

Sea lion saved from certain death now does tricks in Chicago

Biff rescued from the river

By CASSANDRA PROFITA
Oregon Public Broadcasting

The Shedd Aquarium sits at the end of a pier in Lake Michigan with a sweet view of the Chicago skyline wrapped around the lake shore.

Inside, they put a lot of effort into making visitors from the Pacific Northwest feel at home.

Walking into the sea lion cove, a waterfall, huge fake conifers and a host named Herb greet visitors.

“Welcome to the Shedd Aquarium,” he said. “And welcome to the Pacific Northwest.”

We’re no longer in Chicago, he said.

“Now, you’re somewhere else — around Northern California, Oregon, Washington state,” he said.



Shedd Aquarium

Biff the sea lion was rescued from the Columbia River.

The geographic illusion probably isn’t fooling Biff, the sea lion who has lived here — next to a pool of beluga whales — since 2009.

He’s one of just 15 Columbia River sea lions that have been rescued from certain death by zoos and aquariums across the country.

Over the past decade, Northwest wildlife managers have lethally removed 175

California sea lions from the Columbia River. They were killed after getting caught eating too much salmon at Bonneville Dam, where fish ladders create a kind of sea lion buffet.

Biff was among the first sea lions caught making repeat visits to that buffet in 2009. But he was lucky. The Shedd Aquarium was able to give him a new home while others

were euthanized.

On a recent day at the aquarium, Biff wasn’t out on the exhibit floor with the whales and fake conifers. He was in a back room where he does his training sessions.

He was lying on the floor behind metal bars with his own little playground, which consisted of two hot tub-sized pools and a tunnel made of what looked like bent-over bike racks.

Biff still has his brand, C-700, seared into his back. Those are the markings managers used to identify and remove sea lions from Bonneville Dam.

With just a few feet between Biff and visitors, trainer Kurt Heizmann blew a little whistle, and Biff sprang into action.

“Swim!” Heizmann said. Biff jumped in and out of the pool.

“Spin!” Biff jumped around in a circle.

“Wave!” Biff held up one flipper, then the other.

At one point, he flopped his massive sea lion body through the bike-rack tunnel and dove into the second pool. Then he jumped out and flipped his tail up over his head in a sea lion headstand.

After each correct move, Heizmann tossed little fish called capelin to Biff. They’re about 6 inches long — nothing compared to the 20-pound salmon Biff used to eat on the Columbia.

Incidentally, he’s lost more than 250 pounds on the aquarium diet. When he got here he weighed around 900 pounds; now he’s around 630. But he’s still quite big.

Biff dazzled his viewers as he moved quickly in response to commands. And just when the list of tricks had been exhausted, Heizmann offered to pet Biff. They call this doing “tactile.”

The trainer called him over and Biff sat up next to the bars.

“You can just go ahead

and give him a little rub on the chest right there,” he said.

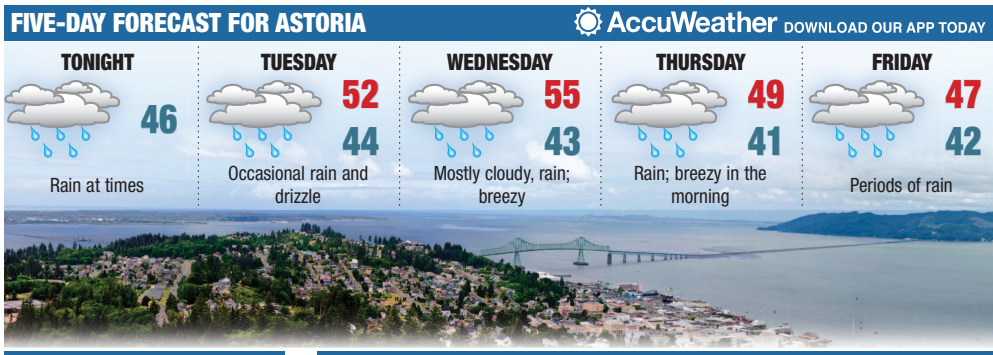
His fur was cold and wet. Petting a wild animal — knowing he would be dead if he weren’t here, behind bars — highlights the dilemma people have managing hungry sea lions.

