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ALEX VANDERSTUYF/NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

### **The Mystery of the Missing Porcupines**

*Scientists are racing to figure out why porcupines are disappearing from their former stomping grounds.*

## Colorado's 2025 'Water Year' was abnormally hot and dry



***Photo by DepositPhotos.***

*“Colorado’s*

2025 “water year” — a 12-month period that tracks water in the state — was a scorcher, according to a new report from the Colorado Climate Center at CSU. The “water year” runs from October 1 until September 30 of the following year. It’s used by scientists to keep track of how water accumulates in the state, from the earliest snowpack to when runoff flows into Colorado’s streams and reservoirs. The 2025 water year was the 10th hottest year on record, which stretches back to 1895. A few Western Slope locations even saw their warmest years on record. The research focuses on temperature, drought and precipitation, including rain and snow. October 2024 was also the hottest October ever recorded in that dataset. Most months also recorded above-average temperatures compared to the past century. ...” [Read more from Colorado Public Radio.](#)

### **How Colorado River talks will affect Utahns and millions more across the Southwest**

“Water from the Colorado River and its tributaries irrigates farms, sprinkles lawns and quenches the thirst of millions across Utah and the greater Southwest. While only 27% of the state’s water comes from it, some 60% of Utahns rely on the Colorado River for drinking water, agriculture and industries such as energy and mining. The future of that water supply is increasingly tenuous, though. The river is overallocated, meaning farmers, cities and companies have rights to more water than actually runs through the basin. That gap is only growing as climate change makes the region hotter and drier, slowing the river’s flow. For years, representatives from the seven U.S. states that share the river have been in tense negotiations over how to manage the waterway during dry years. States were supposed to reach a basic agreement on Nov. 11, but they had nothing to show. ...” [Read more from the Salt Lake Tribune.](#)

### **Utah paid farmers to leave water in the Colorado River. Here’s how it’s going**

“Kevin Cotner grows alfalfa in Carbon County. But this year, around a third of his family’s farmland hasn’t grown anything. “It’s burnt,” he said as he motioned across the desolate, brown field in front of him. “There’s no vegetation there.” That sounds dire, but for Cotner, the situation makes financial sense. His field is part of the first batch of farmland enrolled in Utah’s

Demand Management Pilot Program. The initiative pays farmers in the state's Colorado River Basin to leave some of their ground bare so the water they would have used instead flows downstream to Lake Powell. "It's another cash crop. It's just a different crop than a crop of alfalfa," he said of the payments. "It's a farm, but it is a business. And we have bills and commitments like any other business does, so it works for us." ... " [Read more from KUER](#).

### **Response to Jay Lund's "Nine California Water Rites"**

Deirdre Des Jardins, California Water Research, writes, "Jay Lund published a clever satire of California water rhetoric today, and he's right that policy-based evidence-making occurs in our water debates. I worked with Jay and other Delta Independent Science Board members in 2021 to save the Delta Independent Science Board from defunding, and I value his truth-telling. But Jay's framing misses something critical happening at the Department of Water Resources. There's a difference between rhetoric and documenting actual methodological failures in climate risk assessment. ... " [Continue reading at California Water Research](#).

### **Klamath Tribes challenge orders based on secret agreement between irrigator group and state**

"On November 19, 2025, the Klamath Tribes filed a motion to amend their petition in the Circuit Court of Klamath County. The amended petition seeks to reverse recent illegal orders that replaced a long-time administrative law judge in the Klamath Basin Adjudication (KBA) on the heels of a secret deal cut between the Oregon State Office of Administrative Hearings and certain water users in the Upper Klamath Basin. In August 2025, Chief Administrative Law Judge Jeffrey Rhoades removed long-time presiding Administrative Law Judge Joe Allen from continuing to handle the KBA cases. The removal disregarded two administrative decisions in the past year (in November 2024 and March 2025) that had specifically rejected challenges to Judge Allen from a water users group called the Upper Basin Irrigators and concluded that Judge Allen should continue to preside over the KBA cases. ... " [Read more from the Native American Rights Fund](#).

