

Scientists ID another possible threat to orcas: pink salmon

By GENE JOHNSON
Associated Press



AP Photo/Elaine Thompson

Salmon researcher Greg Ruggerone, one of a group of scientists who noticed a startling trend about the deaths of endangered southern resident orca whales, stands with a chart showing various salmon species his office on Friday in Seattle.

SEATTLE — Over the years, scientists have identified dams, pollution and vessel noise as causes of the troubling decline of the Pacific Northwest's resident killer whales. Now, they may have found a new and more surprising culprit: pink salmon.

Four salmon researchers were perusing data on the website of the Center for Whale Research, which studies the orcas, several months ago when they noticed a startling trend: That for the past two decades, significantly more of the whales have died in even-numbered years than in odd years.

In a newly published paper, they speculate that the pattern is related to pink salmon, which return to the Salish Sea between Washington state and Canada in enormous numbers every other year — though they're not sure how. They suspect that the huge runs of pink salmon, which have boomed under conservation efforts and changes in ocean conditions in the past two decades, might interfere with the whales' ability to hunt their preferred prey, Chinook salmon.

Given the dire plight

of the orcas, which officials say are on the brink of extinction, the researchers decided to publicize their discovery without waiting to investigate its causes.

"The main point was getting out to the public word about this biennial pattern so people can start thinking about this important, completely unexpected factor in the decline of these whales," said one of the authors, Greg Ruggerone. "It's important to better understand what's occurring here because that could help facilitate recovery actions."

By ANDREW SELSKY
Associated Press

SALEM — Leaders of the Oregon Legislature spoke Friday about the need to bridge divides that exist in the state, days ahead of the start of the 2019 session.

Speaking at The Associated Press Legislative Preview, lawmakers described an Oregon that is divided between urban and rural, Democrat and Republican.

The November election gave Democrats a three-fifths supermajority in Oregon's Legislature with greater power to impose taxes, but Senate President Peter Courtney, D-Salem, said they must wield power carefully.

He recalled that Senate Republican Leader Herman Baertschiger Jr. had told him that while Baertschiger represents a minority in the Senate, most people in his district around Grants Pass are Republican.

Courtney said he wants legislation from the session that begins Tuesday to benefit the entire state of Oregon.

He pointed out that Republicans could jam up

Oregon lawmakers discuss need to unite a divided state



AP Photo/Andrew Selsky

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown speaks at the Associated Press legislative preview on Friday in Salem.

legislation by sitting out votes. Quorum rules say 20 senators must be on the Senate floor and 40 representatives on the House floor for votes to take place, Courtney said. Democrats fell short of those numbers in the elections, with 38 seats in the House and 18 in the Senate.

House Democrats have pledged to help build a future for all people in the state "and not just people from Portland," House Majority Leader Jennifer Williamson told Capitol correspondents.

Baertschiger lamented that the days when his district was vibrant — in which families could buy a house, a car, and send their kids to college — disappeared in the last 40 years. He said state and federal governments should reevaluate policies that restricted harvesting of natural resources.

"One thing that has just jumped out, and that I recognize very much, is the divide in Oregon, and it really upsets me," Baertschiger said. "The struggles in rural Oregon are different than the struggles in urban Oregon and vice-versa, and I don't think the Legislature really recognizes that."

Rep. Carl Wilson echoed that, saying there were too many empty storefronts in downtown Grants Pass.

The priority of Republican House members is "making rural Oregon prosperous." He said they would try to block legislation they deem dangerous to rural Oregon's economic health. He said that whenever minimum wage goes up "our fortunes take another shot."

Gov. Kate Brown, also appearing at the AP event, said Friday that boosting funding for Oregon's struggling education system is her number one priority heading into the 2019 Legislature.

"The time is now for us to make significant investments in our education system," Brown said.

Brown has a \$2 billion education investment package that would come with some type of tax increase in her proposed state budget, in addition to her base budget. She says property tax limitations adopted in the early 1990s have resulted in decreased funding per student.

Priorities are for early childhood education, increasing the school year to 180 days, increasing the high school graduation rate, and technical education.

The Democratic governor said some funding issues could wind up before Oregon voters in ballot measures, like a cigarette tax that would help fund the Oregon Health Plan.

Partisan clashes are expected on gun control — and over a bill that would limit rent increases in many cases to address the state's housing crisis.

Wilson said he would not vote for any gun control, even a measure that would require safety locks on firearms to prevent a child from accidentally shooting someone. He said it would be a double tragedy if a parent, through simply forgetting once to lock a gun, resulting in a death of a child, would then have to face possible jail time for violating the law.