Trainer Eric Daniel remembers when Biff first arrived at the aquarium.

“He adapted quickly,” Daniel said. “He’s a very smart, very sharp animal. Very food motivated. All the things that got him into trouble in the first place.”

Dr. Bill Van Bonn, vice president of animal health at the aquarium, said having Biff around helps teach people in the Midwest about the conflict that brought him here.

“We’re really faced with a conservation conundrum,” he said. “As these animals do really well in the wild, they tend to want to be in similar places that people want to be.”



ALMANAC
Astoria through Sunday.

Temperatures

High/low 61°/48°
Normal high/low 50°/38°
Record high 61° in 2018
Record low 17° in 1950

Precipitation

Sunday 0.00"
Month to date 4.40"
Normal month to date 4.84"
Year to date 4.40"
Normal year to date 4.84"

SUN AND MOON

Sunset tonight 4:56 p.m.
Sunrise Tuesday 7:54 a.m.
Moonrise today 6:45 a.m.
Moonset today 4:04 p.m.

New	First	Full	Last
Jan 16	Jan 24	Jan 31	Feb 7

UNDER THE SKY
Tonight's Sky: High above the southwest horizon is the constellation of Aries, the Lamb.

Source: Jim Todd, OMSI

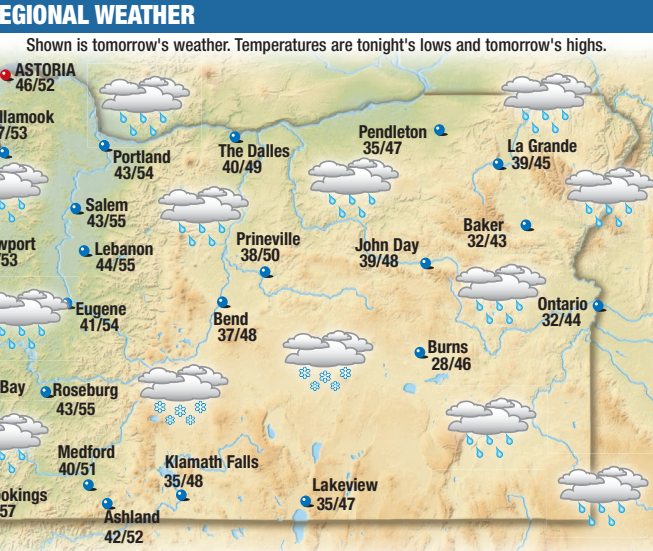
TOMORROW'S TIDES

Astoria / Port Docks

Time	High	Time	Low
1:23 a.m.	8.0 ft.	6:45 a.m.	3.4 ft.
12:28 p.m.	9.2 ft.	7:33 p.m.	-0.2 ft.

