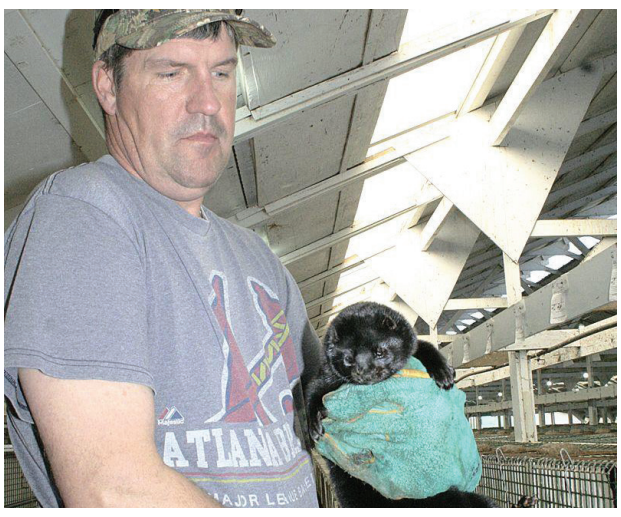


Mateusz Perkowski/Capital Press

Joe Ruef holds a mink at his farm in Mount Angel. Ruef recently testified against a bill that would ban mink farming in Oregon.

Debate over banning Oregon mink farms centers on coronavirus

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

SALEM — Arguments over whether lawmakers should prohibit mink farms in Oregon recently centered on whether coronavirus risks from such operations are either unjustifiable or exaggerated.

Proponents of Senate Bill 832, which would ban mink farming within nine months of enactment, argue the animals pose a unique danger for spreading the coronavirus and amplifying its hazards to humans.

Mink are the only species known to get infected by the virus and then transmit it back to people, said Jim Keen, a veterinarian who serves on the veterinary council of the Animal Wellness Action nonprofit.

The animals are housed in stressful conditions under which the virus can more readily spread, adding to the risk of new variants developing, Keen said.

The species is also considered a top candidate for the "missing link" that transmitted the coronavirus between bats and humans, starting or accelerating the pandemic, he said.

One Oregon mink farm had an outbreak of the coronavirus during which three of the animals escaped, said Lori Ann Burd, environmental health program director for the Center for Biological Diversity nonprofit.

Aside from the threat to public health, escaped mink can imperil related species such as river otters, fishers and martens, Burd said.

"This is not an attack on Oregon agriculture," she said.

John Easley, a veterinarian and mink industry consultant, countered that mink farms have developed new biosecurity measures aimed at thwarting coronavirus spread, in collaboration with federal and state agencies.

A vaccine against the coronavirus has been developed for mink, which will further reduce the chances of transmission and mutations, Easley said.

Denmark, which euthanized 17 million mink after an outbreak, had 1,100 mink farms in an area one-third the size of Wisconsin, so the odds of virus transmission among them was much higher, he said.

SPORTS

No. 1 Marist defeats Astoria girls soccer

The Astorian

Class 4A girls soccer will close the season with an "Elite Eight" tournament that will ultimately decide an unofficial state champion for the shortened season.

The tournament opened Tuesday, with No. 8 seed Astoria squaring off against No. 1 seed Marist, in a playoff at Stayton High School.

And the Spartans showed why they are the top seed, building a 5-1 halftime lead on their way to a 6-2 win over the Lady Fishermen.

One consolation for Astoria — it was just the second time this season that an opponent has scored more than one goal against the Spartans. The only losses for Marist (8-2 overall) have come against 5A teams Scappoose and Wilsonville.

But, 23 minutes into their game with Astoria, the Spartans held a slim 2-1 lead, following a goal by Astoria's Maddie Sisley in the 22nd minute, when the junior slipped a shot past the Spartan goalkeeper just inside the left post.

But Marist answered with three goals in the final 11:56 of the first half, including a penalty kick following a handball on Astoria inside the box.

The Spartans made it 6-1 three minutes into the second half, before Sisley scored Astoria's last goal of the season, winning a race to a loose ball and scoring into an open net in the 69th minute.

The Fishermen finish 7-3 overall.

VOLLEYBALL

Columbia Christian rallies past Knappa in five sets

The Astorian

The Knappa volleyball team made its first and only trip of the season to the big city Tuesday night, and made the most of it before falling in five sets to Columbia Christian in a Northwest League playoff game in Portland.

Knappa won Games 2 and 3 and had all the momentum, before the Knights caught fire and decisively won the last two sets for the five-set victory, 26-24, 22-25, 19-25, 25-8, 15-3.

Coming into the match, the Loggers were 5-5 overall and had won four of their last six matches, while the Knights were 8-1 and on a six-match win streak.

