A new treatment may protect kids with peanut allergies.
THE BRIEF

Stop and Think!

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SPECIES AT RISK

By Rebecca Katzman

Monarch butterfly populations in California reached a historic low in 2018, according to a new count. It estimates that the number of monarchs dropped 86% from 2017. Experts say monarchs are in danger of extinction in the next several decades if nothing is done to save the species.

The survey was conducted by volunteers for the Xerces Society. Each year, they count monarch butterflies in California. They do so at 97 sites across the state. Last year, they counted fewer than 30,000 butterflies. The group says this number is “disturbingly low.”

On its website, the group noted that “2018 was a tough year to be a monarch butterfly in the West.” Weather conditions may be one reason for the drop in numbers. But researchers say other factors could also be at play. These include habitat loss and pesticides. Climate change could also be making an impact.

Monarch butterflies are known for their long-distance migrations. Some travel as far as 3,000 miles when the weather turns cold. In the winter, monarchs head south to warmer climates. Monarchs in the western United States spend the winter in California.

“What we can and should be working on is addressing and reversing widespread habitat loss and pesticide use throughout the monarch’s range,” the Xerces Society said on its website. “There is still hope that we can recover the population if we work quickly, strategically, and together.”

FIGHTING THE FLU

By Rebecca Mordechai

More than 6 million people in the United States have gotten the flu this season, according to a report released on January 11. The report is by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

“Flu activity is widespread in many states,” Dr. Alicia Fry told the New York Times. Fry works for the CDC’s influenza division.

The flu is a disease caused by the influenza virus. It is contagious. Symptoms include fever, chills, and tiredness. Flu season typically runs from October to March in the U.S. Last year’s flu season had the highest number of reported cases since 2009.

Washing your hands frequently with soap and water will lower your chances of getting the flu. But a flu shot is the most effective way to reduce the risk. “It’s really not too late to get vaccinated,” Fry says.

FOR THE RECORD

$204,000

was the price for which an ULTRA-RARE PENNY sold at auction in Orlando, Florida, on January 10. The copper penny was made in 1943, during World War II. Most pennies produced that year were made of steel. Only 10 to 15 of the 1943 copper pennies remain.

“He was a little bit of a hermit. I very rarely saw him outside of his shell,”

said David Sischo, a wildlife biologist in Hawaii. He was describing GEORGE, a land snail that died at age 14 on New Year’s Day in a lab on the island of Oahu. George was the last of his species.

11 hours, 36 minutes

was how long it took K-pop star KANG DANIEL to set a Guinness World Record for fastest time to gain 1 million Instagram followers. The previous record was 12 hours, set by Pope Francis.

STAY HEALTHY

The best way to protect yourself from the flu is to get a flu shot.
Help may be on the horizon for kids with peanut allergies.

Brett Treichel's mother gave him a piece of peanut butter toast when he was 9 months old. He touched the peanut butter and rubbed his eye, which instantly swelled up. Brett was rushed to the hospital, where he was diagnosed with a peanut allergy.

Now 13, Brett has learned to live with his allergy. In the school cafeteria, he sits far from classmates who are eating peanut butter. He's careful at baseball games, where peanuts are a popular snack, and with candy and fried foods. His school keeps a medical device called an EpiPen in the front office, and his teachers are trained to use it. Brett's doctors say that, like most kids who are allergic to peanuts, he probably won't grow out of his allergy. "I have to be careful for life," Brett told TFK.

A recent study in the journal Pediatrics found that one in 50 children in the United States is allergic to peanuts. That's 1.6 million kids. For many, exposure to even a trace of peanut can trigger a reaction called anaphylaxis, which causes swelling of the tongue and throat and a drop in blood pressure. An injection of medicine using an EpiPen can stop the reaction. If not treated, anaphylaxis can be fatal. "In the past 20 years, new cases of peanut allergy have more than tripled. Experts aren't sure what is causing the spike. There is no known cure for a peanut allergy, but in November 2018, a company called Aimmune Therapeutics announced the results of a clinical trial. The findings could mean help is on the way for Brett and other allergy sufferers."

A NEW TREATMENT

Aimmune is developing a therapy that could help kids with peanut allergy tolerate peanuts. Here's how it works: To start, a child is given just one milligram of a special peanut powder. For most patients, this tiny dose doesn't set off an allergic reaction. Over time, more powder is added to the daily dose. This slowly increases the amount a patient can handle.

To make sure the treatment is safe and effective, Aimmune conducted a yearlong clinical trial with 554 participants of various ages. By the end of the trial, more than 96% of the children who completed the therapy could handle at least 300 milligrams of peanut powder. That's equal to about one peanut.

BITE-PROOF PROTECTION

Sayantani Sindh, of Stanford University, in California, was one of the researchers involved in the study. She told TFK that the goal is not to get kids to gorge on peanut butter sandwiches. Even after treatment, they will need to avoid peanuts and peanut products. But the treatment may keep kids from having a life-threatening allergic reaction. "It's bite-proof protection," Sindh says. "So if you accidentally take a bite of a cookie with peanuts in it, you don't have to run to the emergency room. It gives peace of mind to kids and parents, and improves their quality of life.”

This is not the first time researchers have treated food allergies this way. But the clinical trial is believed to be the largest of its kind for peanut allergies.

