Pacific Starfish making comeback

Millions killed from 2013-2014 due to mysterious syndrome

NEWPORT BEACH, Calif. (AP) — Starfish are making a comeback on the West Coast, four years after a mysterious syndrome killed millions of them.

From 2013 to 2014, Sea Star Wasting Syndrome hit sea stars from British Columbia to Mexico. The starfish would develop lesions and then disintegrate, their arms turning into blobs of goo.

The cause is unclear but researchers say it may be a virus.

But now, the species is rebounding. Sea stars are being spotted in Southern California tide pools and elsewhere, the *Orange County Register* reported Tuesday.

"They are coming back, big time," Darryl Deleske, aquarist for the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium in Los Angeles, told the newspaper.

"It's a huge difference," Deleske said. "A couple of years ago, you wouldn't find any. I dove all the way as far as Canada, specifically looking for sea stars, and found not a single one."

Similar die-offs of starfish on the West Coast were reported in the 1970s, '80s and '90s, but the latest outbreak was far larger and more widespread, according to a report by researchers at the University of Santa Cruz.

Beginning with ochre stars off Washington state, the disease spread, killing off mottled stars, leather stars, sunflower stars, rainbows and six-armed stars.

AP Photo/Rick Bowmer, File

This 2010 file photo, shows a starfish clings to a rock near Haystack Rock during low tide in Cannon Beach. Starfish are making a comeback on the West Coast, four years after a mysterious syndrome killed millions of them. From 2013 to 2014, Sea Star Wasting Syndrome hit sea stars from British Columbia to Mexico.

It hit Southern California by December 2013.

"When it did (arrive), you just started to see them melt everywhere," said Deleske. "You'd see an arm here, an arm there."

The recovery has been promising.

Four adult sea stars, each about 7 to 8 inches long, were spotted this month at Crystal Cove State Park in Newport Beach.

"It's a treasure we always hope to find,' said Kaitlin Magliano, education coordinator at the Crystal Cove Conservancy.

"We lost all of them," she said. "It's good to see we have some surviving and thriving ... Maybe the next generation will be more resilient."

The stars aren't out of danger yet.

The wasting syndrome never completely disappeared in Northern and Central California and it has reappeared in the Salish Sea region of Washington state, according to a report.

Onion deliveries to be speeded by new transfer site

EO Media Group

NYSSA — A proposed major rail reload facility in Eastern Oregon that could greatly help the region's onion industry is on track to be built within three years.

The region's onion shipping companies face constant transportation challenges. Industry leaders say the problem is getting worse and the reload facility is sorely needed.

"Transportation is a chronic problem for us (and) it's as bad as I've ever seen it right now," said Kay Riley, manager of Snake River Produce, one of 30 onion shipping companies in southwestern Idaho and Malheur County, Ore.

Riley said the planned reload facility is so important "it could keep us in business, and we could go out of business without it."

The facility would allow shipping containers to be transfered between truck and rail. It could benefit a wide range of agricultural commodities grown as far away as southcentral Idaho.

Most onions produced here are sold to markets on the East Coast. Shippers must currently truck them 216 miles west to the nearest reload facility in Wallula, Wash, before they begin their journey east.

Eliminating that step will reduce the cost of shipping onions, improve timeliness of delivery and possibly open new markets, said Grant Kitamura, general manager of Baker & Murakami Produce, the region's largest onion shipper.

"This is a major game changer for onion shippers," he said. "It will help us maintain our viability as an industry. Transportation has been a real issue for onion shippers in Oregon and Idaho for many years and it's been getting worse and hopefully this will help us turn it around."

Bruce Corn, an Oregon farmer, said the facility could markedly speed up delivery times to East Coast markets.

"It can result in a substantial savings in transportation costs and also be a much more reliable source of transportation," he said.

The $5.3 billion transportation package passed by the Oregon Legislature this year included $26 million for a reload facility in Eastern Oregon. A 400-acre piece of land just north of Nyssa was recently chosen as the facility's location.

The plan for the facility is for it to include dry and cold storage, said Rep. Greg Smith, R-Heppner, who is helping lead the effort to build the facility.

