

Wolves seem to be bypassing Central Oregon

By DYLAN J. DARLING
The Bulletin

BEND — Another lone wolf recently passed through Central Oregon, following a path similar to the one blazed by OR-7, a wolf made famous by his wandering.

But like OR-7 and three other wolves tracked by collar in the past five years, OR-28 appears to not be interested in establishing a territory in Central Oregon.

Since coming from northeast Oregon last month, she is so far sticking south of Silver Lake — the dry lake, not the town — in Lake County, said Russ Morgan, state wolf coordinator for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife in La Grande.

Why collared wolves have only passed through Central Oregon so far and not stayed is unknown, he said. “Collar data only tells, ‘The wolf was here at this point in time.’”

And the data is from a small sample size. Oregon has at least 81 wolves, according to a Department of Fish and Wildlife tally from the end of 2014. Most are found in the

northeast corner of the state. Less than 20 percent of the wolves have tracking collars, estimated John Stephenson, Oregon wolf coordinator for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. He said people should not read too much into the collar data showing wolves passing up on Central Oregon territories.

“We also know there are other wolves that don’t have (GPS or) radio collars running around, and we don’t know their paths,” he said.

The collar data do show that wolves seem to avoid the population centers of Central Oregon, such as Bend, Redmond and Madras. Drawn on a map, the paths of OR-7 and OR-28 show the wolves turning south when they came close to Pine Mountain, about 30 miles southeast of Bend.

Both wolves were likely dissuaded from staying in Central Oregon by human activity and bright city lights at night, Stephenson said. That’s not to say other wolves might not eventually find a home here, though, particularly in the forested mountains.

“I think the Cascades of Central

Oregon are good wolf habitat and they will occupy that area, but they have to get around Bend and Redmond to do that,” he said.

So far, at least one wolf, OR-25, is known to have passed through the Central Oregon Cascades earlier this year, although he kept going south.

Of the collared wolves to disperse, or leave their packs, from northeast Oregon, OR-25 is the only one so far to find trouble. In early November, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife confirmed he attacked three calves, killing one and wounding two others, on private land near the Upper Williamson River.

Efforts to keep him away from cattle since have been effective, Stephenson said Wednesday. They include lights and noise boxes as well as electrified fladry — flagging designed to deter wolves from going over a fence line. And state wildlife managers have fired cracker shotgun shells, which make a loud noise designed to spook animals.

While OR-25 and OR-28’s

collars still are sending signals, the collars of OR-3 and OR-7 have blinked out.

Since September 2011, state and federal wildlife managers did not know what had become of OR-3, until a private trail camera captured a photo of him this July in the Cascades of northern Klamath County. The photo shows a wolf in the lower right corner of the frame. The black animal has a tracking color and an ear tag.

State officials used the color and location of the ear tag to determine the identity of the wolf.

“The only wolf that can be (is) OR-3,” Morgan said.

Farther south and west in the Cascades, OR-7 found a mate, a female who also dispersed from northeast Oregon and now is raising his second litter of pups.

Only time will tell whether more wolves follow OR-3 and OR-7 to the southern Cascades or decide to blaze their own paths to Central Oregon. In May 2014, another male wolf, OR-24, wandered into Central Oregon only to turn back and return to northeastern Oregon.

Brown creates new post to boost grad rate

Office still working on job description for new position

By PARIS ACHEN
Capital Bureau

PORTLAND — Gov. Kate Brown announced Monday she will appoint an education innovation officer whose job will be to boost the state’s dismal high school graduation rate.

Brown made the announcement during an education panel discussion at the Oregon Business Leadership Summit in Portland, where she outlined some of her education priorities.

“The position will assist me, my education team and the Legislature in dedicating resources to increase the number of students who graduate from high school,” Brown said from prepared comments.

“There is no question that our education system must be accountable to better student outcomes, including increasing our high school graduation rate,” Brown said.

“But accountability also means ensuring that as a state we are empowering the best and most effective practices in our classrooms that support student success,” she said.

The administration has yet to complete a job description for the position and to post the job, said Brown spokeswoman Kristen Granger. She gave no timeline for hiring.

Oregon now has the fourth lowest graduation rate in the nation, up from the country’s worst in 2013. Oregon’s graduation rate is 72 percent, compared to a national average of 81.4 percent.

John Tapogna of ECONorthwest said Monday the state’s graduation rate mars Oregon’s reputation in the eyes of employers considering relocating to the state.

“It is really damaging to the state’s reputation in a very tangible way,” the public policy consultant said.

