

Fatal virus hits deer herds

By JAYSON JACOBY
Baker City Herald

BAKER CITY — An outbreak of an insect-spread disease has killed at least eight deer in Baker Valley in less than a week, and a state wildlife biologist fears this outbreak could be much worse than previous episodes.

The often-fatal illness is epizootic hemorrhagic disease, which is caused by a virus spread by the bite of midges that breed in stagnant water.

Brian Ratliff, district wildlife biologist at the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Baker City office, said he received several calls over the weekend from residents who found dead deer on their properties in the Pine Creek and Ben Dier Lane area, at the western edge of Baker Valley about 12 miles northwest of Baker City.

Based on that cluster of cases, the disease seems to be spreading more rapidly than in previous outbreaks in the valley, Ratliff said.

EHD can kill white-tailed and mule deer — the first two carcasses Ratliff examined this weekend were mule deer — but whitetails are



Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife/Contributed Photo, File

An outbreak of an insect-spread disease has killed at least eight deer in Baker Valley in less than a week, and a state wildlife biologist fears this outbreak could be much worse than previous episodes.

much more susceptible to the illness, he said.

An outbreak of EHD killed an estimated 2,000 white-tailed deer in Umatilla County during the fall of 2019.

Deer can't spread the virus, also known as blue tongue, to other deer or animals by direct contact. Midges carrying the virus can infect other animals, including mule deer, elk, pronghorn antelope, sheep and cattle, but the mortal-

ity rate is much higher with white-tailed deer than with other species, Ratliff said.

The virus poses no threat to people, cats or dogs. Nor can people become ill by eating the meat of a deer or other animal infected with EHD.

The biggest recent outbreak in Baker County happened during the late summer and early fall of 2015, Ratliff said.

He said ODFW didn't compile an official death toll

then, but he believes many dozens of white-tailed deer died in the county in 2015.

Ratliff said epizootic hemorrhagic disease outbreaks typically start later in the year, when water sources are more scarce, forcing deer to congregate in those places and making them more likely to either be infected by midges or, in the case of deer that already carry the virus, to spread it to midges that bite them.

The virus can spread in both ways, he said — from infected deer to midges, and from infected midges to deer.

That allows the illness to spread rapidly in certain conditions.

Ratliff said outbreaks usually dissipate once freezing temperatures have killed the year's crop of midges.

Although infected mule deer are much more likely to survive than white-tailed deer are, Ratliff said the virus, which causes blood vessel constriction, can have severe and in some cases permanent effects on mule deer.

The vascular constriction can cause the testicles to shrivel and eventually fall off infected mule deer bucks, which renders them incapable of breeding, Ratliff said. That means bucks can't produce testosterone, the hormone that causes bucks to shed their antlers every year. When that happens the buck can have antlers for the rest of its life, and the antlers typically remain in the velvet

Rampage across Tri-Cities ends with officer shooting

By CAMERON PROBERT
Tri-City Herald

WEST RICHLAND — A violent, fiery rampage that stretched from Finley, Washington, to West Richland ended with a shootout with police early Wednesday, Aug. 25.

Police believe at least one person died in Finley, another was wounded and the suspect was killed in West Richland.

The 43-year-old man suspected of leaving a trail of destruction, including possibly setting fire to a union hall in Kennewick, reportedly died inside a burning pickup truck after exchanging gunfire with officers.

A family member of one of the shooting victims told the Tri-City Herald that the suspect shot and killed one man and wounded the victim's adult son where they lived in Finley. Then the house was set on fire, said the relative.

The three men were neighbors and their property shared a driveway, according to Benton County property records.

Benton County coroner officials were called to Finley and to the West Richland area, and the Regional Special Investigations Unit, which investigates officer-involved shootings, has been asked to investigate.

"The incident that occurred in West Richland is in connection to numerous arsons and a shooting in the Finley area," said an early-morning Benton County Sheriff's Office post.

The wounded man was taken to Trios Southridge Hospital in Kennewick, according to initial reports.

Benton County sheriff's deputies were told to watch out for the assault and arson suspect wearing a ballistic helmet and tactical gear, armed with an assault rifle and driving a Dodge pickup.

A fire was reported at the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 112 building.

"Sprinklers inside of the building quickly contained the fire after it started," Kennewick Fire Chief Chad Michael wrote in a tweet.

Initial reports to dispatchers said the "suspect vehicle in the arson is also the suspect vehicle in that call-out in Finley."