"All of a sudden, we become a regional location that can compete against anyone in the world," said Smith, Malheur County's economic development director.

The plan also includes building the infrastructure needed by food processors, Smith said.

"That way, agricultural food processors will have a one-stop location where they can produce and have a shipping hub right at their back door," he said.

The biggest challenge now is making sure the facility is designed and built correctly, Smith said.

BRIEFLY

Oregon mother, daughter killed in Christmas crash

THE DALLES (AP) — Oregon State Police say a woman and her 12-year-old daughter died in a Christmas Day car crash on Highway 26 in Wasco County.

Sgt. Kaipo Raiser says troopers from The Dalles and Portland responded mid-afternoon to the crash in which an eastbound Nissan Versa lost traction and crossed into the path of an oncoming Subaru Outback.

The Versa was struck on its passenger side. The driver, 48-year-old Deirdre Mackey of Lake Oswego, and her daughter died at the scene.

The two people in the Subaru were taken to a Portland hospital for treatment of injuries not considered life-threatening.

Highway 26 was closed or limited to one lane for more than 10 hours. Investigators believe driving too fast for the wintry conditions was a factor in the crash.

OregonSaves opens to smaller businesses

PORTLAND — A state project to get more Oregonians saving for retirement is being so well received it's being opened up to smaller employers.

Oregon is the first state in the nation to require employers make a basic retirement program available to their workers.

Under the OregonSaves program, staff are automatically signed up to save 5 percent of their paychecks — but they can opt out.

In the six months since the pilot program launched, state officials say about 70 percent of people have stayed in the program.

The original plan was to start enrolling larger companies. But OregonSaves Executive Director Lisa Massena said they have a new message for smaller businesses: "Everything is working fine. Come on in."

The state has rolled the program out slowly so far. That's been partly out of concern OregonSaves doesn't suffer the same fate as Cover Oregon, the botched statewide attempt to implement the Affordable Care Act.

About 1 million Oregonians don't have access to a retirement savings plan at work.

— Oregon Public Broadcasting

Regulators consider reducing Pacific halibut quota next year

KENAI, Alaska (AP) — Regulators are considering reducing the amount of halibut that fishermen are allowed to catch along the Pacific coast next year.

The International Pacific Halibut Commission is expected to consider next month adopting a 24 percent reduction to the annual Pacific halibut quota for fisheries from Alaska to California, the *Peninsula Clarion* reported.

The reduction was recommended due to low recruitment rates among young halibut populations over the last decade and increasing pressure on the fish stocks from commercial, subsistence and recreational fishing, according to a report presented to the intergovernmental organization at its meeting last month.

Halibut populations are projected to continue gradually declining for the next few years under the current fishing rates, according to the report.

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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211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton 541-276-2211
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COMMERCIAL PRINTING
Production Manager: Mike Jensen
541-215-0824 • mjensen@eastoregonian.com

AccuWeather Forecast

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TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Mostly cloudy, a little icy mix	A little icy mix in the morning	Cloudy with a little rain	Cloudy with snow showers	Mostly cloudy and chilly
PENDLETON TEMPERATURE FORECAST				
31° 28°	37° 35°	45° 37°	44° 28°	35° 21°
HERMISTON TEMPERATURE FORECAST				
29° 27°	35° 33°	42° 34°	47° 28°	37° 22°

ALMANAC

PENDLETON
through 3 p.m. yesterday

TEMPERATURE

	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	24°	20°
Normals	39°	25°
Records	67° (1980)	-9° (1924)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"
Month to date	0.93"
Normal month to date	1.33"
Year to date	16.19"
Last year to date	13.35"
Normal year to date	12.80"

HERMISTON
through 3 p.m. yesterday

TEMPERATURE

	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	27°	22°
Normals	39°	27°
Records	67° (1980)	5° (1948)

