop in seafood sales in the post-pandemic years. Oregon exporting is now facing new challenges from international trade barriers and tariffs. The trade interruptions hit some fisheries harder than others. For example, as much as 40 percent of the Dungeness crab catch is sold as "live" which is largely exported to Asia markets.

The total harvest value for Oregon commercial fishing onshore deliveries in 2025 was $223.3 million.

- The **Dungeness crab** fishery season in 2025 had a record high average dock price, and coupled with average catch levels, generated Oregon's second highest season harvest value at $107.5 million. The crab fishery has comprised half of all fisheries' harvest value in past seasons. The fleet uses pots to catch crab. Landings are largely during the months of December and January depending on season opening regulations. The season months rather than calendar months were used to estimate this fishery's annual economic contributions.

- The troll gear **albacore tuna** fishery catch and price were up in 2025. The harvest value was $17.9 million. There is increased domestic demand for sushi and canned tuna products. The fishery has received certification for being managed sustainably which has driven up consumer interest.

- **Black cod** had phenomenal landings in 2025 given higher quotas due to several good recruitment years that moved high abundance juvenile fish into sizes fishable by the fleet. The harvest value was $15.1 million. Alaska and West Coast landings kept supplies high and prices low. There is a large Japanese market for this fish and lower prices induced the export demand. Consumers find black cod to be an acceptable cost substitute for higher priced white fish such as halibut and scallops.

- Onshore landings of **Pacific whiting** were up in 2025 at $21.7 million harvest value. The deliveries were disbursed at several regional fishing centers along the Oregon Coast in recent years, however all landings were made to Astoria area ports in 2025. There are several products manufactured from whiting including surimi which can be made into a crab substitute product. There are markets both for fillets and headed and gutted products. Another product is whole frozen fish exported to Africa nations. Carcasses from whiting and other groundfish fillets are made into fish meal at plants along the Columbia River. The fishery operates under a separate quota than the onshore whiting fishery. A new whiting supply chain mode occurred starting in 2024 for the offshore whiting fishery. Large processing only vessels called motherships receive deliveries from catcher vessels and there are other vessels that catch and process. Instead of just fishing/freezing, then traveling to Puget Sound ports, the catcher-processors instead transferred some of their processed product in Coos Bay to a small cargo ship. The cargo ship when loaded commuted to Puget Sound. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife collected ad valorem taxes on the transfers as if they were an onshore whiting delivery.

- **Pink shrimp** had record high landing volume but had continued supply pressured prices in 2025. There has been lingering lower food service demand since the pandemic. More recently, the European market has reduced demand under trade tariff battles. Procurement through the USDA commodities purchase programs helped absorb supply surplus, but it was not a sufficient influence to return prices to pre-pandemic levels. With the lower prices, the harvest value was only notably up at $29.5 million. This Oregon regulated fishery typically in recent years provided about 15 percent of Oregon total harvest value. This fishery is certified as sustainable.

- **Other rockfish and groundfish** prices are stunted with landings limited by low management quotas. The harvest value not including black cod was $16.6 million in 2025. The participating fleet is buoyed by the news that some selected species (canary rockfish, shortspine thornyhead, and petrale sole) have an emergency 10 percent increase in quotas for the 2026 season. Species in this category can constrain catch of other healthy biomass species in mixed stock fisheries. Once vessel quotas are reached, all gear dependent fishing must stop.

- The Oregon **salmon** fishery community impacts had an uptick in 2025 mostly due to higher Columbia River net gear Chinook fishery landings. The ocean and Columbia River (deliveries to the Oregon side) commercial fishery harvest value in 2025 was $10.4 million. The current ocean salmon fishery is greatly diminished due to low abundance levels of contributing stocks from the Columbia River, Klamath River and California central valley rivers.

- There have been **other fisheries** in the past that have had substantial harvests. Example fisheries are Pacific sardine and market squid. The northern population of Pacific sardine is at a low point of what seems to be a 30-year cycle. There were positive explorative catch levels for market squid in 2025. It could be this means higher abundances for the 2026 season. Purse seine gear is used for the fishery. A large number of vessels using this gear are attracted from Bellingham and southern California for the fishing opportunity.

There is onboard equipment technology upgrading and processing business consolidation occurring in the commercial fishing industry. The industry's harvest efficiency is gaining (number of harvesting vessels is decreasing and remaining vessels have increased average revenue). Processor businesses are centralizing. For example, the large processor business Borstein Seafood has left Newport and instead is doing all Oregon processing in Astoria. Whiting processing plants in Charleston and Newport owned by Pacific Seafood are not operating in favor of operations located in the Astoria area. Successful vessel businesses are diversified in multiple fisheries to avoid the vagrancies (due to low cycles of abundance, adverse weather, market conditions, etc.) that can happen in single fisheries. There used to be hundreds of salmon fishery only vessels on the Oregon Coast. Surviving vessel businesses have acquired permits to combine salmon fishing with other species like tuna, crab, rockfish, etc.

The commercial fishing industry catch levels are highly regulated by the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission and the Pacific Fishery Management Council. Both entities use conservation approaches in their management. The healthy fisheries in 2025 are a testament to regulation success for protecting fish populations and marine habitats. The regulations allow populations to reproduce and replenish, while minimizing negative impacts on the broader marine ecosystem, such as through bycatch or habitat destruction.

The total commercial fishing industry (from local harvesting/processing, aquaculture and participation in distant water fisheries) has generated about 10 percent of all earned income within Oregon coastal counties in 2021 (OCVA January 2024). The economic impact varies from about 4 percent in Tillamook County to 16 percent in Clatsop and Lincoln counties. The Coos and Curry counties economic impact was about 6 and 5 percent of all earned income respectively.