### **Death Valley just had its rainiest November in 115 years**

"The driest place on Earth just had its wettest November on record. Furnace Creek in Death Valley picked up just over 1 ¾ inches of rain last month, the most on record in the station's 115-year history and nearly the amount of rain that the desert typically sees in an entire year. That record was part of a much larger wet November trend across Southern California. Downtown Los Angeles collected 5.5 inches, its fourth-wettest tally on record and its biggest since 1967. Santa Barbara Airport was soaked with 10.6 inches, an all-time high, while Paso Robles logged its fourth-wettest November. ... " [Read more from the San Francisco Chronicle](#).



**Burned batteries from Moss Landing power plant fire will be trucked to Nevada**

### Scholarships with Jan 15-30 Deadlines

<a href="#"><u>Tempe Diablos Scholarship</u></a>	\$8,000	January 15, 2026
<a href="#"><u>Texas Educational Opportunity Grant Program (TEOG)</u></a>	\$20,760	January 15, 2026
<a href="#"><u>Texas Tuition Equalization Grant Program (TEG)</u></a>	\$25,620	January 15, 2026
<a href="#"><u>The Chronicle Diversity in Media Scholarship</u></a>	\$10,000	January 15, 2026
<a href="#"><u>The Mensa Foundation Scholarship Program</u></a>	\$7,000	January 15, 2026
<a href="#"><u>The Ocean Foundation Boyd N. Lyon Scholarship</u></a>	\$3,000	January 15, 2026
<a href="#"><u>The Sweetheart College Award</u></a>	\$1,000	January 15, 2026
<a href="#"><u>Y.C. Yang Civil Engineering Scholarship</u></a>	\$5,000	January 15, 2026
<a href="#"><u>ACEC Colorado Scholarship &amp; Education Foundation Scholarships</u></a>	\$7,500	January 16, 2026
<a href="#"><u>AMS Graduate Fellowships</u></a>	\$26,000	January 16, 2026
<a href="#"><u>Hispanic Education Endowment Fund Scholarship Program</u></a>	\$2,500	January 16, 2026
<a href="#"><u>Jim Borden Memorial Scholarship</u></a>	\$30,000	January 16, 2026
<a href="#"><u>Joan Johnson Graduate Fellowship Award</u></a>	\$5,000	January 16, 2026
<a href="#"><u>Kappa Zeta's Juanita Buchanan Undergraduate Academic Scholarship</u></a>	Varies	January 16, 2026
<a href="#"><u>National Beta Scholarship Program</u></a>	\$20,000	January 16, 2026
<a href="#"><u>NEUP Scholarship</u></a>	\$10,000	January 16, 2026
<a href="#"><u>Rotary Scholarship for Camarillo, CA</u></a>	\$1,000	January 16, 2026
<a href="#"><u>Scholarship for Diversity in Media</u></a>	\$30,000	January 16, 2026
<a href="#"><u>ZGF Scholarships</u></a>	\$10,000	January 16, 2026
<a href="#"><u>Garden Club of America Centennial Pollinator Fellowship</u></a>	\$4,000	January 17, 2026
<a href="#"><u>(A-r)</u></a>	\$9,000	January 17, 2026
<a href="#"><u>Agaram Tamilar Essay Scholarship</u></a>	\$1,000	January 18, 2026
<a href="#"><u>Micron Science and Technology Scholars Program</u></a>	\$55,000	January 19, 2026
<a href="#"><u>OSCPA Oregon University &amp; Community College Scholarships</u></a>	\$5,000	January 19, 2026
<a href="#"><u>Sacramento Press Club Journalism Scholarships</u></a>	\$8,000	January 19, 2026
<a href="#"><u>Trice Family Legacy Award</u></a>	\$2,300	January 19, 2026
<a href="#"><u>U.S. Army ROTC Scholarships</u></a>	Full-Tuition	January 19, 2026