But it was the Loggers who came out firing, as Hannah Dietrichs served up five straight ace serves for a quick 6-0 lead in Game 1.

From there, it was back and forth, with Knappa holding a 24-23 lead before Columbia scored a side-out and finished the set on a 3-0 run.

The Loggers bounced back strong, with Dietrichs delivering kill after kill in Game 2, and Knappa built a 12-6 lead behind a big serving run from Amanda Hellberg.

Ashley Feldscher had an ace serve for a 21-16 Logger lead and a kill by Dietrichs at game point tied the match at one set apiece.

Knappa kept it rolling in Game 3, with a serving run by freshman Ava Skipper leading to a 17-10 advantage. An ace by Dietrichs gave Knappa the win.

Columbia Christian nearly lost an entire set with 21 missed serves on the night, but the Knights settled down at the service line and never trailed in the final two sets.

A kill by Lexi Davis gave Columbia a 15-3 lead in Game 4 and the Knights jumped out to a 5-0 lead in Game 5. Columbia's Nicole Bishop had three straight ace serves down the stretch for the victorious Knights.

Local runners tune up for final meet

The Astorian

Local schools will be sending several runners to state cross-country meets, which take place Saturday at locations in the Willamette Valley.

The upcoming meets are not recognized by the Oregon School Activities Association as official state championship meets, which are normally held at different preselected locations.

Tillamook was to have hosted Saturday's state gathering for 4A runners, but the meet has been moved to Marist High School, following Tillamook County's rise in coronavirus cases.

In the Cowapa League's district race, a virtually-held meet with teams running at home, then submitting times, the Cheesemakers won both boys and girls team titles, with Valley Catholic and Astoria placing second and third in both boys and girls team scoring.

Banks and Seaside did not have complete teams.

Tillamook's Marshall Bush, Johnathan Ginyrich and Devon Franske finished 1-2-3 in the boys' race, with Bush winning in 16 minutes, 20 seconds.

Sophomore John Clement had Astoria's best time (18:18, sixth overall), followed by sophomore Tommy Laman (14th, 18:56). Freshman James Roehr was Seaside's top runner (16th, 19:21).

Tillamook senior Sarah Pullen won the girls' race in 19:45, well ahead of sophomore Elli Zilli of Astoria (20:52). The Lady Mooks had seven of the top nine runners.

Seaside junior Elise Seppa finished 13th overall in 24:21.

The Astoria boys still qualified its entire team and will send seven runners (John Clement, Tommy Laman, Daniel Messing, Stephen Ero, Cole Hudnall, Elias Harding-Coe, Henry Smith) to the state meet, while the Lady Fishermen have five entries (Ella Zilli, Hannah Daniels, Allyson Pritchard, Keira Long, Lindsay Riutta).

"Unique times we're in, but I'm excited that a lot of our runners have another opportunity to race," said Astoria coach Andrew Fick. "They keep improving, so we'll see what we can do this weekend."

The class 3A/2A/1A state meet is scheduled for Saturday at Cheadle Lake Park in Lebanon.

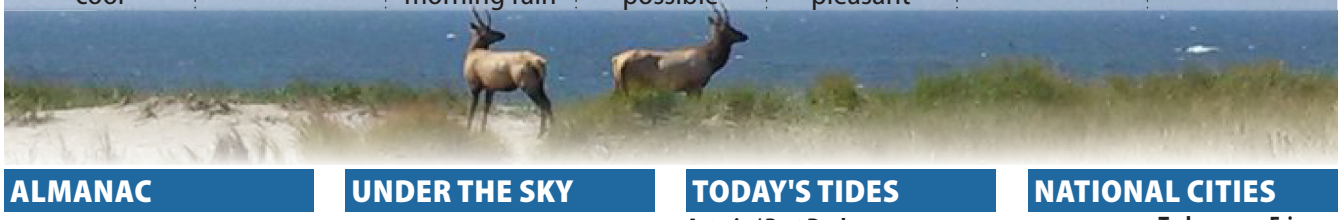
Warrenton will have eight entries (seven boys, one girl), Knappa will send five runners (four boys, one girl), and Jewell has one male runner.

Knappa sophomore Isaiah Rodriguez has the third-fastest seed time among 2A/1A runners.

SEVEN-DAY FORECAST FOR ASTORIA

AccuWeather | Go to AccuWeather.com

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
51 35	50 38	50 34	56 35	62 39	63 45	64 44
Clouds and sun; cool	Rain and drizzle	A bit of morning rain	Showers possible	Partly sunny; pleasant	Partly sunny	Plenty of sun



ALMANAC

Astoria through Tuesday

Temperatures

High/low	54/43
Normal high/low	55/40
Record high	73 in 2009
Record low	32 in 1978

Precipitation

Tuesday	0.00"
Month to date	0.01"
Normal month to date	1.23"
Year to date	32.82"
Normal year to date	26.07"

Forecasts and graphics provided by **AccuWeather, Inc.** ©2021

UNDER THE SKY

Tonight's Sky: Low in the southeast before sunrise is the conjunction of the moon and Jupiter.