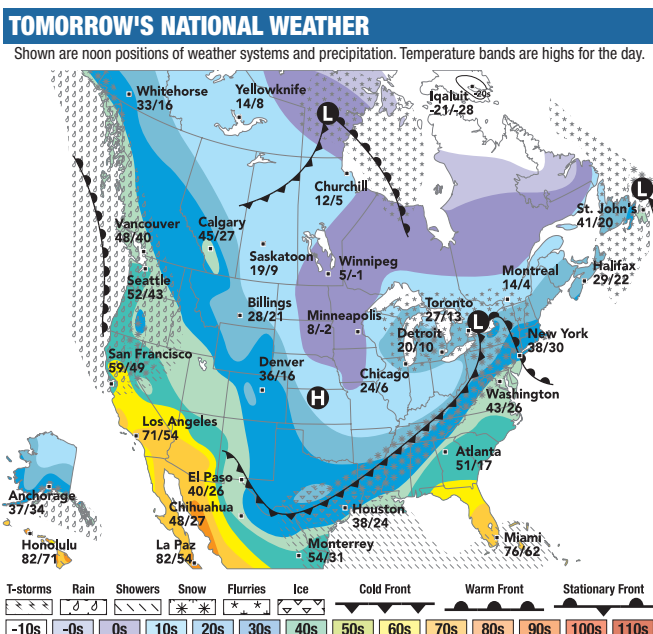
NATIONAL CITIES

City	Today	Tues.
Atlanta	48 31 s	51 17 c
Boston	23 20 sf	33 29 pc
Chicago	24 10 sn	24 6 sn
Denver	21 3 sn	36 16 s
Des Moines	3 -4 pc	9 0 s
Detroit	26 15 sn	20 10 sf
El Paso	64 28 s	40 26 s
Fairbanks	20 9 i	24 21 i
Honolulu	83 70 s	82 71 pc
Indianapolis	27 0 sn	13 6 pc
Kansas City	12 -4 c	10 0 s
Las Vegas	65 48 pc	63 45 pc
Los Angeles	74 53 pc	71 54 c
Memphis	44 18 pc	22 9 sn
Miami	73 62 pc	76 62 pc
Nashville	44 17 pc	21 9 sn
New Orleans	59 41 s	49 24 c
New York	28 24 c	38 30 sn
Oklahoma City	34 9 pc	23 7 s
Philadelphia	32 27 pc	40 27 sn
St. Louis	25 3 sn	17 9 s
Salt Lake City	44 28 pc	45 30 c
San Francisco	59 53 c	59 49 r
Seattle	58 45 c	52 43 r
Washington, DC	31 26 pc	43 26 c



REGIONAL CITIES

City	Today	Tues.
Baker City	46 32 pc	43 27 r
Bend	48 37 c	48 33 r
Brookings	59 48 r	56 47 r
Eugene	50 41 r	54 38 r
Ilwaco	55 47 r	51 46 r
Klamath Falls	53 35 c	48 30 c
Medford	54 40 r	51 36 r
Newberg	55 45 r	54 41 r
Newport	57 46 r	53 45 r
North Bend	60 47 r	57 44 r
Olympia	53 42 r	51 39 r
Pendleton	44 35 c	47 36 r
Portland	54 43 r	54 42 r
Roseburg	57 43 r	55 43 r
Salem	55 43 r	55 41 r
Seaside	57 47 r	52 45 r
Spokane	40 30 c	37 29 r
Springfield	54 43 r	55 40 r
Vancouver	54 45 r	53 41 r
Yakima	48 38 c	49 36 r



Smart electric meters coming in 2019

The Daily Astorian

Pacific Power is beginning to replace 590,000 traditional electric meters at Oregon homes and businesses with new digital smart meters providing continually updating usage information.

Installations will roll out region by region over the next two years, reaching Clatsop County in April 2019.

“Installing smart meters is a key step toward the power grid of the future here in Oregon and our customers throughout the state all benefit,” Stefan Bird, president and CEO of Pacific Power,

said in a release. “By vastly improving our meter technology, we can deliver power more reliably and shorten outages, save costs, and allow for better management of renewable sources.”

More than 70 million smart meters have been installed nationwide, equivalent to half of the households in the U.S. Smart meters are a key component to updating an aging energy grid, and can make it possible to adjust the flow of energy to meet specific needs, and support both rising technological demands and a clean energy future.

Access to daily energy

usage information will be available to customers via a secure website about six weeks after a new meter is installed. The meters instantly track outages, provide forecasts of the next bill and offer alerts to help adjust usage.

“We are connecting our small communities throughout Oregon in a way that improves the reliability and efficiency of the grid, both at home and at work,” Bird said. “With smart meter technology now mature, proven and available at competitive prices, we can deliver the benefits without any additional cost to customers.”