<a href="#">AAUW Carlisle Higher Education Scholarship</a>	\$2,000	January 20, 2026
<a href="#">Elie Wiesel Prize In Ethics Essay Contest</a>	\$10,000	January 20, 2026
<a href="#">Joy Cappel Scholarship</a>	\$2,500	January 20, 2026
<a href="#">Loss of a Loved One Scholarship</a>	\$500	January 20, 2026
<a href="#">Orange Scholars Scholarship Program</a>	\$2,500	January 20, 2026
<a href="#">Army Women's Foundation Legacy Scholarships</a>	\$5,000	January 21, 2026
<a href="#">Boren Fellowships</a>	\$25,000	January 21, 2026
<a href="#">Edison Scholars Program</a>	\$50,000	January 22, 2026
<a href="#">State Fair of Virginia Scholarship Program</a>	\$2,561	January 22, 2026
<a href="#">The Kress Foundation Conservation Fellowships</a>	\$37,000	January 22, 2026
<a href="#">DSEA Christopher K. Smith Memorial Future Teacher Scholarship</a>	\$4,000	January 23, 2026
<a href="#">R. Gene and Nancy D. Richter Foundation</a>	\$15,000	January 23, 2026
<a href="#">ROJ Postsecondary Scholarship</a>	\$10,000	January 23, 2026
<a href="#">American Legion National High School Oratorical Contest</a>	\$25,000	January 24, 2026
<a href="#">Quad City Engineering and Science Council Scholarship (QCESC)</a>	\$3,000	January 27, 2026
<a href="#">Boren Scholarships</a>	\$25,000	January 28, 2026
<a href="#">Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship &amp; Excellence in Education Foundation</a>	\$15,000	January 30, 2026
<a href="#">California Assn. of Collectors Educational Scholarship Foundation</a>	\$2,500	January 30, 2026
<a href="#">Des Moines Women's Club Literature Scholarship</a>	\$2,000	January 30, 2026
<a href="#">Frans Hagen Scholarship</a>	\$5,000	January 30, 2026
<a href="#">Grieg Lodge Educational Scholarship</a>	\$1,500	January 30, 2026
<a href="#">Intel Scholarship For Employees' And Retirees' Children</a>	\$4,000	January 30, 2026
<a href="#">ISI Richard M. Weaver Fellowship</a>	\$15,000	January 30, 2026
<a href="#">Melvin Kruger Endowed Scholarship Program</a>	\$20,000	January 30, 2026
<a href="#">VPMA Statewide Scholarship</a>	\$1,500	January 30, 2026
	\$1,500	January 30, 2026

Here's a rundown of 15 notable state laws that California residents, businesses and visitors will need to follow starting next year. "[9th Circuit revives California law requiring background checks for ammo purchases](#)

## **Rep. Calvert introduces the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians Water Rights Settlement Act**

“Congressman Ken Calvert introduced the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians Water Rights Settlement Act, or H.R. 5935, on Monday. According to Calvert’s office, the legislation facilitates the execution of the water settlement agreement reached by the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians (Tribe), Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD), and Desert Water Agency (DWA). “One of the many ways we recognize and protect the tribal sovereignty of

### **Arizona opinion: Colorado River talks, desert style — blame, posturing as the clock ticks**

Rusty Childress writes, “At a western governors’ meeting, Katie Hobbs of Arizona pointed at the Upper Basin states and accused them of running out the clock, refusing to take real cuts, while Arizona has already worn the austerity belt. Meanwhile, Spencer Cox of Utah said he understands Arizona’s position “if I were in the Lower Basin,” and then quietly added that Utah isn’t ready to simply surrender water quotas yet. The spectacle is predictable. The long-expiring operating guidelines for the Colorado River system finally throw their papers out at the end of 2026. The federal “deadline” of Nov. 11, 2025, passed without a new deal. Now the federal government is warming its “intervention” engines. Still, the storyline out of Arizona politics is comfort. “We’re leading on conservation,” says Hobbs. “We won’t accept a deal that dumps all cuts on Arizona.” The sub-text: “We’ve done our share; you do yours.” It’s the state’s greatest hits playlist: leafy greens, national chip manufacturing, tribal claims. Powerful. Passionate. Politically spun. But it won’t change the hydrology. ...” [Read more from the Arizona Daily Star.](#)