PEANUTS EVERYWHERE

PEANUTS Everywhere A person with a peanut allergy must be careful not to eat peanuts or peanut products. But it isn’t always obvious what foods contain peanuts. Did you know that the foods below contain peanuts, or could be prepared using products made from peanuts?

NUT BUTTERS, like almond or cashew, may be made by machines that process peanuts.

FRIED FOODS are sometimes made using peanut oil.

GRANOLA BARS, even peanut-free ones, can be contaminated.

SAFE TO EAT? A kid with a peanut allergy must be careful to avoid accidental exposure.
SHOULD KIDS HAVE TO GO TO SCHOOL ONLINE ON A SNOW DAY?

For many kids, a snow day is cause for celebration. Instead of going to class, they can have snowball fights or go sledding. But snow days are a thing of the past in one South Carolina school district. Anderson School District 5 is the latest of several districts nationwide to replace snow days with classes online.

With e-learning, students log on to a computer to do assignments at home. E-learning is meant to keep the school year on track and reduce the need for makeup days in the summer. But not everyone thinks this is necessary. How would you feel if your school replaced snow days with online learning? Here, two TIME for Kids readers share their views.

YES!
BY RAUNAK SINGH, 10
FAIR LAWN, NEW JERSEY

I think kids should go to school online on a snow day. When there is a blizzard or a heavy snowstorm, school is closed and kids have nothing to do but watch television and play video games because they can’t go outside. How boring! If students could attend school online on snow days, they would have something productive to do. On a snow day, parents would like to see their kids doing something other than lying around on the couch. With e-learning, kids would still get time to play in the snow, but they would also have something to do when they were stuck in the house. Attending school online lets kids learn new things while sitting at home on their comfy couch. E-learning on snow days is a welcome change for parents, students, and teachers.

NO!
BY GABRIELA QUESADA, 10
MIAMI, FLORIDA

Kids need to go to school, but they should not have to go to school online on a snow day. During blizzards and snowstorms, many people lose power. Sometimes, you lose Internet access. If kids don’t have power, how are they going to use the computer? When I was small and lived in Spain, I experienced something similar. My dad wanted me to do online schoolwork on a snow day. But the power was out and there was no Internet, so I couldn’t. Even if there is Internet, the online assignments might be confusing for students. They might need help from teachers. On a snow day, kids and teachers should use the time to rest and enjoy the snow. In my opinion, going to school online on a snow day is not a wise thing to do.

THE NEXT DEBATE!
Is technology making us rude? Email your opinion to tfkasks4you@timeforkids.com. Your response might be featured in an upcoming issue.

The Story Pirates take kids’ stories and turn them into music, theater, books, podcasts, and more.

Phoebe Wolinetz, 9, dreamed up a mystery about a mother-daughter detective duo. The details were vivid. The setting: a rare-plant shop in New York City. The culprit: a man with yellow eyes from a scary, faraway island. Story Pirates gave Phoebe’s idea to a best-selling author, who turned it into a novel. Digging Up Danger, by Jacqueline West, hit bookshelves on January 15.

The Story Pirates are on the lookout for hidden treasures. But Story Pirates don’t sail the seas hunting for gold, jewels, or sunken ships. They seek out stories and ideas from kids. That’s what inspires the Story Pirates. Digging Up Danger is the latest of several books based on kids’ stories. The new season of the Story Pirates podcast, Digging Up Danger, by Gimlet Media. It tells stories with original songs and lots of goofy voices. It also features interviews with kid authors and special guest appearances. The new season of the podcast launches on January 31.

With Story Pirates, kids’ ideas take on a life of their own. Sometimes it’s on the stage, and sometimes it’s on the page. What does it feel like to watch your spark of an idea come to life for others to enjoy? “It’s very shocking,” Phoebe told TFK. “It’s going to be in my mind forever.”

—By Rebecca Katzman
An ancient legend gets a modern retelling in *The Kid Who Would Be King*, in theaters on January 25. The film is based on the classic story of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. This version follows Alex, a boy tormented by school bullies. One night, while trying to escape them, Alex runs into a demolished building, where he finds a sword stuck in a stone pillar. When he pulls the sword from the stone, Alex awakens the wizard Merlin and the evil Morgana, King Arthur’s ancient enemy. Now, with the help of his friends, Alex sets out to save the world from Morgana’s wrath.

Writer and director **JOE CORNISH** (right) spoke with *TIME for Kids* about his inspiration for the film. “I was excited to connect modern-day kids with the traditional idea of the knight’s code,” he says. Cornish loved watching films about King Arthur when he was young, and he always hoped to create his own movie based on the legend. “I wanted to show that kids are just as noble, bold, and capable of improving the world as knights were hundreds of years ago,” he says. —By Kio Herrera

**A QUEST FOR FREEDOM**

It’s the early 18th century, and 12-year-old Oliver Cromwell Pitts has been convicted of thievery and sentenced to seven years of forced labor. He is sent from England to the American colonies, where he is put to work by a brutal tobacco farmer. Oliver’s only friend is Bara, an enslaved boy. Unlike Oliver, Bara will not be freed after seven years. The choice is clear: The boys must escape.

During this period in history, both adults and children often suffered harsh punishments for minor crimes. *The End of the World and Beyond*, the latest novel by **AVI** (pictured), explores this side of America’s past. “This is an important thing that happened, but which no one really knows about,” he told TFK Kid Reporter Josh Lee.