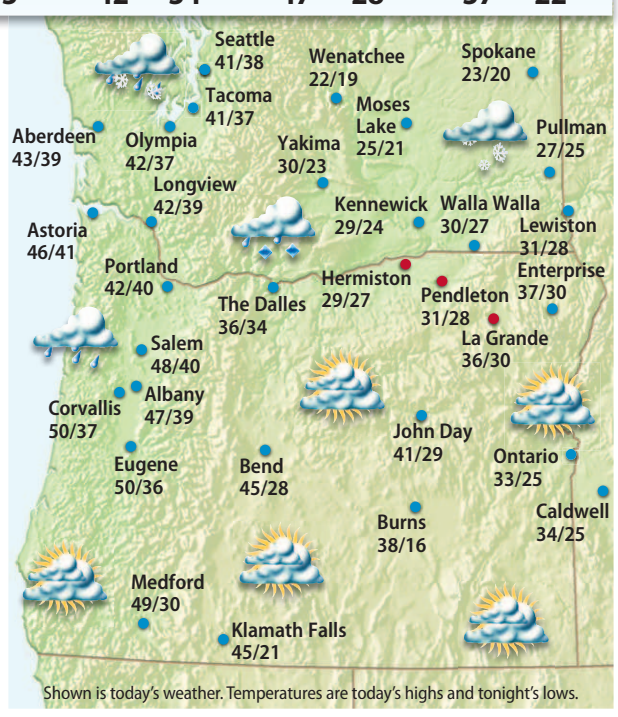
PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"
Month to date	0.53"
Normal month to date	1.24"
Year to date	9.29"
Last year to date	9.13"
Normal year to date	9.71"

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	7:35 a.m.
Sunset tonight	4:18 p.m.
Moonrise today	12:47 p.m.
Moonset today	12:54 a.m.

Full	Last	New	First
Jan 1	Jan 8	Jan 16	Jan 24



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

REGIONAL FORECAST

Coastal Oregon: Mostly cloudy today with a shower in the area.

Eastern and Central Oregon: Mostly cloudy today; a little icy mix across the north.

Western Washington: A rain or snow shower this morning, then a little rain in central parts; a little rain elsewhere.

Eastern Washington: Mostly cloudy today; a flurry in the north during the afternoon.

Cascades: Cloudy today. Showers of rain and snow in the morning, then rain and drizzle across the north.

Northern California: Mostly sunny at the coast today; clouds and sun elsewhere. Partly cloudy tonight.

REGIONAL CITIES

	Today Hi	Lo	W	Thu. Hi	Lo	W
Astoria	46	41	r	49	45	r
Baker City	34	22	c	35	30	sn
Bend	45	28	c	47	39	c
Brookings	53	42	c	53	46	c
Burns	38	16	c	38	26	c
Enterprise	37	30	sn	39	35	sn
Eugene	50	36	c	48	44	r
Heppner	33	30	c	40	38	c
Hermiston	29	27	c	35	33	sn
John Day	41	29	c	41	39	sn
Klamath Falls	45	21	c	43	24	pc
La Grande	36	30	sn	38	35	sn
Meacham	33	29	sn	36	33	sn
Medford	49	30	c	48	33	c
Newport	51	45	r	50	48	r
North Bend	54	41	c	54	49	r
Ontario	33	25	c	34	30	c
Pasco	28	24	c	31	30	sn
Pendleton	31	28	sn	37	35	sn
Portland	42	40	r	46	44	r
Redmond	44	25	c	43	34	c
Salem	48	40	r	50	46	r
Spokane	23	20	c	30	29	sn
Ukiah	37	29	sf	38	36	sn
Vancouver	41	39	r	46	44	r
Walla Walla	30	27	sn	38	35	sn
Yakima	30	23	c	34	30	sn

WORLD CITIES

	Today Hi	Lo	W	Thu. Hi	Lo	W
Beijing	38	21	s	43	22	s
Hong Kong	69	64	s	70	63	pc
Jerusalem	61	48	pc	60	50	c
London	41	31	c	40	32	s
Mexico City	72	42	pc	69	43	pc
Moscow	35	33	c	36	32	c
Paris	43	31	r	42	35	pc
Rome	58	46	r	52	36	sh
Seoul	28	19	s	36	30	c
Sydney	78	69	pc	83	71	pc
Tokyo	48	36	s	48	38	s

