



STEMBoost Newsletter

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Northern California States: Kennedy Wins First

Ryan Li

From April 2 through April 9, the Kennedy Science Olympiad Gold Team took part in the virtual 2022 Northern California Science Olympiad State Tournament, coming in first place amongst the 35 participating teams. This qualified the team to compete in the Science Olympiad National Tournament hosted by CalTech, which will take place next month, as one of two teams from California. Within each of the 23 events, Kennedy had placed within the top 10.

In addition, Kennedy had taken first place within 16 of the events, with those being: Bio Process Lab, Codebusters, Crave the Wave, Crime Busters, Disease Detectives, Dynamic Planet, Electric Wright Stuff, Experimental Design, Green Generation, Mission Possible, Mousetrap Vehicle, Ornithology, Road Scholar, Rocks and Minerals, Sounds of Music, and Storm the Castle. We would like to not only congratulate all of the members of the Kennedy Science Olympiad Gold Team for their phenomenal performance, but also all of the parents who served as coaches in preparation for this tournament. We wish the team best of luck at Nationals in May!

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Fun Fact

What mammal can hold its breath underwater the longest? (See answer in the back)

The Abortion Discourse

Angela Zhang

Recently, the subject of abortion has resurfaced after decades of living with Roe v. Wade and Planned Parenthood v. Casey. Even before the leaked Supreme Court draft opinions were released, many states had already moved to restrict access to abortion, and without the presence of Roe, which the Supreme Court is expected to overturn, many states would be able to ban it for good. Indeed, the New York Times found that thirteen states would move to ban abortion immediately afterwards, five would be able to enforce existing bans, and fourteen would be able to ban abortion before fetal viability. But what exactly does an abortion actually look like?

Suction abortion is the most common type of abortion, a simple 5-10 minute procedure involving using a thin tube inserted into the cervix to remove pregnancy tissue. Anesthesia is usually injected near the cervical area, and the patient will also receive medication before the procedure to help with side effects that would otherwise arise afterwards. However, for abortions past 16 weeks—a month after second trimester starts—a dilation and evacuation abortion will be performed. The steps in this procedure are similar to that of a suction abortion, though

the patient's cervix must also be dilated before the evacuation of pregnancy tissue. Discomfort during these procedures can usually be mitigated with anesthesia, though the pain that an individual will feel during and after the abortion can vary.

Reasons for getting an abortion also vary, though there are common themes amongst those that do seek one. According to research conducted by the Guttmacher Institute, common reasons cited include that "having a child would interfere with a woman's education, work or ability to care for dependents (74%); that she could not afford a baby now (73%); and that she did not want to be a single mother or was having relationship problems (48%)" (Finer, et al, 2005). Irregardless of reasons, research has widely found that restricting access to abortion does not decrease the rate of abortion, but instead makes abortions unsafe as individuals seek illegal, under-the-table abortions, turning abortions from a simple and easy procedure into one that could be fatal. In fact, the Guttmacher Institute found that "the abortion rate is 37 per 1,000 people in countries that prohibit abortion altogether or allow it only in instances to save a woman's life, and 34 per 1,000 people in countries that broadly allow for abortion, a difference that is not statistically significant" (Amnesty International).

Ultimately, irregardless of personal opinions on abortion or when life begins, abortion must be viewed fundamentally as an issue of women's rights, as the ability to have a safe, affordable abortion could significantly affect one's life.

- Finer, Lawrence B, et al. "Reasons U.S. Women Have Abortions: Quantitative and Qualitative Perspectives." Guttmacher Institute, 3 Feb. 2020, <https://www.guttmacher.org/journals/psrh/2005/reasons-us-women-have-abortions-quantitative-and-qualitative-perspectives>.

- Mccann, Allison, and Taylor Johnston. "Where Abortion Could Be Banned without Roe v. Wade." The New York Times, The New York Times, 3 May 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/us/abortion-bans-restrictions-roe-v-wade.html>.

- "Key Facts on Abortion." Amnesty International, 6 May 2022, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/sexual-and-reproductive-rights/abortion-facts/>.

- "What Happens during an in-Clinic Abortion?" Planned Parenthood, <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/abortion/in-clinic-abortion-procedures/what-happens-during-an-in-clinic-abortion>

Answer: The Cuvier's beaked whale has been observed to hold its breath underwater the longest for 3 hours and 42 minutes in a single dive.