"There are people who want to disarm us incrementally over time," Wilson said. He said "rural Oregon is steeped in gun culture."

A bill sponsored by House Speaker Tina Kotek and Senate Majority Leader Ginny Burdick, both Portland Democrats, would prohibit a landlord from terminating month-to-month tenancy without cause after 12 months of occupancy, and limit annual rent increases to 7 percent annual changes in the consumer price index.

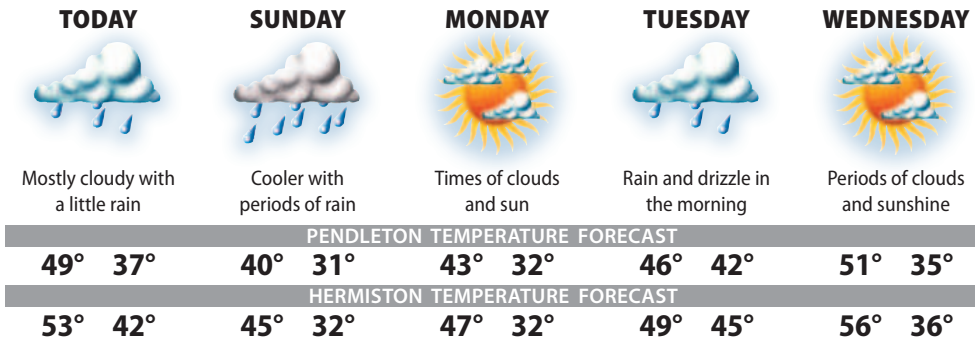
Such a move would drive some landlords to sell their homes and get out of the rental business, Wilson said.

Legislation to cut statewide carbon emissions would be a hard sell to his constituents, the Republican said, adding that a carbon tax is likely to pass.

"I have to explain to them what good is it going to do for them, that it costs them more to heat their homes, to drive their cars, to operate their machinery, to drive their trucks," Wilson said.

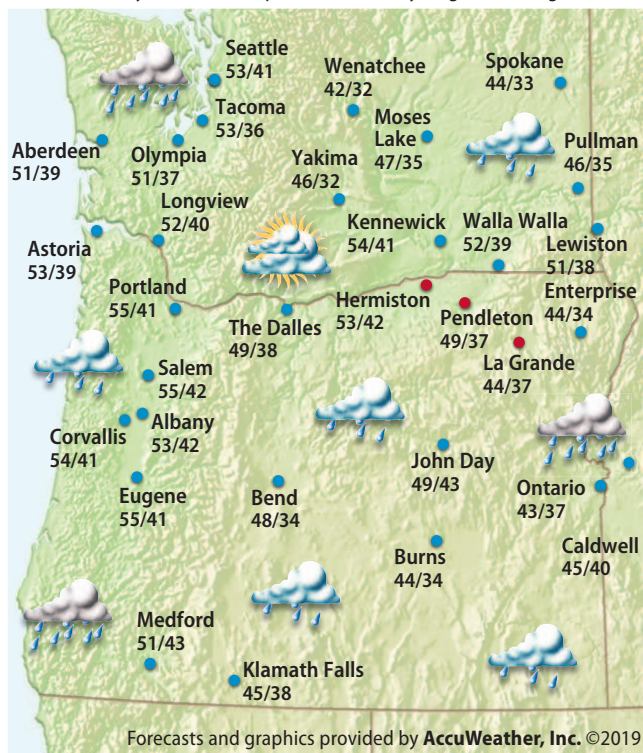
Kotek responded she'll need to explain how resources from a carbon pricing program could help the natural resource industry, and that dollars should go to rural areas that are often most impacted by climate change, including drought and wildfires.

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

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



ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	52°	35°
Normals	42°	28°
Records	63° (2005)	-20° (1922)

PRECIPITATION	
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.08"
Month to date	0.46"
Normal month to date	0.93"
Year to date	0.46"
Last year to date	1.06"
Normal year to date	0.93"

HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	51°	31°
Normals	42°	29°
Records	65° (1961)	-11° (1930)

PRECIPITATION	
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.03"
Month to date	0.45"
Normal month to date	0.75"
Year to date	0.45"
Last year to date	0.72"
Normal year to date	0.75"

WINDS (in mph)

	Today	Sun.
Boardman	SW 4-8	NW 4-8
Pendleton	SSW 6-12	WNW 6-12

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	7:30 a.m.
Sunset tonight	4:42 p.m.
Moonrise today	3:17 p.m.
Moonset today	6:02 a.m.