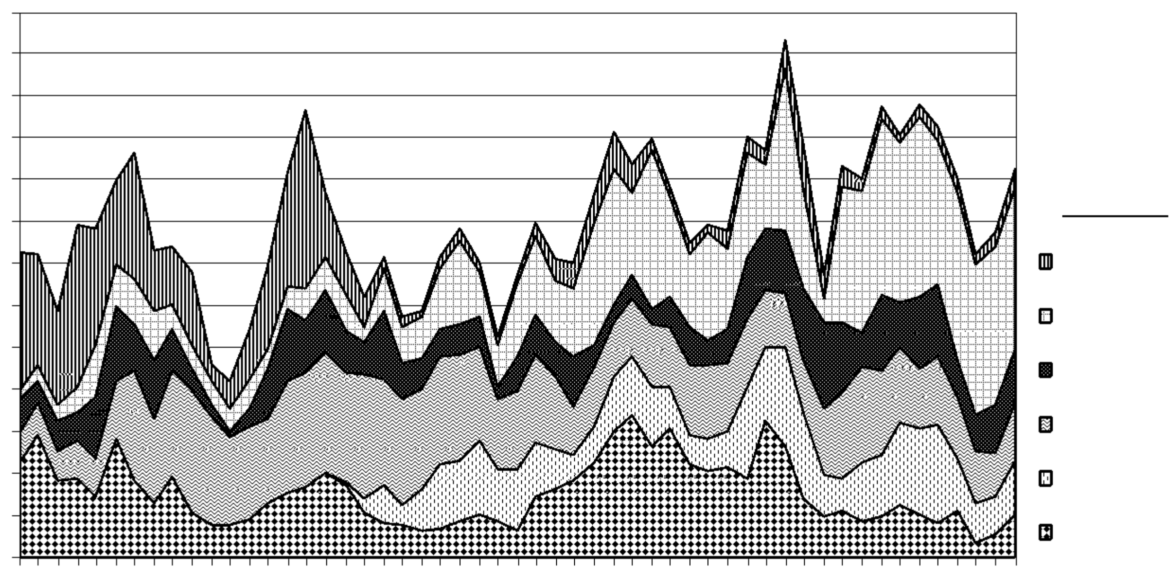
At some Oregon ports, distant water fishery participation by Oregon residents can be more than one-third of the total commercial fisheries economic impacts. However, the investigation showed there was declining Alaska fisheries' harvest value in recent years.

Oregon onshore landings from harvests in the ocean and Columbia River catch areas are processed into seafood products that are sold locally or are shipped to high volume processing and distribution centers. The seafood products enter niche or commodity markets, both domestic and global. Those commodity markets include product substitutes that influence the price paid to processors and distributors that buy from Oregon harvesters. For example, many of the species landed in Oregon also are landed in greater numbers in Alaska and British Columbia. For a comparison, Oregon's harvest value in 2021 was only seven percent of all U.S. West Coast, Alaska, and British Columbia landings.

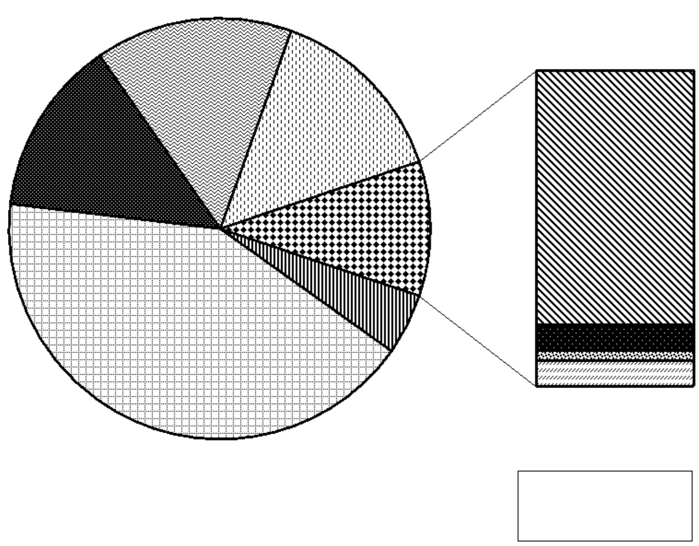
Harvesters are facing increasing fixed costs in capital, vessel repairs, moorage, insurance (hull, indemnity, liability), etc. and continue to be in uncertain revenue positions. Processors were not buying in certain fisheries in 2022 even though a vessel had the license, quota and platform to catch. Fish prices are undependable, for example in recent years pink shrimp was double and black cod was more than three times what they are today. Surveys show vessels barely cover the variable costs (fuel, crew shares, etc.) of operations in some fisheries. Slim margins make the business high risk let alone the work being physically demanding and dangerous. The health of the industry has a social context for the well-being of harvesters, processor workers, affected communities, and ultimately the public. Studies show Oregonians not only care about natural resource conservation, but have empathy and appreciate the lifestyle of the participants. Those involved in the industry know its vagaries: part-time employment, changes in abundances, dangerous weather conditions, volatile prices, and seeming unending surprises in management and regulations. Families and businesses must be dynamic and flexible to survive and prosper. Their resilience and innovation is celebrated by those that enjoy Oregon seafood.

Figure 1

Economic Contributions From Onshore Landings in 1973 to 2025



Economic Contributions by Major Fishery in 2025



Notes: 1. Economic contributions are expressed as labor income (includes multiplier effect) in millions of 2025 dollars. Real dollar adjustment uses the GDPIPD. Economic level is statewide.

2. Economic contributions are calendar years for all fisheries except the Dungeness crab fishery which are seasons (December 1 through November 30) in 2020 and forward.