Women’s agriculture conference in Astoria

The Daily Astorian

The Oregon Women for Agriculture will hold its annual conference in Astoria Feb. 15 to Feb. 17.

The conference will begin with a tour of the Oregon State University Seafood Lab for a glimpse into how faculty and staff are developing new

uses for seafood byproducts. The conference will also tour the Hampton Lumber Mill in Warrenton.

There will be a panel discussion of female forest managers representing land conservancies, national parks and state and private forestlands. They will talk about varying portfolio goals, the objectives of forest

ownership and the tools used to achieve these goals. The panel will be moderated by Valerie Elder, an assistant professor of forestry and natural resources at the university.

For more information, call 503-243-3276 (FARM) or email Sandy Willius, the group’s treasurer in Yamhill County, at swil-lus@citizensEbank.com

Knappa Water Association flushing water mains

The Daily Astorian

KNAPPA — The Knappa Water Association is flushing

water mains from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. today through Friday, and from Jan. 22 through Jan. 24.

Users may experience peri-

ods of low pressure or cloudy water. If these conditions persist, call the Knappa Water Association office at 503-458-6461.

DEATHS

Jan. 12, 2018
LaTOURETTE, Shirley, 59, of Seaside, died in Seaside. Ocean View Funeral & Cremation Service of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

Jan. 11, 2018
MILLS, Janet Kathleen, 67, of Astoria, died in Asto-

ria. Ocean View Funeral & Cremation Service of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

SOLUM, Rodney Edwin, 65, of Astoria, died in Astoria. Ocean View Funeral & Cremation Service of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

Jan. 9, 2018
HARMON, Silvia R., 78, of

Astoria, died in Astoria. Ocean View Funeral & Cremation Service of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

WINSTANLEY, Valerie Lynne, 62, of Warrenton, died in Astoria. Hughes-Ransom Mortuaries & Crematory of Astoria/Seaside is in charge of the arrangements.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

MONDAY
Ecola Creek Watershed Council, 4:30 p.m., City Hall, 163 E. Gower St.
Knappa School Board, 4:30 p.m., Knappa High School library, 41535 Old U.S. Highway 30.

TUESDAY
Cannon Beach Public Works Committee, 9 a.m., City Hall, 163 E. Gower St.

Port of Astoria Commission, 4 p.m., 10 Pier 1 Ste. 209.
Seaside School District Board of Directors, 6 p.m., 1801 S. Franklin, Seaside.
Astoria City Council, 7 p.m., City Hall, 1095 Duane St.
Seaside Planning Commission, 7 p.m., work session, City Hall, 989 Broadway.
Shoreline Sanitary District Board, 7 p.m., Gearhart Hertig Station, 33496 West Lake Lane, Warrenton.

LOTTERIES

OREGON	WASHINGTON
Sunday's Pick 4: 1 p.m.: 2-1-2-6 4 p.m.: 1-0-4-8 7 p.m.: 6-5-2-0 10 p.m.: 1-4-0-4	Estimated jackpot: \$6.6 million
Sunday's Lucky Lines: 04-06-12-14-18-23-26-30 Estimated jackpot: \$22,000	Saturday's Powerball: 14-25-35-58-69, Powerball: 24 Estimated jackpot: \$62 million
Saturday's Pick 4: 1 p.m.: 3-4-3-7 4 p.m.: 2-1-9-5 7 p.m.: 4-3-6-9 10 p.m.: 6-9-1-2	Friday's Pick 4: 1 p.m.: 5-9-5-6 4 p.m.: 6-0-8-5 7 p.m.: 4-1-7-2 10 p.m.: 6-6-1-8
Saturday's Lucky Lines: 03-07-11-15-19-24-26-32 Estimated jackpot: \$20,000	Friday's Mega Millions: 17-18-33-46-60, Mega Ball: 24 Estimated jackpot: \$50 million
Saturday's Megabucks: 5-11-19-28-29-36	Sunday's Daily Game: 6-5-8 Sunday's Keno: 01-02-03-23-24-

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