The graduation rate is perplexing because it doesn’t align with the state’s test scores, Tapogna said.

The Capital Bureau is a collaboration between EO Media Group and Pamplin Media Group.

BRIEFLY

Snowfall brings hope to drought-stricken Oregon basins

BAKER CITY (AP) — A snowstorm that swept across drought-stricken northeastern Oregon is expected to help replenish the region’s aquifers and reservoirs.

The Baker City Herald reports that the weekend storm left nearly two feet of snow in the higher peaks of the Elkhorns and Wallows. Several inches of heavy, wet snow also fell at lower elevation and should help alleviate the drought.

Jerry Franke of the Burnt River Irrigation District says the weather is encouraging, but it’s still early in the season.

Last year, wintry weather arrived early but the rest of the season was drier and warmer than average.

But as of Monday morning, the water content in the snow was higher than it was at the same time last year.

Meanwhile, the Crater Lake rim in Southern Oregon is closed to vehicle traffic after winter storms dropped heavy snow and knocked down trees near the park.

A news release from park spokeswoman Heidi Barker says

the visitor center is still open and the rim can still be accessed by skis or snow shoes.

Three days of storms dropped 43 inches of snow around the park, bringing the snowpack to 72 inches.

Barker says it is one of the largest snow storms the park has seen, although the amount of snow is not abnormal.

She says 69 storms since 1932 have resulted in bigger three-day snowfall accumulations than the current storm. A record 75 inches accumulated in three days in February 1971.

State unemployment drops to 5.7 percent

SALEM (AP) — Oregon’s unemployment rate dropped to 5.7 percent in November as employers added 9,600 new jobs.

The Oregon Employment Department released the seasonally adjusted figures on Tuesday.

The unemployment rate ticked down from 6 percent in October and 6.8 percent a year earlier.

Compared with a year earlier, employers have added 58,200 jobs, an increase of 3.3 percent.

Oregon’s year-over-year job gains have been about that strong for 10 months. Economists say Oregon

hasn’t had such a rapid pace of hiring since 2006.

The biggest job gains came in the retail sector, which added 2,400 more jobs than usual during the busy holiday season.

Two other sectors saw particularly strong growth in November. They were professional and business services, and health care and social assistance.

150-year-old juniper tree stolen from Badlands Wilderness

BEND (AP) — Federal officials say whoever cut down and hauled off an old-growth juniper tree at a popular trailhead east of Bend may have committed a federal crime.

The Bulletin reports that the tree went missing from the Badlands Wilderness earlier this month. Bureau of Land Management officials could not find any leads as to who took the tree.

The BLM considers junipers to be old-growth if they are more than 150 years old.

Logging or cutting down trees is illegal in wilderness areas, wilderness study areas or at trailheads. Before the U.S. Congress designated the Badlands

in 2009 as wilderness, it was a wilderness study area.

Regulators urge limited ‘Ride the Ducks’ operation

OLYMPIA, Wash. (AP) — State regulators investigating a Seattle tour company following a deadly crash on Seattle’s Aurora Bridge have found 442 violations and have recommended penalties against Ride the Ducks Seattle.

But staff of the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission in a report Tuesday recommended the company be allowed to resume operating a limited fleet of amphibious vehicles, under certain conditions.

A three-member commission will determine whether Ride the Ducks can resume operations at a hearing Monday. The commission can penalize the company up to \$1,000 per violation.

Regulators also proposed issuing an “unsatisfactory” safety rating, based on one “acute” and six “critical” violations, as well as two accidents in 2015.

Five international college students were killed in the Sept. 24 crash when a repurposed military “duck boat” swerved into an oncoming charter bus.

Corrections

The East Oregonian works hard to be accurate and sincerely regrets any errors. If you notice a mistake in the paper, please call 541-966-0818.

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AccuWeather.com Forecast

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
A little morning snow	Ice, then rain	Milder with a little rain	Cloudy, a rain or snow shower	Periods of rain

PENDLETON TEMPERATURE FORECAST

38°	24°	36°	34°	45°	30°	40°	29°	43°	35°
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HERMISTON TEMPERATURE FORECAST

42°	28°	35°	33°	46°	31°	40°	28°	42°	32°
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ALMANAC

PENDLETON
through 3 p.m. yesterday

TEMPERATURE	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	42°	29°
Normals	39°	26°
Records	67° (1959)	-18° (1919)

PRECIPITATION
24 hours ending 3 p.m. 0.00"
Month to date 1.58"
Normal month to date 0.70"
Year to date 9.39"
Last year to date 11.70"
Normal year to date 12.17"

HERMISTON
through 3 p.m. yesterday

TEMPERATURE	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	45°	27°
Normals	39°	27°
Records	68° (1939)	-7° (1932)

PRECIPITATION
24 hours ending 3 p.m. 0.00"
Month to date 1.11"
Normal month to date 0.76"
Year to date 6.50"
Last year to date 6.69"
Normal year to date 9.23"

REGIONAL FORECAST

Coastal Oregon: Mostly cloudy today. Rain tonight; breezy. Rain tomorrow. Friday: occasional rain.

