## Eyes Over Puget Sound

## Summary

Art \& Critters

## Surface Conditions Report: Sept 8, 2021



Up-to-date observations of water quality conditions in Puget Sound and coastal bays


Editor: Dr. Christopher Krembs, editorial assistance: Holly Young, Valerie Partridge.

Puget Sound is beautiful and inspiring

| Summary | Art \& Critters | Climate \& streams | Combined factors | Marine water | Aerial photos | Data |
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Showcasing the natural beauty of
Puget Sound through
Artists corner
photography
"Arteries of life": North Fork of the Skagit River flowing into Skagit Bay

Puget Sound is beautiful and inspiring

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## Puget Sound is beautiful and inspiring

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Artists corner
"The straight way is not always the best way": North Fork of the Skagit River flowing into Skagit Bay

Puget Sound is beautiful and inspiring
Summary
Art \& Critters
Climate \& streams
Combined factors
Marine water

"The green caterpillar": Memorial Highway 20, Twin Bridges

Puget Sound is beautiful and inspiring

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Artists corner

## Puget Sound is beautiful and inspiring

Summary<br>Art \& Critters<br>Climate \& streams<br>Combined factors<br>Marine water $\quad$ Aerial photos

Puget Sound is beautiful and inspiring

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Artists corner

## Critter of the Month - The Pacific Sand Dollar



## Dendraster eccentricus

The washed-up remains of this beautiful critter may be easy to find on Washington's beaches, but sand dollars are anything but common. They can orient themselves with the water current, find their friends, and breathe through flowers. In fact, l'd say these amazing creatures are "worth their weight in sand"!

## Fun Sand Dollar Facts

- Juveniles swallow sand grains for ballast so they don't get washed away
- You can age them like trees, by counting the rings
- They have "birds" inside of them




In the month of August, Puget Sound air temperatures were above normal with some north-south variability, while precipitation continued to be below normal (A). In the next 30 days, temperatures are expected to be near normal, while precipitation may be above normal in some areas (B). Extreme heat and prolonged dry conditions led to a drought emergency declaration in mid-July, but excluded the Snohomish, Duwamish-Green, and Cedar-Sammamish watersheds due to adequate storage.

## A. Northwest Climate Toolbox (Previous 30 days)



Temperature Anomaly
from historical mean ranged from -3 to $+3^{\circ} F$ in the Puget Sound region during the past 30 days.


## Precipitation Anomaly

from historical mean ranged from 0 to -5 inches in the Puget Sound region during the past 30 days.

## B. Northwest Climate Toolbox (Next 30 days)



Temperature Anomaly from historical mean is forecasted to be $+/-1^{\circ} \mathrm{F}$ in the Puget Sound region during the next 30 days.


Precipitation Anomaly from historical mean is forecasted to be between 2 and +1.5 inches in the Puget Sound region during the next 30 days.

Temporal: Following extreme heat in late June, which rapidly melted snowpack, streamflow levels dropped to below normal (trend charts, left). Typically, snowmelt occurs gradually, which sustains streamflow later into the summer. Spatial: Streamflow conditions (map, right) currently vary from normal to the lowest recorded for a particular date at that location. Normal flow conditions are found at snow-dominated watersheds with reservoir storage, while low-flow conditions are found in rain-dominated watersheds, or those without reservoirs that can gradually release water.

Select Puget Sound Streamflow Trends Current Streamflow Conditions as of 9/08/2021


Summary

| Art \& Critters | Climate \& streams | Combined factors | Marine water |
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Historically, the peaks of coastal upwelling and the freshet are in sync.


The Fraser River is the major driver of estuarine circulation and water exchange between the Salish Sea and the ocean. The Fraser River flows in summer 2021 were lower than expected. Upwelling off the coast appears earlier.

Three-year running average of PDO, Upwelling, and NPGO Indices


How do ocean boundary conditions affect the quality of water the Salish Sea exchanges with the ocean? Water has gradually cooled (PDO). Upwelling (Upwelling Index anomaly) is at expected level. Productivity in the eastern Pacific is lower (NPGO) (last updated June 2021).

Pacific Decadal Oscillation Index (PDO, temperature, explanation). Upwelling Index (anomalies) (Upwelling, Iow oxygen, explanation). North Pacific Gyre Oscillation Index (NPGO, productivity, explanation).

The Skagit River is the largest freshwater source for Puget Sound. It is a river that is regulated.

Skagit River (at midnight USGS)


The Skagit River freshet is no longer clearly pronounced, because it is a regulated system for hydroelectric power generation. However, drought years and low flows can be seen in the river's discharge data. In 2021, flows are lower.

Rivers strengthen estuarine circulation in the Salish Sea. This is important in the summer.

Upwelled ocean water provides cool, nutrient-rich water.

For that to happen, we need northerly winds and good river flows (a good snowpack) during periods of water exchange through Admiralty Reach (neap tides).

| Art \& Critters | Climate \& streams | Combined factors | Marine water |
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In the anomaly plot, we want to connect different factors influencing water quality in the context of space and time. We do this with a heat map and anomalies by month for selected regions from north to south. All data are from public sources: UW GRAYSKIES; river flows from USGS and Environment Canada; indices from NOAA \& UW (PDO).