Source: Jim Todd, OMSI

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	6:42 a.m.
Sunset tonight	7:54 p.m.
Moonrise today	5:53 a.m.
Moonset today	4:29 p.m.

New	First	Full	Last
Apr 11	Apr 19	Apr 26	May 3

TODAY'S TIDES

Time	High (ft.)	Time	Low (ft.)
Astoria / Port Docks			
11:37 a.m.	7.4	5:50 a.m.	2.2
none		6:22 p.m.	0.2
Cape Disappointment			
11:21 a.m.	7.4	5:20 a.m.	2.6
none		5:43 p.m.	0.4
Hammond			
11:31 a.m.	7.6	5:34 a.m.	2.3
none		5:55 p.m.	0.2
Warrenton			
11:32 a.m.	7.8	5:34 a.m.	2.3
none		6:06 p.m.	0.3
Knappa			
12:33 a.m.	7.6	6:51 a.m.	1.9
12:14 p.m.	7.6	7:23 p.m.	0.2
Depoe Bay			
10:37 a.m.	7.4	4:47 a.m.	2.5
11:35 p.m.	7.5	5:07 p.m.	0.3

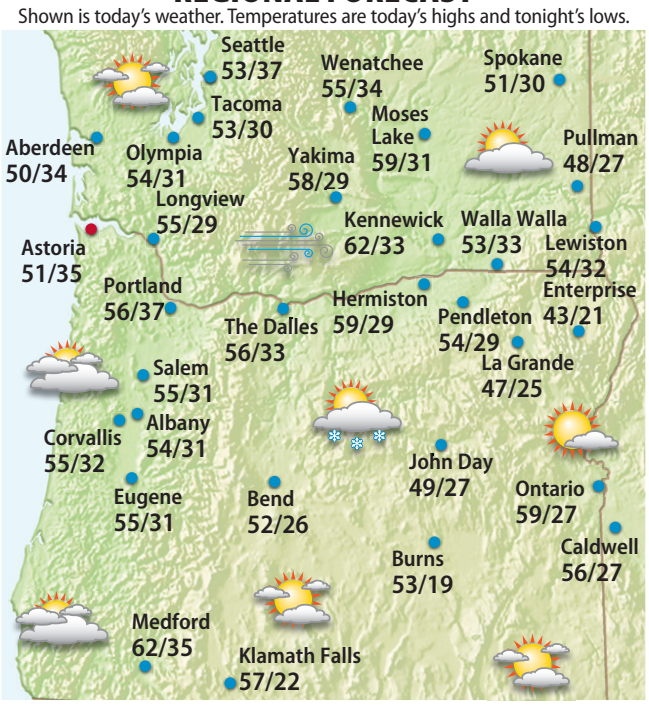
NATIONAL CITIES

City	Today Hi/Lo/W	Fri. Hi/Lo/W
Atlanta	74/62/t	76/60/t
Boston	56/46/c	59/46/pc
Chicago	64/50/sh	60/50/c
Dallas	84/66/pc	83/57/t
Denver	68/38/s	54/31/s
Honolulu	80/68/pc	81/66/s
Houston	86/68/pc	86/68/c
Los Angeles	78/56/s	76/56/pc
Miami	82/69/s	82/72/s
New York City	67/48/s	62/48/c
Phoenix	92/66/s	93/64/s
San Francisco	61/50/pc	58/48/pc
Wash., DC	71/52/pc	61/54/c

Weather (W): **s**-sunny, **pc**-partly cloudy, **c**-cloudy, **sh**-showers, **t**-thunderstorms, **r**-rain, **sf**-snow flurries, **sn**-snow, **i**-ice.

REGIONAL FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.



City	Today Hi/Lo/W	Fri. Hi/Lo/W	City	Today Hi/Lo/W	Fri. Hi/Lo/W
Baker City	50/22/pc	64/31/pc	North Bend	53/36/pc	51/41/pc
Brookings	55/39/c	53/42/s	Roseburg	58/33/c	62/37/s
Ilwaco	49/37/pc	48/40/r	Seaside	50/33/pc	49/38/r
Newberg	55/32/pc	58/39/c	Springfield	56/31/c	62/40/pc
Newport	50/34/c	49/39/c	Vancouver	56/35/c	60/40/c