

LOCAL, STATE & REGION

Environmental group sues over protections for 20 species

BY GILLIAN FLACCUS
Associated Press

PORTLAND — An environmental group filed a lawsuit Thursday alleging the federal government has failed to act on petitions to protect nine species under the Endangered Species Act and hasn't designated critical habitat for 11 other species that are already protected.

The lawsuit, filed in U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C., by the Center for Biological Diversity lists a variety of plants, bees and animals from Oregon to Florida to Delaware and joins a previous lawsuit filed last year that listed 200 different species that were awaiting protection decisions.

The average waiting period for an imperiled species to get federal protection is



12 years, and 47 species have gone extinct waiting, said Noah Greenwald, endangered species director for the center. "The Endangered Species Act is incred-

This image from a 2018 species assessment shows the Franklin's bumble bee.

Pete Schroeder via USFWS, ODFW

ibly successful at saving species from extinction, but only if they're provided its protections in the first place," he said. "The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's listing program is broken and badly in need of reform."

Representatives from Fish and Wildlife and the U.S. Department of Interior declined to comment on the lawsuit.

Included in the complaint are species from across the U.S. with sometimes fanciful names that are teetering on the brink of environmental disaster.

The Franklin's bumble bee in Oregon hasn't been seen in the wild since 2006.

Coronavirus

Oregon detects variant identified in South Africa

BY AIMEE GREEN
The Oregonian

Oregon's top state epidemiologist said Wednesday that the state has detected its first cases — eight in total — of the B.1.351 coronavirus variant that has been linked to South Africa.

State epidemiologist Dr. Dean Sidelinger told a group of state lawmakers that other COVID-19 "variants of concern" first linked with Brazil, the United Kingdom and California also increased by notable levels. The reported numbers jumped from April 5 to April 10.

Experts are closely watching the spread of variants in Or-

egon and across the globe — saying they could complicate efforts to reach herd immunity as they continue to mutate and attempt to evade the effectiveness of current vaccines.

The B.1.351 variant previously hadn't been identified in Oregon before Saturday. It's thought to possibly be more contagious and more successful at undermining the effectiveness of current vaccines.

Sidelinger said he has no data yet on whether the eight cases were among people who'd recently traveled to countries with higher rates of B.1.351 or whether any of those infected are linked to each other. More than 450 cases of B.1.351 have

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been identified in at least 35 states other than Oregon, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Cases of P.1, initially linked to Brazil, grew from one previously reported case to a total of four.

The state reported a more than three-fold increase in cases of B.1.1.7, the variant first

detected in the United Kingdom — from 22 to 69.

"We're seeing a fairly significant rise in B.1.1.7," Sidelinger said.

B.1.1.7 is thought to be 60% more contagious and studies show conflicting data on whether it causes more serious disease than the strains that had been dominant in the United States up until last week, when federal officials said B.1.1.7 had taken over as the most common strain.

The variants first identified in California, however, continue to show up in higher numbers in Oregon than all the other variants of concern combined.

TODAY

It's Saturday, April 17, the 107th day of 2021. There are 258 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

In 1970, Apollo 13 astronauts James A. Lovell, Fred W. Haise and Jack Swigert splashed down safely in the Pacific, four days after a ruptured oxygen tank crippled their spacecraft while en route to the moon.

In 1492, a contract was signed by Christopher Columbus and a representative of Spain's King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, giving Columbus a commission to seek a westward ocean passage to Asia.

In 1895, the Treaty of Shimonoseki ended the first Sino-Japanese War.

In 1905, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Lochner v. New York*, struck down, 5-4, a New York State law limiting the number of hours that bakers could be made to work. This ruling was effectively overturned in 1937 by the high court's *West Coast Hotel Co. v. Parrish* decision.

In 1961, some 1,500 CIA-trained Cuban exiles launched the disastrous Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in an attempt to topple Fidel Castro, whose forces crushed the incursion by the third day.

In 1969, a jury in Los Angeles convicted Sirhan Sirhan of assassinating Sen. Robert F. Kennedy.

In 1972, the Boston Marathon allowed women to compete for the first time; Nina Kuscsik was the first officially recognized women's champion, with a time of 3:10:26.

In 1973, Federal Express (later FedEx) began operations as 14 planes carrying 186 packages took off from Memphis International Airport, bound for 25 U.S. cities.

In 1975, Cambodia's five-year war ended as the capital Phnom Penh fell to the Khmer Rouge, which instituted brutal, radical policies that claimed an estimated 1.7 million lives until the regime was overthrown in 1979.

