

# The Bulletin

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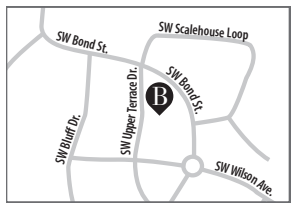
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**OUR ADDRESS**

Street ..... 320 SW Upper Terrace Drive  
Suite 200  
Bend, OR 97702  
Mailing ..... P.O. Box 6020  
Bend, OR 97708



**ADMINISTRATION**

**Publisher**  
Heidi Wright ..... 541-383-0341  
**Editor**  
Gerry O'Brien ..... 541-633-2166

**DEPARTMENT HEADS**

**Advertising**  
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Lottery results can now be found on the second page of Sports.

# LOCAL, STATE & REGION

## DESCHUTES COUNTY New COVID-19 cases per day

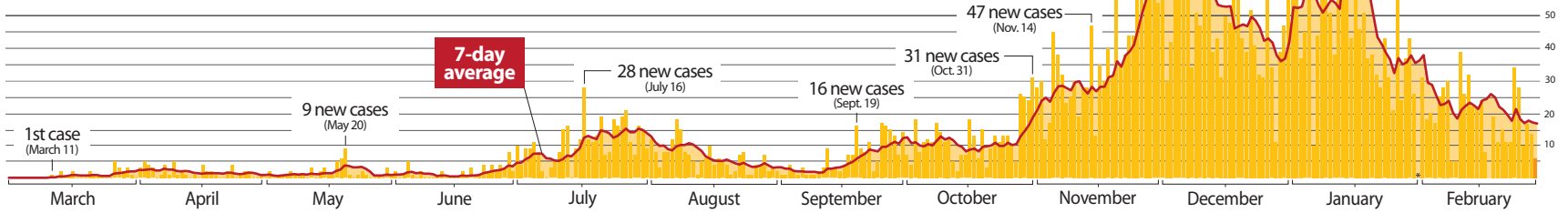
SOURCES: OREGON HEALTH AUTHORITY, DESCHUTES COUNTY HEALTH SERVICES BULLETIN GRAPHIC

**COVID-19 data for Sunday, Feb. 28:**

Deschutes County cases: 5,952 (6 new cases)  
Deschutes County deaths: 59 (zero new deaths)  
Crook County cases: 775 (zero new cases)  
Crook County deaths: 18 (zero new deaths)  
Jefferson County cases: 1,958 (3 new cases)  
Jefferson County deaths: 28 (zero new deaths)  
Oregon cases: 155,597 (292 new cases)  
Oregon deaths: 2,208 (zero new deaths)

**What is COVID-19?** It's an infection caused by a new coronavirus. Coronaviruses are a group of viruses that can cause a range of symptoms. Some usually cause mild illness. Some, like this one, can cause more severe symptoms and can be fatal. Symptoms include fever, coughing and shortness of breath.

**7 ways to help limit its spread:** 1. Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. 2. Avoid touching your face. 3. Avoid close contact with sick people. 4. Stay home. 5. In public, stay 6 feet from others and wear a cloth face covering or mask. 6. Cover a cough or sneeze with a tissue or cough into your elbow. 7. Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.



### WASHINGTON'S PUGET SOUND

## Gray whales learn a daring feeding strategy: DIGGING FOR GHOST SHRIMP AT HIGH TIDE

BY LYNDA V. MAPES

The Seattle Times  
**E**very spring, a small group of about a dozen gray whales pauses along an epic migration from calving lagoons in Baja California to their feeding grounds in the Arctic. They travel more than 170 miles off their coastal migration route, to stop off in northern Puget Sound. There, they linger from about March through May.

Now scientists think they know why the Sounders, as this beloved group of regulars is known, likes to visit — and hang around.

New research confirms these whales have figured out a brilliant feeding strategy.

Combining drone photography with long-term data on the Sounders has enabled scientists to track the body condition of these whales from when they first enter Puget Sound, until their departure to rejoin the migration north along the coast.

Last year was the first year of observations in a long-term study launched into the Sounders — and the results astounded scientists.