### **Why Arizona needs decentralized water and wastewater solutions“**

Arizona is no stranger to water scarcity, but a historic megadrought—combined with declining Colorado River inflows and groundwater depletion—is pushing the state toward crisis. Fast-growing counties like Pinal, Maricopa, and Yavapai are placing even greater demand on already overstressed resources. To sustain growth and protect aquifers, Arizona needs decentralized water and wastewater solutions that deliver capacity faster, reduce dependence on groundwater, and align with the state’s complex regulatory framework. As surface water allocations shrink, communities increasingly rely on groundwater, which is a short-term fix with long-term costs. Overpumping has caused land subsidence, depleted wells, and growing tension among water users. Traditional centralized systems can be slow and capital-intensive, making it hard to keep pace with Arizona’s rapid growth or local water realities. ...” [Read more from the Arizona Star.](#)

### **University of Arizona researchers test new ways to grow lettuce with less water**

“University of Arizona researchers are testing natural plant additives called biostimulants to help lettuce farms in Yuma grow more crops with less water during the peak growing season. The research comes as drought threatens the Colorado River, Arizona’s primary water source. Yuma County supplies about 90% of the leafy greens Americans eat from November through March. Assistant Professor Ali Mohammed at the University of Arizona’s Yuma Agricultural Center has been examining the impact of biostimulants, which are natural additives like seaweed extracts or beneficial bacteria designed to make plants hardier or use nutrients more efficiently. Mohammed found that pairing biostimulants with smart irrigation sensors and organic farming techniques significantly boosted crop yields. He estimates this combination

could allow Yuma's organic farms to skip a few watering cycles during the growing season, potentially saving 1 to 2 inches of water per acre. ... ” [Read more from Arizona Family](#).

### **Charting a shared groundwater future in rural, southern Arizona with the community**

“In the small town of Patagonia, Arizona, nestled in the rolling hills south of Tucson, water has long been both a defining feature and a pressing concern. Established as a railroad and mining hub in the late 1800s, Patagonia has transformed over time into a community prized for its unique character, rich ecology and abundant birding opportunities. However, pressures including mining and drought are reshaping the local landscape, and the area faces new challenges in sustaining its most vital resource. Those challenges, and the opportunities to meet them, were at the heart of a recent rural groundwater resilience workshop organized by Impact Water – Arizona, a pillar of the Arizona Water Innovation Initiative, a statewide project led by Arizona State University’s Julie Ann Wrigley Global Futures Laboratory in collaboration with the Ira A. Fulton Schools of Engineering. ... ” [Read more from Arizona State University](#).

### **Colorado Springs Utilities stores some of its Colorado River Basin supplies in reservoirs on Hoosier Pass**

“A major November deadline for Colorado River negotiations passed without resolution, though hope remains for an agreement to avoid federal intervention. The seven Colorado River Basin states were expected to submit broad parameters for managing Lake Powell and Lake Mead by Nov. 11, but failed to find consensus. However, enough progress was made to warrant an extension, according to a joint statement from federal officials and the states’ representatives. Continued discussions — and the deadline for them — were set to an urgent timeline of mid-February 2026. Current guidelines are expiring, and a new finalized agreement must be in place by October 2026, the start of the 2027 water year. What’s being negotiated are the future operating guidelines for the two large storage reservoirs. The guidelines must be realistic and resilient and not allow one reservoir to be drained to shore up the other, as has happened in recent years. Both reservoirs have hovered near critical levels for a few years. ... ” [Read more from the Southern Colorado Business Forum](#).

