



Week ending Friday, June 25, 2021

Climate Crisis

Earth is now trapping nearly twice as much heat due to mounting greenhouse gases in the atmosphere from carbon emissions than it did in 2005, according to a new report by NASA and the U.S. environment agency NOAA. It describes the surge in warming as alarming, unprecedented and gaining in strength. The study used satellite sensors that measured how much of the sun's radiant energy was absorbed by the planet compared to how much of the heat was reflected back into space. About 90 percent of the excess heat is now being stored in the oceans, with the rest heating up the land, melting ice and snow, and warming the atmosphere, the report concluded.

Earthquakes

Panicked residents in western Peru rushed into the streets during a strong offshore quake.

- Earth movements were also felt in Japan's Hokkaido Island, India's Assam state, northwestern Pakistan and metropolitan Istanbul.

Planetary Pulse

Earth experiences a cycle of strong geologic activity that researchers say can be considered like a "pulse." Writing in the journal "Geoscience Frontiers.", scientists at New York University say new advances in radio-isotope dating techniques allowed them to reexamine the last 260 million years of Earth's turbulent past. Events during that period include extinctions on land and in the water, major outpourings of volcanic lava, oxygen depletion of the oceans, sea-level fluctuations and changes in the Earth's tectonic plates. They found that the events were clustered in groups of peaks roughly 27.5 million years apart. Since the last peak was 7 million years ago, the next isn't likely for another 20 million years.

Prison Mice

The vast mouse plague that has ravaged Australian agriculture and wildlife for more than a year has also infested a New South Wales prison so badly that the entire prison population and staff had to be evacuated to other facilities. The rodents gnawed through wiring and ceiling panels, and littered the prison with their dead carcasses. "The mice start decaying, and then the next problem is mites, and we just don't want to expose staff and prisoners to anything that could cause harm to their health," Peter Severin, commissioner of the state's corrective services department, said.

Relocation Aftermath

Native penguins and other seabirds were wiped out on a small Australian is-land after Tasmanian devils not infected with a deadly mouth cancer were intro-duced there to help save the world's larg-est carnivorous marsupial from extinction.

The conservation effort backfired on Maria Island, just off the coast of Tasma-nia, as the initial 28 devils sent there in 2012, grew to the current population of 100 and devoured the birds.

“Every time humans have deliberately or acciden-tally introduced mammals to oceanic islands, there's al-ways been the same outcome ... a catastrophic impact on one or more bird species,” Eric Woehler of the group BirdLife Tasmania, said.

Siberian Sizzle

A heat wave baking Siberia on June 20 saw ground temperatures reach 118 degrees Fahrenheit in an area that often records the world's coldest temperatures during winter. The reading near Verkhoyansk was measured by Europe's Copernicus Sentinel satellite system. While the air temperature recorded in Verkhoyansk was only 86 degrees that day, many Siberian temperature records were broken. The scorching ground heat was also observed across a wide area of Siberia in a development that does not bode well for Russia's rapidly melting permafrost and the potent greenhouse gases the melt is releasing.

Tropical Cyclones

At least 14 people perished in the southeastern United States as Tropical Storm Claudette unleashed flooding that also destroyed dozens of homes.

- Mexico's central Pacific coast was drenched by minimal Tropical Storm Dolores.
- Typhoon Champi passed northward over the Pacific.

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