

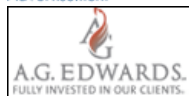
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A Breathtaking Study

? If your summer vacation plans include a trip to Los Angeles, California, hold your breath. The area remains the most polluted in the country, the American Lung Association reported yesterday.

The good news is that the country as a whole is less smoggy than before. Even L.A. had fewer bad-air days than in previous studies.

However, nearly half the U.S. population lives in areas with unhealthy air, the group said. And dangerous soot particles, blamed on coal-fired power plants and emissions from diesel vehicles, are on the rise along the East Coast. Washington was cited for high levels of ozone and soot.

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For pollution, Los Angeles is No. 1. (By Genaro Molina -- Los Angeles Times)

Animal Doings

? Washington state now has an official amphibian -- the Pacific chorus frog. Some third-graders pushed the legislation as a class project.

An Arakan forest turtle has hatched at Georgia's Zoo Atlanta. The species is critically endangered: There are 12 living in captivity in the United States.

Lonesome George, an 80-year-old Galapagos tortoise long thought to be the last of his kind, has a distant cousin on a nearby island. The recent discovery offers hope that George's species might survive after all.

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