### **Inside Wyoming’s fight against cheatgrass, the ‘most existential, sweeping threat’ to western ecosystems**

“Brian Mealor scanned the prairie east of Buffalo, but his mind drifted west to a haunting scene in northern Nevada. In the burn scar of the Roosters Comb Fire, a single unwelcomed species had taken over, choking out all competitors. Mealor saw few native grasses or shrubs, scarcely a wildflower. Not even other weeds. “Literally everything you see is cheatgrass,” Mealor recalled of his June tour of the scar. “I just stood there, depressed.” Mealor already knew plenty about the Eurasian species’ capacity to decimate North American ecosystems since he leads the University of Wyoming’s Institute for Managing Annual Grasses Invading Natural Ecosystems. But he was still shocked walking through the endless cheatgrass monoculture taking over the 220,000 once-charred acres northwest of Elko. The same noxious species, he knew, is steadily spreading in Wyoming. The ecological scourge made Silver State officials so desperate that they were planting another nonnative, forage kochia, because it competes with less nutritious cheatgrass and offers some nourishment for native wildlife, like mule deer. “They’ll just die,

ecause there's nothing there," Meador said. "That's why we have to do stuff. Because we could turn into that." ... " [Read more from WyoFile](#).

### **WOTUS 'wet season' test would further shrink US regulatory reach**

"A Trump administration proposal to reduce the scope of the Clean Water Act would exclude more waters than at any other point in the past 50 years. But it also left open the possibility of going even further. Administration officials last week unveiled their plan to define "waters of the U.S.," a frequently litigated term that delineates which waters and wetlands are regulated by the 1972 law. In the proposal, EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers sought to establish a bright-line test for determining how often rivers and streams must flow in order to be covered. It suggests including only rivers, streams and other waterways that flow at least for the duration of the "wet season." The proposal also floats an alternative approach: exclusively regulating perennial waters and wetlands. ... " [Read more from E&E News](#).

### **Claude, Beloved Albino Alligator at SF's Cal Academy, Dead at 30**



Claude also briefly lived with another alligator, Bonnie, until she was removed for biting off his toe.

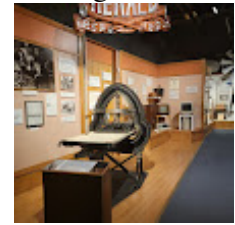
<https://www.kqed.org/news/12065763/claude-beloved-albino-alligator-at-sfs-cal-academy-dead->





### **Maidu Museum & Historic Site 1970 Johnson Ranch Dr Roseville CA**

This museum and historic site celebrate the indigenous Nisenan Maidu people who lived in the area for thousands of years. The site features an outdoor trail with historic petroglyphs and bedrock mortars, an indoor museum with artifacts and exhibits, and an ethnobotanical garden.



### **Placer County Museum      Location: 101 Maple Street, Auburn.**

Located in the historic 1898 Placer County Courthouse in Auburn, this museum provides an overview of Placer County's history from the Nisenan inhabitants through the 20th century. It features the Placer County Gold collection and the Pate Collection of American Indian artifacts.

### **Catch the Final Supermoon of 2025 with December's Cold Moon**

Spot the stunning 'Cold Moon,' the third in the series of three sequential supermoons in 2025, which will appear alongside the stars on December 4, 2025.

This full moon is also called the "Snow Moon," the "Winter Maker Moon," and the "Moon When The Deer Shed Their Antlers".

Extract: Like many of the common names for full moons, which are also included in the Old Farmer's Almanac, the name "Cold Moon" takes its inspiration from centuries of Native American culture. Originating from the traditions of the Mohawk, the Iroquoian-speaking North American tribe, the name stresses the cool temperatures of the season and the importance of the moon in tracking seasonal transitions.

Other names for the December Cold Moon stress the weather conditions that accompany its appearance or its closeness to the winter solstice. Among the Algonquian-speaking Mohican people of North America, for instance, the moon is called the "Long Night Moon" since it appears when the days are at their shortest.

[https://www.discovermagazine.com/catch-the-final-supermoon-of-2025-with-december-s-cold-moon-48328?utm\\_source=firefox-newtab-en-us](https://www.discovermagazine.com/catch-the-final-supermoon-of-2025-with-december-s-cold-moon-48328?utm_source=firefox-newtab-en-us)

**it takes an estimated 37 gallons of water to produce a single roll of bathroom tissue**



An orca breaches near Washington state's San Juan Islands. (Getty Images)