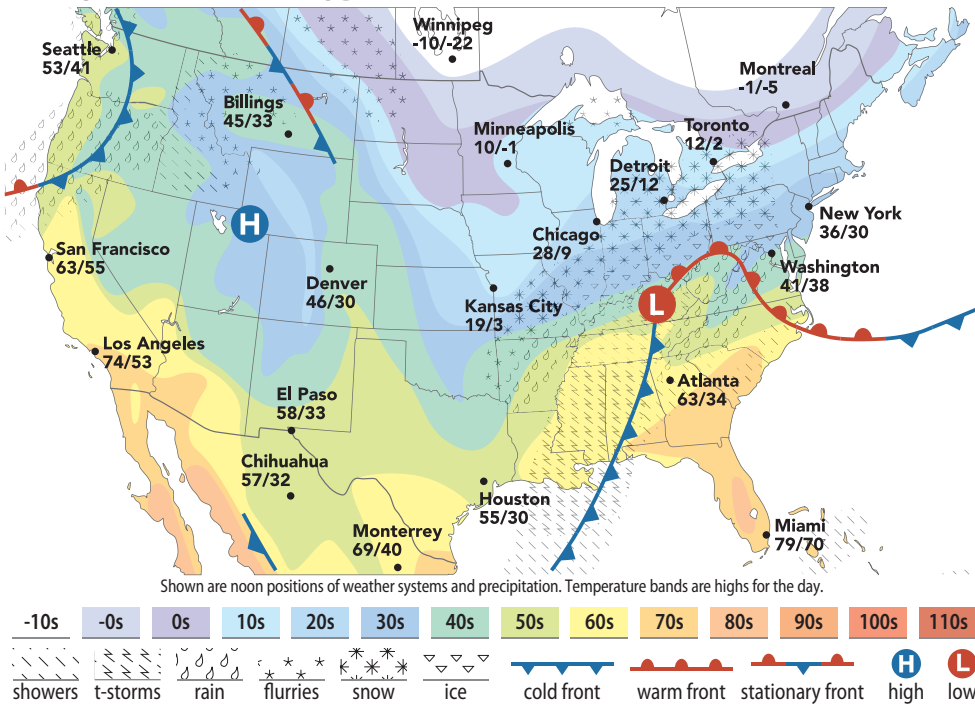


NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)

High 86° in McAllen, Texas Low -28° in Cotton, Minn.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



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



BRIEFLY

2 found dead in Grants Pass motel may have died of drugs

GRANTS PASS (AP) — A man and woman found dead in a Grants Pass motel room may have died of a drug overdose.

The *Daily Courier* said Friday the bodies of the 31-year-old man and the 37-year-old woman were found Wednesday by employees at the Motel 6.

Their names have not yet been released. The Grants Pass Department of Public Safety says the cause of death has not been determined but the deaths are being investigated as a potential drug overdose.

Authorities are awaiting the medical examiner's report.

The newspaper reports that the abuse of heroin and the even more lethal narcotic fentanyl is high in Josephine County.

Measles cases hit 19 with more suspected in SW Washington

VANCOUVER, Wash. (AP) — Officials say the number of confirmed measles cases in southwestern Washington has increased to 19 with seven more cases suspected.

Clark County health officials said Friday the confirmed cases include 15 children under the age of 10, three people between 10 and 18 and one adult.

Officials say 16 were not immunized against the disease, a highly contagious

viral illness spread through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

People who visited nearly 30 locations in southwest Washington and Portland, Oregon, may have been exposed.

The patients while contagious have visited schools, medical facilities, restaurants, the Portland International Airport and the Northeast Portland Costco and Ikea stores. One person went to a Portland Trailblazers game on Jan. 11.

Symptoms include fever, cough, runny nose, red eyes and rash.

Portland man convicted of trafficking girl, 15

PORTLAND (AP) — A Portland man has been convicted of multiple sex crimes after luring a 15-year-old girl from a bus stop five years ago.

Multnomah County District Attorney's spokesman Brent Weisberg said Friday that 54-year-old Anthony Curry forced the girl to pose for nude photos and dance naked in a strip club alongside adult women.

Prosecutors said during trial that Curry persuaded the girl to get into his car and then groomed her for human sex trafficking.

The girl testified against Curry in court that he got her a fake ID so she could enter strip clubs.

The jury found him guilty of all but one count of sodomy, compelling prostitution, using a child in a display of sexually explicit conduct and attempting to sexually prostitute. He will be sentenced in March.

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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