Within three weeks of arrival, the regulars they tracked with drone photography plumped up almost be-

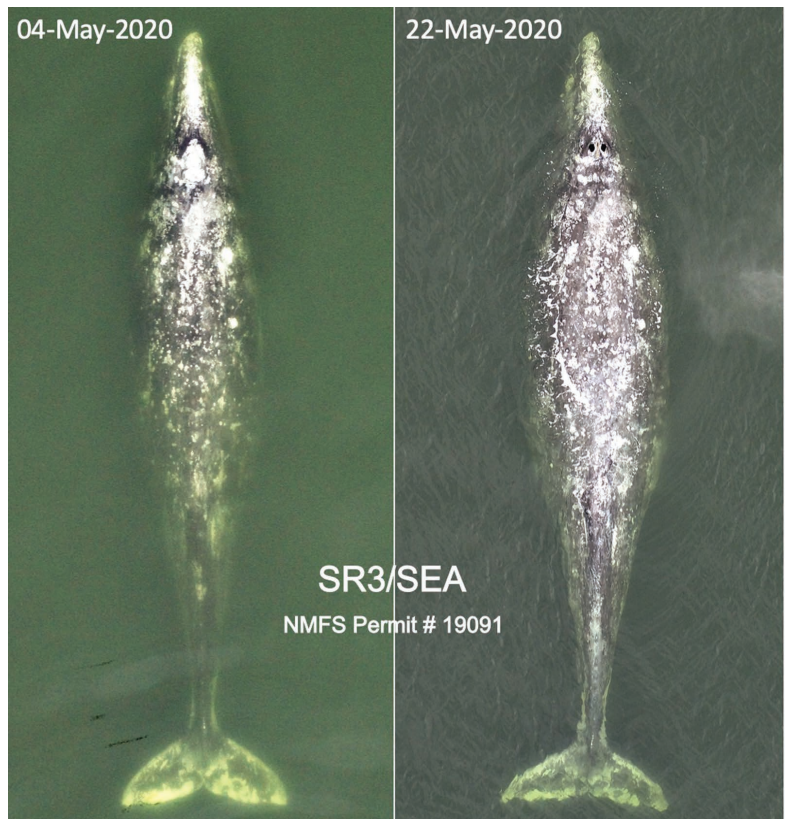
fore their eyes, as the whales fed, day after day, on ghost shrimp, which the Sounders have taught themselves to target in near-shore waters.

Scientists had long thought these whales must be on to something important for them to bother traveling so far off course from their migratory route, and stay so long. When they show up, many of them might not have eaten for seven months. Their ribs are showing.

But not for long. Snuffling up ghost shrimp in hundreds of pounds per day, scientists estimate, the Sounders within weeks are looking robust indeed, said John Durban, senior scientist at Southall Environmental Associates. He is a member of the research team along with Holly Fearnbach, marine mammal research director at SR3, a Seattle-based science research nonprofit, and John Calambokidis of the Cascadia Research Collective, who has studied the Sounders for decades.

"It is remarkable," Durban said. "They have stumbled on a strategy that works for them."

"I was shocked at how quickly they changed shape from a whale that looks emaciated ... to a whale that is plumping out."



Holly Fearnbach and John Durban via The Seattle Times  
**Aerial images of the same gray whale, known as "Earhart", taken 18 days apart in May in Washington state's northern Puget Sound. Changes in body condition are evident as the whale fattens up during this important feeding stopover during migration.**

Calambokidis, senior research biologist at Cascadia, has compiled observations of some of the visiting whales since 1990. That data, combined with the new drone photography and tags he is deploying on whales, is opening a whole new window onto the Sounders' world. Theirs is a high-risk strategy, they are learning.

The whales are quite daring, traveling up to a mile into the intertidal zone in the Snohomish River delta offshore of Everett. They have to really know where they are, and how to get out of there as the tide drops.

"Any boater knows to be in an intertidal area can be a very precarious thing," Durban said.

The tags that track the whales' movement show the Sounders synch their feeding precisely to the high

tide. They will bide their time for hours in deeper water, waiting for the tide to turn to give them just enough water at high tide to move in on ghost shrimp burrowed in the mud flats. The amount of effort the Sounders deploy is remarkable. When the tide drops, thousands of feeding pits about 6 feet long and 2 feet wide typically are revealed.