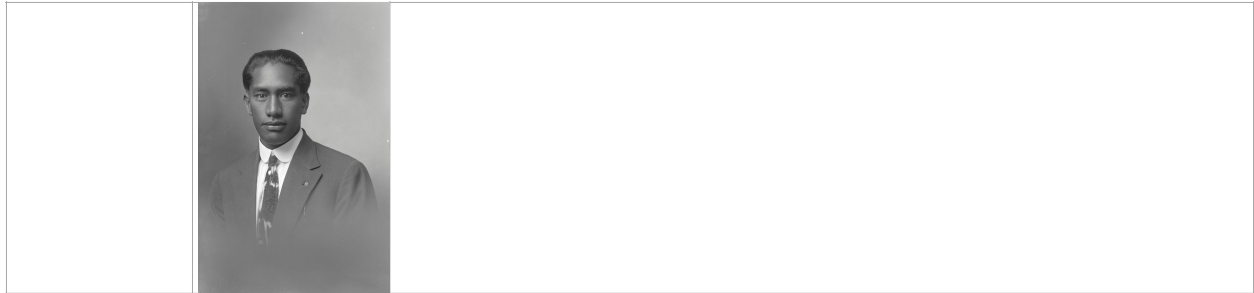
**Under the sea:** A mysterious ocean heatwave is pushing water temperatures in the North Pacific to record highs. This "warm blob" is disrupting marine life already stressed by ship traffic *and* climate change. Now, scientists in Washington state are trying to protect some of the ocean's most endangered animals, including killer whales, by listening to them more closely than ever before. Our friend Ben Tracy with Climate Central shows us [how researchers are eavesdropping on these majestic creatures](#)

## [The Duke Kahanamoku Story](#)

[dukekahanamoku.com](http://dukekahanamoku.com)

<https://dukekahanamoku.com/the-duke-kahanamoku-st...>

*Swimmer. Surfer. Legend.* His life represents far more than his unprecedented accolades in and on the water. Duke introduced the world his sport and to the ...



Duke Kahanamoku, circa 1915

He was one of the greatest athletes of the twentieth century. An Olympic swimmer who set world records and won five medals across three different Games, a surfer who became the “father of modern surfing,” and a strong competitor in many other sports. He was also a heroic lifeguard, whose board-rescue techniques saved lives and helped shape modern ocean safety.

Yet had you asked those who knew Duke Kahanamoku how he wished to be remembered, they would have probably pointed you instead to the rolling tides of Waikīkī beach, a large bowl of poi - his favorite food, or tell you about the long afternoons that he loved to spend in the company of family and friends, or simply asleep. Duke lived without pretense; he was a humble man with a warm demeanor and modesty that stayed with people long after the crowds and his many victories had passed.

Duke Paoa Kahinu Mokoe Hulikohola Kahanamoku was born on August 24, 1890, near Waikīkī in Honolulu on the island of O‘ahu, then still part of the sovereign Hawaiian Kingdom. Waikīkī in those years was a peaceful coastal stretch with modest homes set among taro patches and fishponds, canoe sheds along the beach, and footpaths winding through groves of palms.

But beneath the serene surface of island life, political tensions had been rising for years. Hawai‘i’s powerful American and European sugar planters had come to dominate the islands’ economy, and feared that Queen Lili‘uokalani’s efforts to restore Native Hawaiian authority would threaten their influence and profits. A small group of these businessmen, eager to protect their sugar interests and political power, and backed by U.S. Marines from the USS *Boston*, overthrew the queen and brought an abrupt end to the Hawaiian Kingdom in 1893. The queen yielded her authority peacefully to avoid bloodshed, believing the United States would restore her. Instead, a provisional government took over, and the islands soon entered a period of political and cultural upheaval that reshaped life in Hawai‘i.

Amid these changes, Duke grew up in a family of Hawaiian noble lineage, though with little wealth. While his name was royal-sounding, it was not a title. Like many families, theirs held fast to certain traditions, one of which was the passing of names. Duke’s came from his father, who had himself been named in honor of a visit by British royalty, the Duke of Edinburgh, in 1869. In that spirit, he passed it on to his eldest son.

The name did fit him, though. There was something regal in the way Duke carried himself. Calm, dignified, steady. He seemed to move in an unhurried, confident manner from his earliest years...