In 1986, at London's Heathrow Airport, a bomb was discovered in the bag of Anne-Marie Murphy, a pregnant Irishwoman about to board an El Al jetliner to Israel; she'd been tricked into carrying the bomb by her Jordanian fiancé, Nezar Hindawi. The bodies of kidnapped American Peter Kilburn and Britons Philip Padfield and Leigh Douglas were found near Beirut; they had been slain in ap-

parent retaliation for the U.S. raid on Libya.

In 1991, the Dow Jones industrial average closed above 3,000 for the first time, ending the day at 3,004.46, up 17.58.

In 1993, a federal jury in Los Angeles convicted two former police officers of violating the civil rights of beaten motorist Rodney King; two other officers were acquitted.

In 2013, 15 people were killed when a fertilizer plant exploded in West, Texas. Sports returned to Boston two days after the deadly Marathon bombing as the Buffalo Sabres defeated the Bruins in a 3-2 shootout (players on both teams wore "Boston Strong" decals on their helmets).

Ten years ago: U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton visited Japan, where she expressed confidence the country would fully recover from its tsunami and nuclear disasters. Actor Michael Sarrazin, 70, died in Montreal.

Five years ago: Pennsylvania became the 24th state to legalize a comprehensive medical marijuana program as Gov. Tom Wolf signed the bill into law. Actor Doris Roberts, who played the tart-tongued, endlessly meddling mother on CBS' "Everybody Loves Raymond," died at 90.

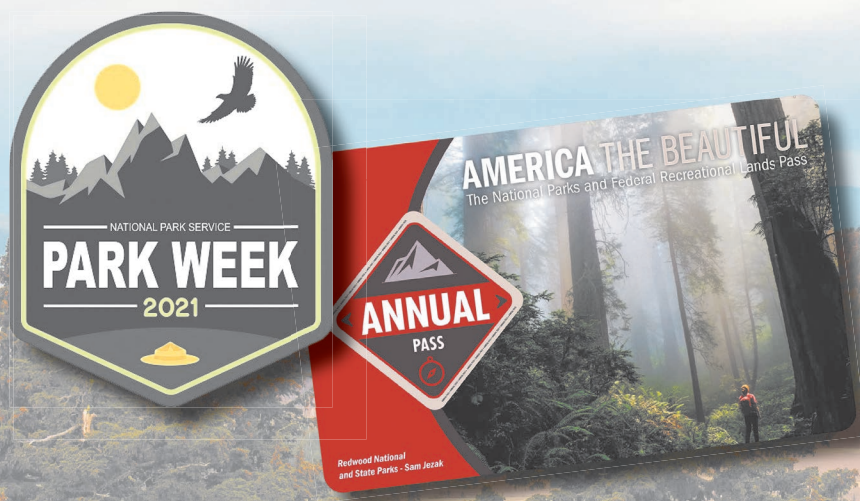
One year ago: President Donald Trump urged supporters to "LIBERATE" three states led by Democratic governors, apparently encouraging protests against stay-at-home mandates aimed at stopping the coronavirus. Washington Democratic Gov. Jay Inslee accused Trump of "fomenting domestic rebellion and spreading lies."

Today's Birthdays: Actor David Bradley is 79. Composer-musician Jan Hammer is 73. Actor Olivia Hussey is 70. Actor Clarke Peters is 69. Rapper Afrika Bambaataa is 64. Actor Sean Bean is 62. Former NFL quarterback Boomer Esiason is 60. Actor Joel Murray is 59. Rock singer Maynard James Keenan is 57. Actor William Mapother is 56. Actor Leslie Bega is 54. Actor Henry Ian Cusick is 54. Actor Kimberly Elise is 54. Singer Liz Phair is 54. Director/producer Adam McKay is 53. Rapper-actor Redman is 51. Actor Jennifer Garner is 49. Singer Victoria Beckham is 47. Actor-singer Lindsay Korman is 43. Actor Rooney Mara is 36.

—Associated Press

TODAY!

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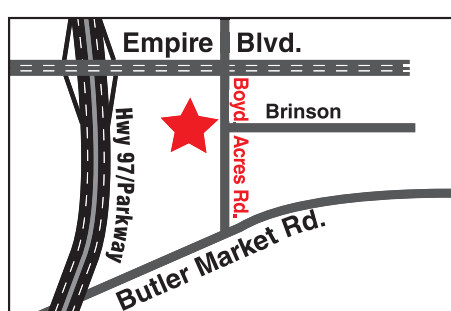


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