Notably, the Sounders have not in 30 years of record-keeping succumbed to any of the downturns in the overall gray whale population in the northeastern Pacific.

"These are empowering stories where these improvements are the effects of changes in human actions, not just a nice story about a whale doing well," Calambokidis said. "It shows it is possible to make these sorts of changes."

### COVID-19 | Federal relief

## Earlier bill gave Oregon over \$1B; how much exactly is unclear

BY HILLARY BORRUD

The Oregonian  
Two months ago, Congress passed a \$900 billion COVID relief package to boost unemployment benefits, deliver another round of stimulus payments to households, aid businesses and schools and support the rollout of vaccines.

With attention focused on Democrats' new \$1.9 trillion relief plan, the December relief law might seem like a distant memory.

But the money Congress approved Dec. 21 has been flowing into Oregon in huge buckets. The Oregonian found that state and local governments in Oregon — particularly school districts — will collectively receive nearly \$1.8 billion to spend on public services or distribute to struggling Oregonians.

Even experts on government spending, however, can't say for sure how much in total Oregon's state agencies and other governments will receive. The Oregonian concluded after days of reporting aimed at pinning that down.

In February, lawmakers and state analysts said they were still figuring out how much the federal funding might help fill an estimated \$1.6 billion state budget shortfall caused by slower than usual tax and

lottery revenue growth and significant state spending on pandemic and wildfire response. The Legislative Fiscal Office had yet to pin down the number as of Tuesday.

Gov. Kate Brown's administration was also unable to sum up how much the state expects to receive. "There are 21 different funding streams in the December federal relief package, which are distributed directly both to state agencies and to local entities, including counties, cities, behavioral health clinics, and higher education institutions," Deputy Communications Director Charles Boyle wrote in an email. "We don't yet have a total breakdown of the funds coming to state and local entities through those funding streams, as the state hasn't received all the dollars."

The Oregonian contacted staffers for all seven members of the state's congressional delegation, starting with Sen. Ron Wyden and Sen. Jeff Merkley the first week of February. Merkley's office was able to point to what appears to be the largest tranche of funding for Oregon governments, \$499 million for K-12 schools. Five senators' and representatives' staffers responded with varying amounts of information about the relief funding.

Here are the other December relief package funding streams identified by contacting various government agencies and other sources.

- **\$281 million** for rental assistance through the state and six counties.
- **\$280.8 million** in public health funding for COVID-19 testing, vaccine distribution and contact tracing work, some of which will go to local governments.
- **\$232.8 million** awarded directly to community colleges and public and private universities, according to the Oregon Department of Education.
- **\$225 million** for transit agencies, including \$190 million for the Portland area, smaller allotments for other urban centers and just \$2.5 million for rural transit providers, according to the Oregon Department of Transportation.
- **\$124 million** in relief funds for highway infrastructure program, according to ODOT.
- **\$103 million** in child care and development block grants, administered the Early Learning Division.
- **\$41.8 million** in education funding to be spent largely at the governor's discretion, including \$27.6 million specifically for private schools.

There is also a nationwide

pot of \$50 million to support school-based mental health programs, but it's unclear how much Oregon will receive.

The fuzzy picture of how much federal aid Oregon is receiving points to the size and complexity of these federal relief bills — \$2.2 trillion CARES Act still being paid out 11 months after it passed. It sent at least \$2.45 billion to Oregon governments, plus stimulus payments paid directly to individuals, aid to businesses through tax cuts and the Paycheck Protection Program and an array of other policies. Sara Hottman, state communications director for Merkley, wrote in an email that "funds are largely distributed based on

grant applications, and right now CARES Act grants are still being awarded to applicants. So I'm guessing it'll be some time before we have state totals of the December bill."

In practice, the state was able to apply \$56 million from the CARES Act to the state police budget and a number of city, county and special district governments used federal funds to help cover payroll and employee paid leave costs, state auditors found.

Democrats' latest COVID relief bill, which passed the House on Saturday and now heads to the Senate, contains \$350 billion to patch state and local governments' budgets, according to multiple news reports.

**Join us to make a difference for local kids on Friday, Feb. 26, 2021. The celebration will include special readings of children's books by Central Oregonians, raffle prizes, and more!**

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