## Conditions leading up to September:

Air temperatures have been mostly warmer this summer.

Precipitation has been much below normal since March, and is markedly lower than in 2020.

Cloud cover - Low cloud cover (sunny condition) follows low precipitation in 2021.

River flows are lower in 2021 than in 2020.

Upwelling has been variable this summer. PDO \& ENSO are in cold phase (La Niña).


[^0]
## Boundary conditions lead to salinity fluctuations

Marine Water Conditions: 2021 temperature, salinity, and dissolved oxygen

Coastal Bays
T: Low
S: Station
DO: Attainment

Salish Sea
T: Expected with high temperatures in shallow inlets
S: Salinity normalizing
DO: Variable with lower conditions in Central Basin (box).

In July, a sizable pulse of melt water from the Fraser and Skagit weakened the positive salinity anomaly (box). Oxygen in Central Sound was lower than expected in August.


| Summary | Art \& Critters | Climate \& streams | Combined factors | Marine water | Aerial photos | Data |
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Colorful red and red-brown blooms occur in many bays across the region. Liberty Bay has a green bloom. Jellyfish occur in unusual places (Dyes Inlet, Carr Inlet) and are absent in typical places. Macroalgae and organic debris still numerous in South, Central Sound and Padilla Bay.


Abundant jellyfish in Dyes Inlet, and potentially in Carr Inlet and Quartermaster Harbor; also present in East Sound

## Suspended sediment:

Port Susan, and bays with glacially-fed rivers: Skagit, Nooksack, Puyallup

## Visible blooms:

Green: Liberty Bay, Port Susan
Red: Marrowstone Island, Case and Henderson Inlets
Red-brown: Budd, Eld, and Sinclair Inlets; Sequim and Samish
Bay; East Sound
Brown: Lopez Sound

## Debris:

Numerous patches of macroalgae and organic debris in South and Central Puget Sound, Port Susan, Padilla and Samish Bays


## Aerial navigation guide

 Date: 9-8-2021
## Click on numbers

Flight Observations High visibility, rain over San Juan Islands

Contributed observations


Tide data from 9-8-2021 (Seattle):

| Time |  | High/Low |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| 12:28 AM | 3.47 | L |
| 06:06 AM | 10.45 | H |
| 12:28 PM | 0.23 | L |
| 06:58 PM | 11.63 | H |

## Connect aerial observation with data from ORCA moorings



NANOOS NVS Data Explorer

View products by mooring

Puget Sound
(1) Carr Inlet
(2) Dabob Bay
(3) Hoodsport
(4) Hansville
(5) Point Wells
(6) Twanoh

Salish Sea
(7) Bellingham Bay
(8) Friday Harbor



Strong red-brown bloom. Location: Budd Inlet (South Sound), 11:34 AM

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Red-brown bloom and milky-white water originating in Young Cove. Location: Eld Inlet (South Sound), 11:35 AM


Different-colored water originating from A. Oakland Bay. B. Water remaining separated while flowing north. Location: Totten Inlet (South Sound), 11:38 AM

# Aerial photography 9-8-2021 



Large raft of organic material. Location: Anderson Island (South Sound ), 11:46 AM


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A.

B.


Large of organic debris drifting between A. West Point and B. Kingston.
Location: Carr Inlet (Central Sound), 12:01 PM

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The wake of a boat reveals A. a thin surface layer of lower-density water and B-C. slightly warmer water from Whidbey Basin entering Central Sound. Location: Edmonds (Central Sound), 12:12 PM



Long oil sheen stretching from Hat Island to Camano Head.
Location: Entrance to Port Susan (Whidbey Basin), 12:17 PM

# Aerial photography 9-8-2021 


A. Stillaguamish estuary with B. relatively cool tideflat despite sunshine. C. Large rafts of organic material of different color and composition. Location: Port Susan (Whidbey Basin), 12:23 PM

## Aerial photography 9-8-2021



Very green bloom in an old disconnected slough. Very different water colors in Telegraph and Blind Sloughs and as the water enters the Swinomish Channel. Location: Swinomish Channel (North Sound), 12:33 PM

## 12 <br> ECOLOMTMENT OF State of Washington <br> Aerial photography 9-8-2021



Padilla Bay seagrass experiences much cooler temperatures north of the tidal gully. Sediment from south of the gully discolors the water. Location: Padilla Bay (North Sound), 12:35 PM

##  State of Washington <br> Aerial photography 9-8-2021



Large rafts of organic material drifting in water discolored by a bloom.
Location: Padilla Bay (North Sound), 12:36 PM

A. Strong red bloom and drifting organic material in Samish Bay. B-C. Red-brown bloom in Squalicum Harbor. Location: A. Samish Bay, B-C. Bellingham Bay (North Sound), 12:40 PM

## Aerial photography 9-8-2021

Navigate


Plumes of the forks of the Nooksack River moving in opposite directions.
Location: Bellingham Bay (North Sound), 12:46 PM