WINDS

(in mph)	Today	Thursday
Boardman	ENE 4-8	S 4-8
Pendleton	NNW 4-8	SSW 6-12

UV INDEX TODAY

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

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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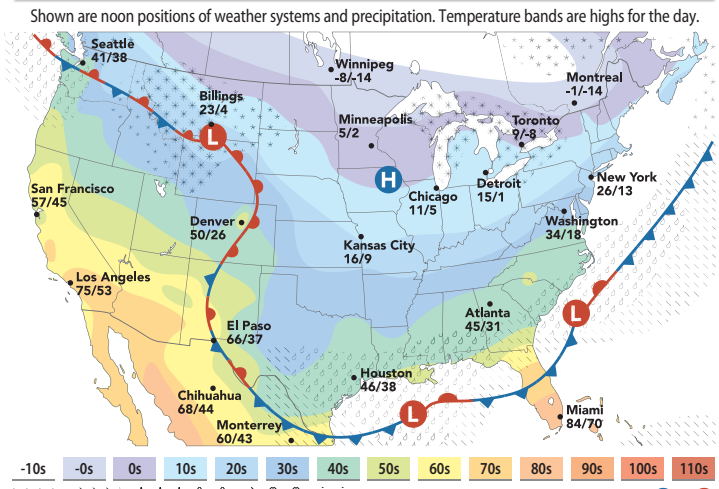
NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY

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



National Summary: A cold rain is in store for the Deep South as more lake-effect snow is forecast near the Great Lakes. Snow will fall on the northern Rockies as rain dampens the coastal Northwest. Most other areas will be dry.

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 83° in Miami, Fla. **Low** -36° in Embarrass, Minn.

NATIONAL CITIES

	Today Hi	Lo	W	Thur. Hi	Lo	W
Albuquerque	59	31	s	58	29	s
Atlanta	45	31	r	36	29	i
Atlantic City	32	16	pc	26	14	pc
Baltimore	31	12	sf	28	13	pc
Billings	23	4	sn	10	-1	sn
Birmingham	42	30	c	47	30	c
Boise	33	24	c	36	32	c
Boston	22	5	s	14	4	s
Charleston, SC	48	33	sh	42	32	r
Charleston, WV	26	8	pc	29	18	pc
Chicago	11	5	s	17	11	sn
Cleveland	13	7	c	19	11	c
Dallas	42	28	c	44	32	c
Denver	50	26	s	48	25	pc
Detroit	15	1	pc	17	10	sn
El Paso	66	37	pc	70	37	s
Fairbanks	-6	-19	s	-15	-21	pc
Fargo	0	-3	s	6	-15	sn
Honolulu	81	67	sh	81	68	pc
Houston	46	38	r	50	39	c
Indianapolis	13	4	pc	23	12	c
Jacksonville	61	48	c	55	43	r
Kansas City	16	9	pc	29	13	c
Las Vegas	65	43	s	67	44	s
Little Rock	34	17	c	38	22	c
Los Angeles	75	53	s	79	55	s

	Today Hi	Lo	W	Thur. Hi	Lo	W
Louisville	24	13	pc	31	21	pc
Memphis	33	18	c	38	22	c
Miami	84	70	pc	82	68	s
Milwaukee	8	3	s	18	9	sn
Minneapolis	5	2	s	13	-2	sn
Nashville	32	17	c	39	24	c
New Orleans	50	42	r	50	42	r
New York City	26	13	pc	23	13	s
Oklahoma City	32	21	c	43	22	c
Omaha	11	4	pc	22	8	c
Philadelphia	30	16	pc	26	16	pc
Phoenix	75	46	s	77	47	s
Portland, ME	19	-4	s	9	-6	s
Providence	23	6	s	17	5	s
Raleigh	46	17	c	36	20	pc
Rapid City	19	6	c	18	2	c
Reno	57	29	s	57	29	s
Sacramento	61	35	s	61	33	s
St. Louis	20	10	pc	28	16	c
Salt Lake City	43	32	pc	46	32	pc
San Diego	68	49	s	72	49	s
San Francisco	57	45	s	57	43	s
Seattle	41	38	r	47	42	r
Tucson	78	44	pc	78	45	s
Washington, DC	34	18	sf	29	22	pc
Wichita	27	18	c	41	16	c

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