

Oregon minnow is first fish taken off endangered list

GRANTS PASS (AP) — It’s official. A tiny minnow that lives only in backwaters in Oregon’s Willamette Valley is the first fish to be formally removed from Endangered Species Act protection because it is no longer in danger of extinction.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe was to make the announcement Tuesday afternoon at a wildlife refuge outside Corvallis.

The action comes 22 years after the 3-inch-long fish was first listed as an endangered species, and five years after it was upgraded to threatened.

Paul Henson, Oregon director of U.S. Fish and Wildlife, said the Oregon chub demonstrates that a lot of species can be brought back from the brink of extinction, if key needs are met, such as a safe place to live, even in an urban landscape.

The Oregon chub had practically disappeared from the Willamette Valley as the swampy backwaters and beaver ponds it depends on were drained to control flooding and create farms and cities over the past century and a half. Those that

survived became easy prey for non-native predators, such as bass and bullfrogs.

Restoring the chub has focused on working with private, tribal and public landowners to protect and restore ponds and backwaters the fish needs to thrive, transplanting fish to expand its range and population, protecting them from predators, and altering dam releases to resemble natural river flows. A range of state and federal agencies, tribes, conservation groups and private landowners joined in the work.

Saving the chub faced fewer major obstacles than higher-profile species, such as salmon, which have been harmed by major economic forces, such as logging, hydroelectric dams, and urban development.

The agency proposed the delisting a year ago after establishing 80 different populations around the Willamette Valley.

Formal notice the Oregon chub will be removal from Endangered Species protection is to appear in the Federal Register on Wednesday, Fish and Wildlife spokeswoman Elizabeth Materna said.

WORLD BRIEFLY

Danish sources name gunman, say he got out of jail about 2 weeks ago

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (AP) — The Danish gunman who attacked a free-speech seminar and a synagogue in Copenhagen was released about two weeks ago from a jail where he may have been radicalized while serving time for a vicious stabbing.

As Denmark mourned the two victims, these and other troubling details emerged Monday about Omar Abdel Hamid El-Hussein’s path to the country’s worst terror spree in three decades.

El-Hussein was arrested 15 months ago in a vicious knife attack on a train passenger, and while he was awaiting trial, a change in his behavior last summer set off enough “alarm bells” for jail authorities to alert PET, Denmark’s counter-terror agency, a source close to the investigation told AP.

Such warnings usually set in motion counter-radicalization efforts, such as counseling in jail. It wasn’t immediately clear how aware the court was of this issue before El-Hussein was convicted of a lesser charge.

Sentenced to the time he had already served, he was released about two weeks ago, the source said, speaking on condition of anonymity because police haven’t officially identified the gunman.

Egyptian warplanes strike IS targets in Libya, pushes for joint intervention

CAIRO (AP) — Egypt bombed Islamic State militants in neighboring Libya on Monday and called on the United States and Europe to join an international military intervention in the chaotic North African state after extremists beheaded a group of Egyptian Christians.

The airstrikes bring Egypt overtly into Libya’s turmoil, a reflection of Cairo’s increasing alarm. Egypt now faces threats on two fronts — a growing stronghold of radicals on its western border and a militant insurgency of Islamic State allies on its eastern flank in the Sinai Peninsula — as well as its own internal challenges.

Islamic State group weapons caches and training camps were targeted “to avenge the bloodshed and to seek retribution from the killers,” a military statement said.

The announcement on state radio represents Egypt’s first public acknowledgement of military action in post-Moammar Gadhafi Libya, where there has been almost no government control.

Libya is where the Islamic State group has built up its strongest presence outside Syria and Iraq. Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi is lobbying Europe and the United States for a coordinated international response similar to the coalition air campaign in those countries.

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GUNS: Judge could issue exceptions for concealed carry permits

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Blaine said Anderson never made it into a courtroom, but an order from the district’s presiding circuit court judge, Ron Pahl, bans guns from the state court areas of the county courthouses in Pendleton, Hermiston and Heppner. Blaine said that order is based on gun bans under Uniform Trial Court Rules and Oregon Revised Statute 166.370, which outlaws carrying a gun into a court facility.

Basically, he said, the law prohibits the possession of a firearm by any person in a

courthouse, though the presiding judge may issue exceptions for people who have concealed carry permits.

“And I will be quite frank,” Blaine said, “there have been requests made, but they have not been permitted.”

The judge’s order, though, allows law enforcement officers and judges with concealed carry permits to bring guns to court.

Harp said security changes already were in the works, but the recent incident “emphasized the need for the changes we’re discussing.” He said he is researching

state laws and rules to see if a gun ban could apply throughout the courthouses. And he said there is a lot to weigh and balance, including staffing, funding, and the reality the Umatilla County Courthouse in Pendleton was not designed with security in mind. Another key factor, he said, is the local public, which cares about gun rights.

Harp also said he is looking for other models of courthouse security, and a recent tour of Marion County impressed him. “They’re definitely much better staffed and equipped than we are,” he said, “and their facility

seems to be designed to account for security functions.”

The discussion right now is on the ground floor, Harp said, and with so much to consider it will be a while before recommendations are ready for county commissioners and state courts to consider.

