

'Stumptown Fil' predicts 6 more weeks of winter (with video)

February 2, 2023



Don't put those mittens away just yet. Filbert the beaver — aka Stumptown Fil — has made his weather prediction at the Oregon Zoo: six more weeks of winter.

Though Feb. 2 is widely known as Groundhog Day, when it comes to furry forecasters, Filbert's care staff (and social media fans) prefer their local beaver.

"Groundhogs are great if you live in the Northeast," said Christina Parr, a keeper in the zoo's North America section. "But here in the Pacific Northwest, we're beaver believers."

Filbert made his forecasting debut in 2020, and Parr warns that so far his weather predictions haven't been quite as impressive as his dam-building skills.

“Last year, [Filbert predicted an early spring](#), and in April we had to close the zoo because of snow and ice,” Parr said. “Then again, [Punxsutawney Phil’s record](#) isn’t so great either — you might be better off flipping a coin.”

Even if meteorology doesn’t end up being Filbert’s strong suit, he does a great job connecting people with one of Oregon’s most iconic and misunderstood animals, according to Parr.

Born at the zoo in 2011, Filbert and his lodge-mate Maple have acquired thousands of fans on the zoo’s social media channels, where their industrious wood-gathering activities have earned them the title “branch managers.” Filbert is also an experienced research assistant: In 2015, he helped Oregon State University with its Beaver Genome Project.

Though Oregon is known for its beaver population, that hasn’t always been the case. In the 19th century, American beavers were hunted and trapped for their fur; by about 1900, they were almost gone from many of their original habitats. Pollution and habitat loss also affected their survival. In the last 100 years, thanks to re-establishment programs and hunting regulations, beavers have made a strong comeback. They are now listed as a species of least concern by the International Union of Conservation of Nature.

Metro, the regional government that manages the Oregon Zoo, has preserved and restored more than 90 miles of river and stream banks in the region through its voter-supported natural area programs. By protecting water quality and habitat, these programs are helping to provide the healthy ecosystems needed for beavers, fish and other wildlife to thrive. Beavers are frequently observed in Metro region waterways.

Committed to conservation, the zoo is also working to save endangered northwestern pond turtles, Oregon silverspot and Taylor’s checkerspot butterflies, and northern leopard frogs. To learn more, visit oregonzoo.org/recovery.

Support from the [Oregon Zoo Foundation](#) enhances and expands the zoo’s efforts in conservation, education and animal welfare. Members, donors and corporate and foundation partners help the zoo make a difference across the region and around the world.

For more information on getting to the zoo, visit [Explore Washington Park](#). For TriMet fare and route information, call 503-238-RIDE (7433), or visit trimet.org.