The orange pickup truck with a canopy was apparently spotted by Washington State Patrol troopers and officers, who followed the driver as he headed toward West Richland, according to initial reports.

Officers were told to back off and "give him some space," and he started to slow down on Van Giesen — the main street leading from Richland into West Richland.

He reportedly was swerving and then flames erupted and the truck came to a stop near a car wash.

Officers then reported "shots fired." Dispatchers were told to contact the nearby mobile home to be evacuated.

"Shots fired by me, as well," said an officer.

By then the truck was engulfed in flames with the man still inside, according to officers at the scene.

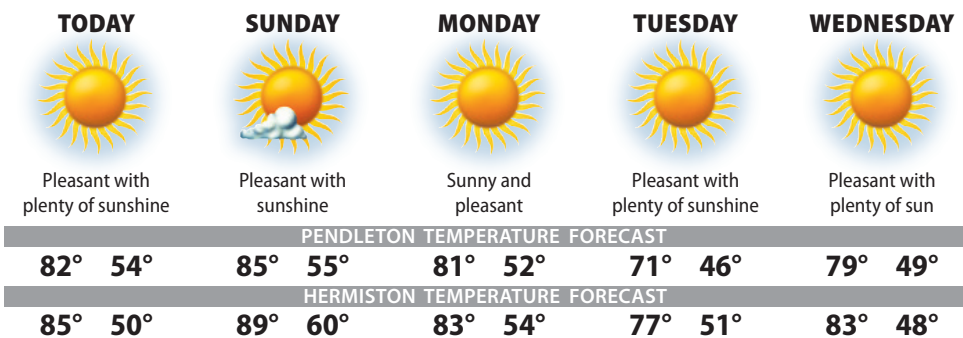
Firefighters were kept back for safety reasons and it burned for at least 30 minutes before an armored SWAT vehicle could pull up close and douse some of the flames.



Bob Brawdy/Tri-City Herald

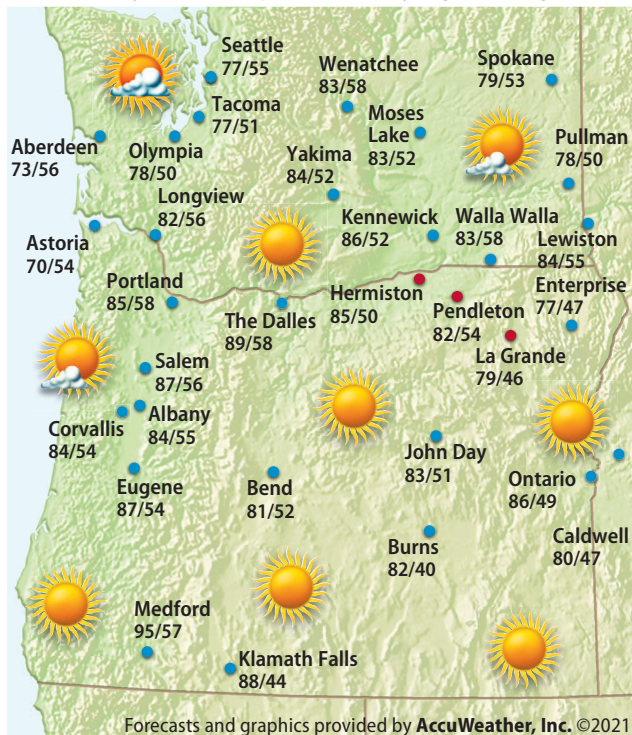
A line of police officers walk past the burned up pickup Wednesday, Aug. 25, 2021, near The Wash Stop car wash at 4024 W. Van Giesen St. in West Richland, Washington. The driver was involved in shootings and arson fires starting in Finley, Washington.

