

Today	Wednesday	Thursday
High: 56 Low: 44 Precip: 80%	High: 58 Low: 44 Precip: 10%	High: 58 Low: 47 Precip: 40%

IN BRIEF

Sea otter spotted at Oregon coast

CHARLESTON — A lone sea otter spotted at Simpson Reef on Cape Arago might be a sign that the species is beginning a natural recolonization of the Oregon coast, naturalists said.

"There were thousands of them here once, and I think we've got room for dozens of them today," said Wendell Wood, Southern Oregon field representative for the Oregon Natural Resources Council.

The last official sighting of the otter, who spent at least six months in the area, came on Labor Day weekend, when the season ended for volunteers who staff the overlook there.

A student at the Oregon Institute of Marine Biology in Charleston looked earlier this month but didn't spot the otter.

The otter could still be there, said Jan Hodder, the institute mammalogist. It will take multiple failed sightings before reaching the conclusion that the animal has left, she said.

In the past decade, confirmed sightings of sea otters along the Oregon coast have noticeably increased, said Roy Lowe, project leader for the Oregon Coast National Wildlife Refuge.

In addition to several sightings near Simpson Reef, sea otters have been spotted at Cape Blanco, Yachats and Yaquina Bay in recent years.

This particular otter is the only one that has stuck around for a while, as far as anyone knows. The only suitable habitat in Oregon for sea otters is on the south coast, near shore reefs where kelp beds attract their favorite foods, sea urchins and abalone.

Sea otters are the smallest marine mammals, growing to four feet long and ranging from 45 to 65 pounds.

Their fur — 600,000 to 1 million hairs per square inch — is the thickest of any animal and was highly prized by fur hunters. The animal was hunted to extinction in Oregon in 1906.

Democrats signing up more new voters

The Democrats appear to be gaining the upper hand in the battle to sign up new voters in the all-important swing states, an Associated Press analysis said. The AP analysis of the most up-to-date figures from across the country found that, in every state where complete data is available, the Democrats have registered more new voters than Republicans. They have the edge in Arizona, Iowa, New Mexico, Nevada and New Hampshire.

Anglicans criticize U.S. Episcopal Church

LONDON — On Monday an Anglican church commission urged the U.S. Episcopal Church not to elect any more gay bishops and called on conservative African bishops to stop meddling in the affairs of other dioceses. The commission, created last year after the consecration of V. Gene Robinson as bishop of New Hampshire, called for apologies from both sides and for reconciliation among the world's Anglican churches.

Foreign student enrollment declines in Oregon

College campuses nationally are struggling to attract foreign students

because of concerns about terrorism and heightened security requirements and Oregon schools are no exception.

At Lane Community College, the number of foreign students has stayed flat for the past three years. Before Sept. 11, 2001, the number was growing at more than 6 percent per year.

And the University has seen its international enrollment drop from a peak of almost 1,700 in 1997 to an estimated 1,170 this year.

Colleges want international students for two reasons: for the diversity of their backgrounds and because they typically pay high nonresident tuition and fees.

For example, if Lane Community College, were to increase its enrollment of international students by 200, it would bring in an estimated \$345,689 in annual revenue after expenses, according to a staff analysis.

Oregon campuses are now debating whether to spend the money to actively recruit such students, but it's not clear that even that will be enough to boost international enrollment.

Residents of many Islamic countries now face demanding, time-consuming background checks, and if they plan to study in one of a number of technical fields deemed sensitive by the State Department, they face further hurdles and often are denied. And in certain non-Islamic countries such as China, potential students also are finding it difficult to get a visa.

Magid Shirzadegan, director of international student and scholar services at the University, said the number of students coming to the University from places such as China, the Middle East and Indonesia has been on an especially noticeable decline.

— The Associated Press

Iraq introduces weapons buyback to disarm cities

Iraqi forces ready to fight terrorists, Prime Minister Allawi said following a recent eruption of violence

BY TINI TRAN  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Iraqi Prime Minister Ayad Allawi announced Monday to extend a cash-for-weapons program for Shiite fighters in Baghdad's Sadr City to cities nationwide in an attempt to disarm the country.

The announcement came as fresh violence erupted in Baghdad and Mosul. Multiple car bombs over a two-day period claimed at least 12 lives, and a militant group, the Islamic Army in Iraq, claimed to have headed two Macedonian hostages.

U.S. forces also reported fresh attacks against alleged terrorist strongholds in Fallujah.

The government launched the cash-for-guns program in Sadr City as part of a deal to end weeks of fighting in the Shiite district of Baghdad and has twice extended the deadline for fighters to hand in their weapons.

On Monday, Allawi told the National Council, a government oversight body, that the program is going so well he wants to extend it to the rest of Iraq.

"The government is determined to disarm cities and neighborhoods because our forces are now ready to fight terrorists and there's no

justification for people to keep weapons at home," Allawi said.

Iraqi officials hope that Sunni Muslim leaders in the insurgent-torn city of Fallujah can be persuaded to negotiate a similar weapons buyback deal.

But Fallujah, the focal point of the Sunni rebellion, presents a tougher challenge.

The U.S. military announced late Monday that it had destroyed several safehouses and weapons storage sites linked to terror mastermind Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. The statement did not specify whether the attacks were airstrikes, although such attacks have been launched frequently against the insurgent stronghold in recent weeks.

Iraqi officials insist they are seeking a peaceful solution to the standoff in Fallujah, 40 miles west of Baghdad. But hopes that peace talks could resume there quickly were dashed when the city's chief negotiator, Sheik Khaled al-Jumeili, ruled out any quick resumption of talks despite his release Monday from U.S. custody.

"I'm negotiating on behalf of Fallujah people — civilians, kids, women — who have no power except by being represented by somebody," al-Jumeili told Al-Arabiya

STANDOFF, page 7

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