## Aerial photography 9-8-2021


A. Drayton Harbor with seagrass. B. Front and different water masses at entrance to Birch Bay. C. Schools of fish near seagrass bed. Location: A. Drayton Harbor, B-C. Birch Bay (North Sound), 12:53 PM

A. Patches of jellyfish, red-brown bloom (low visibility due to rain) and B. macroalgae on beach in Ship Bay. Location: East Sound, Orcas Island (North Sound), 1:07 PM


Red-brown algae bloom from East Sound mixing with clearer water entering via Obstruction Pass.
Location: East Sound, Orcas Island (North Sound), 1:12PM

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Strong brown bloom and organic material accumulating at a distinct front. Location: Shoal Bay (North Sound), 1:12 PM


Macroalgae growing around perimeter of False Bay. Location: San Juan Island (San Juan Islands), 1:24 PM


Bloom, tidal front, organic material, and suspended sediment near western shoreline. Location: Sequim Bay (North Sound), 1:40 PM


Very red-brown bloom spanning the entire length of Kilisut Harbor, from the entrance of the bay to Scow Bay. Location: Marrowstone Island (Central Sound), 1:50 PM

A. Long ribbons of organic material drifting at surface. B. Turquoise-colored water in Mats Mats Bay. Location: A. Port Ludlow, B. Mats Mats Bay (Central Sound), 1:54 PM


Bright-green bloom patches in shallow portions of Liberty Bay.
Location: Liberty Bay (Central Sound), 2:02 PM

## Aerial photography 9-8-2021


A. Milky-white patches and red-brown bloom in Ostrich Bay. B-D. Jellyfish patches in Ostrich and Oyster Bays.

Location: Dyes Inlet (Central Sound), 2:08 PM


Strong red-brown bloom, but no jellyfish. Location: Sinclair Inlet (Central Sound), 2:11 PM

jellyfish?


Turqouise patch that appeared granular, which could be a diffuse patch of jellyfish.
Location: Carr Inlet (Central Sound), 2:18 PM

A. Red-brown and red bloom. B. It matters on which side of the bridge one takes a plankton sample! Location: Case Inlet (South Sound), 2:22 PM

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Strong red-brown bloom with turquoise water mixing in from Chapman bay. Schools of fish near Cliff Point. Location: Henderson Inlet (South Sound), 12:42 PM

We add your observations to EOPS because we believe they matter.

- In the following pages you will find water quality issues that engaged and concerned citizens submitted to us.
- We feel that your observations should be shared side-by-side with aerial photo records.
- We encourage you to share your observations with us. Together we can document more.


## (3) $19 h_{n}$

## People contribute their observations

Navigate

Summary


Mya Keyzers, 7/14/2021, East Sound, Orcas Island

# (33) NANAK <br> <br> People contribute their observations 

 <br> <br> People contribute their observations}


Jacquelyn Stenman and Michael Dawson, 7/20/2021, Port Ludlow, stench complaint (ERTS\#708105)

# (3) Mind 


"For the past week I have noticed periodic red/rust discoloration in the water and today it looks like almost half of the channel leading out to Dyes Inlet was dyed this rust/red color".


Josephine Strauss, 7/23/2021, Oyster Bay, Madrona Point and channel that leads out to Dyes Inlet

## (3) 1 M h a


"I've been seeing a red tint in Puget Sound along the Bainbridge ferry route. There have been several spots of light orange-green algae, too. I also suspect it could be waste, but l'm not really a scientist, just an enthusiast".


Jim Baker, 8/4/2021, organic material rafts, Port Orchard

#  <br> <div class="inline-tabular"><table id="tabular" data-type="subtable">
<tbody>
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<table-markdown style="display: none">| Summary | Art \&amp; Critters | Climate \&amp; streams | Combined factors | Marine water | Aerial photos | Data |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |</table-markdown></div> <br> "Nearly an everyday occurrence here. The water glowed blue effervescent, probably because of the algae. Never seen that before? 

Maria Mason, 8/5/2021, Bainbridge Island facing West Point

## (3) 1 M M h <br> People contribute their observations


"The bloom extended into Shilshole Bay - West Point and Meadow Point with patches of decaying material at the surface - everywhere! A sailing teammate told me that he and his wife have been going out on their paddleboards at night to see the bioluminescence". Click here bioluminescence in Puget Sound

Julia Boss, 8/11/2021, Shilshole Marina


Grace McKenney, 8/12/2021, green bloom in Bowman Bay

# (40) MN M \& 



4
Alysha Dotson, 8/16/2021, macroalgae in Elliott bay

DEPARTMENT OF

## Get your marine monitoring data from us

| Art \& Critters | Climate \& streams | Combined factors | Marine water | Aerial photos |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |

## Long-term monitoring data from Puget Sound and coastal bays

- 39 stations sampled monthly
- 16 physical, chemical, biogeochemical parameters
- data from 1999-present



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## Contact:

Dr. Christopher Krembs Christopher.Krembs@ecy.wa.gov Marine Monitoring Unit Environmental Assessment Program Washington State Department of Ecology

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[^0]:    *Upwelling/downwelling Anomalies (PFEL)
    PDO = Pacific Decadal Oscillation
    ENSO = El Niño Southern Oscillation