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

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



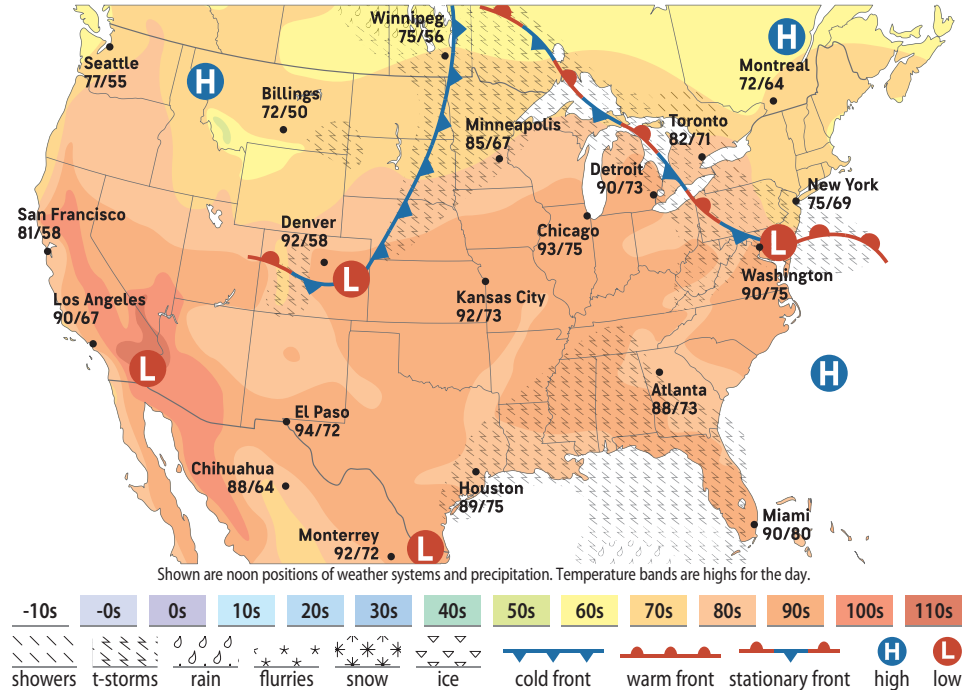
ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.				
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW		
Yesterday	76°	59°		
Normals	86°	56°		
Records	103° (1916)	40° (1911)		
PRECIPITATION				
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"			
Month to date	0.01"			
Normal month to date	0.28"			
Year to date	4.37"			
Last year to date	8.68"			
Normal year to date	8.59"			
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.				
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW		
Yesterday	78°	62°		
Normals	88°	54°		
Records	99° (1934)	41° (1930)		
PRECIPITATION				
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"			
Month to date	Trace			
Normal month to date	0.15"			
Year to date	1.93"			
Last year to date	1.66"			
Normal year to date	5.29"			
WINDS (in mph)				
	Today	Sun.		
Boardman	NNE 3-6	WSW 4-8		
Pendleton	NNW 4-8	NW 4-8		
SUN AND MOON				
Sunrise today	6:12 a.m.			
Sunset tonight	7:40 p.m.			
Moonrise today	10:37 p.m.			
Moonset today	12:45 p.m.			
	Last	New	First	Full
	Aug 29	Sep 6	Sep 13	Sep 20

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 116° in El Centro, Calif. Low 27° in Bodie State Park, Calif.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



IN BRIEF

Washington state orders the killing of up to 2 wolves

SPOKANE, Wash. — The state of Washington on Thursday, Aug. 26, ordered the killing of one or two wolves from the Togo Pack in Ferry County in response to repeated attacks on cattle.

The state Department of Fish and Wildlife said nonlethal deterrents used by three different ranchers had not stopped the attacks.

The department had documented one dead and three injured calves since June 24. The attacks were attributed to the Togo Pack. Three occurred within the last 30 days.

"Removing individual wolves is one of the toughest decisions we face and is never taken lightly," said Julia Smith, wolf policy lead for the department. "Those communities and WDFW staff have worked diligently to protect their livestock and meet expectations, and the season has been relatively quiet until now. August and September are typically months in which wolf-livestock conflict peaks, so this is not unexpected."

The pack consists of five adult wolves and four pups, the department said.

Ranchers tried a variety of approved meth-

ods to deter the wolves — including using range riders, removing sick or injured cattle and properly disposing of dead cattle — but those methods failed, the department said.

Killing one or two wolves from the Togo Pack territory is not expected to harm the wolf population's ability to reproduce in the state, the agency said. The department has documented three known wolf deaths in the state since Jan. 1. In previous years, it has documented 12 to 21 wolf deaths per year, and the population has continued to grow.

An environmental group decried the kill order.

At the end of 2020, the state's wolf population consisted of only 132 wolves confirmed by the wildlife agency and another 46 wolves estimated on the Colville Indian Reservation. Washington state is home to 1.1 million cattle, the Center for Biological Diversity said.

"It's such a tragedy that Washington's Department of Fish and Wildlife has once again put the Togo Pack in the crosshairs," said Amaroq Weiss, senior wolf advocate at the center. "Rather than continue to work with better alternatives, the agency insists on killing wolves to appease livestock owners."

—EO Media Group

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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