



Nathan Duckworth of New Plymouth, Idaho, flies head first over Labyrinth for no score in saddle bronc riding Wednesday at the Pendleton Round-Up.



Cam Groff of Walla Walla begins to lose control during his ride on Wild Sheep during bareback riding at the Pendleton Round-Up.



Steve Woolsey pf Payson, Utah, gets thrown over the top of Dream Catcher after marking a 73.5-point ride Wednesday.

What goes Round-Up must come down



Diego Benedetti of Eagle, Idaho, gets thrown sideways off Hot Potato during bull riding Wednesday at the Pendleton Round-Up.



Tre Hosley of Compton, Calif., gets bucked off Joe for no score in bareback riding Wednesday.



Joe Frost of Randlett, Utah, gets caught in his rigging while riding Frenchy for no score Wednesday.

Protections rejected for American pika

Associated Press

BILLINGS, Mont. — Federal officials on Tuesday rejected greater protections for four species including the rabbit-like American pika, which researchers warn is disappearing from areas of the Western U.S. as climate change alters its mountain habitat.

The pika's range is shrinking across southern Utah, northeastern California and in the Great Basin that covers most of Nevada and parts of Utah, Oregon, Idaho and California, according to a U.S. Geological Survey study released last month.

Exposure to ambient temperatures of 78 degrees or higher can kill the mountain-dwelling mammals, wildlife officials say.

But the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service said in documents released Tuesday that pika adapt to warmer temperatures by seeking refuge beneath rock fields in the summer. As a result, surface temperatures may



This 2005 file photo provided by the US Geological Survey/Princeton University shows an American pika.

not be the best predictor of population declines, the agency said.

The agency also said the most severe effects of climate change are felt at elevations below 8,200 feet, which is near the lower limit of the pika's range in the West. That suggests pika habitat "has not experienced the more substantial changes" of reduced snowpack due to climate change, the wildlife

service said.

Last month's Geological Survey study was not available when a student from New York petitioned the wildlife service in April to protect the animal under the Endangered Species Act, agency spokesman Brian Hires said, meaning its findings were not considered.

"We always try to use the best available science for our decisions," Hires said.

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