Eastern and Central Oregon: Mainly cloudy today; a bit of snow, except a rain or snow shower in the south.

Western Washington: Cloudy today; a shower in spots across the south during the morning. Rain tonight.

Eastern Washington: A bit of snow across the south, near the Idaho border and in the mountains.

Cascades: Mostly cloudy today; a bit of snow, accumulating up to an inch, except dry in the south.

Northern California: Periods of sun today; cold in the interior mountains. Some rain and snow far north tonight.

REGIONAL CITIES

	Today			Thu.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Astoria	50	45	c	54	44	r
Baker City	35	15	sn	32	30	sn
Bend	39	28	c	43	37	r
Brookings	49	45	c	54	48	r
Burns	33	20	c	36	31	sf
Enterprise	32	10	sn	32	29	i
Eugene	48	42	c	55	46	r
Heppner	39	25	sn	38	35	i
Hermiston	42	28	sn	35	33	i
John Day	40	29	sn	40	37	r
Klamath Falls	36	30	c	40	34	r
La Grande	35	15	sn	34	32	sn
Meacham	33	15	sn	33	31	sn
Medford	45	39	c	51	43	r
Newport	49	44	c	54	46	r
North Bend	52	47	c	58	49	r
Ontario	40	27	sf	38	34	sn
Pasco	43	28	sn	34	31	i
Pendleton	38	24	sn	36	34	i
Portland	47	40	c	47	44	r
Redmond	42	29	c	42	36	i
Salem	48	42	c	54	45	r
Spokane	32	18	sn	31	28	sn
Ukiah	33	18	sn	39	35	i
Vancouver	45	38	c	48	43	r
Walla Walla	36	24	sn	37	35	i
Yakima	41	29	c	34	29	sn

WORLD CITIES

	Today			Thu.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Beijing	33	15	s	38	16	s
Hong Kong	64	50	s	60	51	s
Jerusalem	56	44	c	52	43	sh
London	60	54	r	60	51	c
Mexico City	76	45	pc	77	48	pc
Moscow	31	21	sn	24	18	pc
Paris	57	50	c	59	49	c
Rome	58	38	c	58	39	s
Seoul	36	18	sf	31	22	s
Sydney	79	66	t	79	67	s
Tokyo	63	43	sh	52	42	pc

WINDS

(in mph)	Today	Thursday
Boardman	ENE 3-6	NNE 4-8
Pendleton	WNW 4-8	SSW 3-6

UV INDEX TODAY

0	0	1	1	0	0
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8 a.m. 10 a.m. Noon 2 p.m. 4 p.m. 6 p.m.

0-2, Low 3-5, Moderate 6-7, High; 8-10, Very High; 11+, Extreme

The higher the AccuWeather.com UV Index™ number, the greater the need for eye and skin protection.

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NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY

Shown are noon positions of weather systems and precipitation. Temperature bands are highs for the day.

NATIONAL SUMMARY

Mild conditions are in store for the Northeast today as chilly air sweeps across the Plains and holds in the West. Showers will extend from the Great Lakes to the Gulf Coast.

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 91° in Edinburg, Texas **Low** -17° in Bridgeport, Calif.

NATIONAL CITIES

	Today			Thur.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Albuquerque	35	17	pc	36	18	s
Atlanta	70	58	pc	67	40	r
Baltimore	54	42	s	57	41	r
Birmingham	71	55	c	62	36	pc
Boise	39	25	sf	36	34	sn
Boston	45	38	s	51	46	r
Charleston, SC	76	61	pc	76	59	r
Chicago, IL	52	30	pc	56	32	r
Cleveland	55	44	pc	46	29	c
Dallas	57	34	s	58	33	s
Denver	32	12	pc	23	16	sf
Detroit	51	36	sh	41	28	c
El Paso	48	26	s	51	26	s
Fairbanks	3	-7	pc	3	-6	pc
Fargo	31	17	sn	18	0	sf
Honolulu	83	72	s			