Until then, though, Harp will deliver at least an initial report to the board of commissioners during its meeting Wednesday at 9 a.m. at the Pendleton courthouse.

Contact Phil Wright at pwright@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0833.

PRIOR: Lobbied to improve the water situation in Umatilla County

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Kim B. Puzey said he first got to know Prior in 1994, when Prior was a Port of Umatilla commissioner and Puzey was hired as the port’s new manager.

“Chet was passionate and generous and brilliant,” Puzey said.

He said any time it was imperative something was done right, Prior was the man to call, which is why he was a clear choice for chair of the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center Authority and to fill the Hermiston Development Corporation president’s role after founder Joe

Burns retired.

“If you drive around to the major projects in Hermiston in the last two decades there is hardly anything you would find that doesn’t have the Prior name on it as a sponsor or a contributor or a benefactor,” Puzey said.

Lloyd Piercy, owner of Sno Road Winery in Echo, said Prior was a staple at Echo events, providing the equipment for community cleanups and founding the local food bank. Prior was scheduled to serve as trail boss of this year’s Red 2 Red ride next week.

“He was the heart of

Echo,” Piercy said. “There was not a charity he wasn’t involved in.”

Piercy said Prior was “irreplaceable” to Echo. He said from an agricultural community perspective Prior’s skill and passion for lobbying to improve the water situation in Umatilla County will also be missed.

“There are no words to describe the sadness around here,” Piercy said.

He said he also respected Prior’s hard work in building a legacy for his sons, Art and David, through the family farm and Prior’s habit of making time for family, most recently to share his

grandsons’ passion for duck hunting.

Other accomplishments of Prior’s included helping found the Oregon Water Coalition and Farmers Ending Hunger, and serving on the boards of the Hermiston Chamber of Commerce, Oregon State University Extension Center, Umatilla County Budget Committee, Potato Growers Bargaining Committee, Hermiston Airport Advisory Board and Good Shepherd Medical Center.

Contact Jade McDowell at jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4536.

TAX: Projects granted zone exemption have resulted in 243 jobs

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Hermiston that pay at least 150 percent of Umatilla County’s average wage.

Some of the state’s limited number of enterprise zones have sat inactive for years, but Hermiston’s, which covers the entire city, has been applied to more than \$80 million in capital investment since 2007.

DuPont Pioneer and Pioneer Hi-Bred used the zone in 2013. In 2014 Shearer’s Foods was granted a \$3.5 million exemption. Mor-

gan said the deadline hasn’t passed yet for the company to submit its final numbers but the expansion was expected to create at least 35 new jobs.

Morgan said not counting the Shearer’s expansion, capital projects granted an enterprise zone exemption have resulted in 243 new jobs for the area, representing more than \$7 million in wages.

Last year the city applied for and received an extra designation for its enterprise zone, allowing e-commerce companies that do a

majority of their business online to take a five-year exemption on state income taxes. Morgan said if Hermiston’s enterprise zone isn’t renewed, the e-commerce incentive will go away as well.

Morgan said some people support the idea of an enterprise zone as incentive for new businesses to locate in Hermiston, but others criticize the zone because it delays when new businesses are added to the tax rolls, depriving taxing districts of the money for three years.

“They’re assuming we

would have had that money anyway,” Morgan said. “But the company might not have come in without it.”

On Friday, Feb. 20 from 3-5 p.m. at the Hermiston Conference Center the city is holding an informational meeting on the enterprise zone. The public, especially representatives from local taxing districts, is invited to ask questions, learn about the current enterprise zone and learn about the public process the city will go through while preparing an application to renew the enterprise zone.

PORT: Union blames the slowdown on problems with the supply chain

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and eerily quiet on normally bustling waterfronts.

Dockworkers deny slowing down and say they want to work.

Full port operations are supposed to resume Tuesday, when Perez is scheduled to attend negotiations — his first, and the two sides’ first discussions since Friday. Perez already has been in touch by phone with representatives of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union and the Pacific Maritime Associa-

tion, which represents the shipping lines that carry cargo and the terminal operators that handle it once the ships dock.

For now, those massive vessels are lined up outside the ports, laden with imports that are now delayed by weeks. Off the coast of Los Angeles and Long Beach, for example, 33 ships “congestion vessels” were waiting space at the docks, according to the Marine Exchange of Southern California — a new high since this round of disruptions began.

Cargo congestion at the

coast’s largest ports predated the contract dispute, though the problems were nothing like those now seen. Congestion worsened in the fall, which is when the maritime association says dockworkers began slowing down. The union blames the slow movement of cargo on larger problems with the supply chain, including a shortage of truck beds to carry containers from dockside yards to distribution warehouses.

Contract negotiations began in May. The last contract expired in July. The

two sides have reached tentative agreements on many of the key issues, but are stuck on whether to change the process of arbitrating workplace disputes.

Several other issues have been on the table, including pay. The maritime association says average wages exceed \$50 an hour; the union says wages are set between \$26 to \$36 an hour — though many shifts carry a premium over that range.

Contact Justin Pritchard at <http://twitter.com/lalanewsman>

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