



Week ending Friday, July 9, 2021

Seafood Bake

The deadly heat wave that roasted the U.S. Pacific Northwest and western Canada also cooked more than a billion seashore animals to death, leaving a putrid stink near Vancouver, B.C. University of British Columbia experts say the heat, combined with low tides in the middle of the afternoon, created dangerous combinations for animals like clams and mussels for more than six hours at a time. Observers say temperatures above 50 degrees Celsius occurred on some rocky shoreline habitats. Professor Dave Sauchyn of Canada's University of Regina says this summer's unprecedented heat occurred years earlier than predicted by models, in a sign that the climate emergency is deepening faster than expected.

Earthquakes

People in eastern India's Assam state ran from their homes during a sharp temblor.

- Earth movements were also felt in India's Gujarat state, Taiwan, the Big Island of Hawaii and the Mexican resort of Puerto Vallarta.

‘Eye of Fire’

A rare combination of events near a Mexican oil platform in the Bay of Campeche created a massive ocean-surface fire that took hours to extinguish. Mexico’s state-owned Pemex oil company, which has a long history of major accidents at its facilities, says the leak of an underwater pipeline allowed natural gas to accumulate on the ocean floor, and was probably ignited by a lightning bolt when it rose to the surface. Once a brief video of the fire went viral on social media, the orange bubbling mass on the water’s surface was dubbed “eye of fire.” Pemex said swift action by its workers prevented any environmental damage, a claim disputed by environmental groups and activists.

Eruption

Days of rising magma from the Philippines’ Taal volcano sent plumes of steam soaring into the sky and lava streaming from its main crater. The activity, about 50 km south of Manila, prompted officials to evacuate more than 6,500 nearby families. Volcanologists warn that the volcano has the potential to produce stronger explosive eruptions. An eruption in 1911 killed more than 1,300 people.

Trout ‘Addicts’

A new study reveals that low levels of methamphetamines present in wastewater runoff, flushed into the environment from treatment plants, can cause at least one species of fish to become addicted to the illicit drugs. Researchers at Czech University in Prague found that after spending two months in holding tanks laced with tiny amounts of methamphetamines, brown trout (*Salmo trutta*) became addicted, experienced withdrawal and sought out even tiny amounts of the drug to get a “fix.” The addiction even caused the fish to prefer more polluted water if it contained the drug. The researchers say the addicted trout were less active than a control group of fish and appeared to be less fit for survival.

Avian Handouts

Ornithologists have reassured bird lovers that they can continue to feed songbirds in their backyards without worrying their feathered friends will become too dependent on their generosity. But writing in the “Journal of Avian Biology,” experts said the feeding can spread diseases if the feeders are not kept clean, and possibly change migration and local distributions of the birds. “There’s still much we don’t know about how intentional feeding might induce changes in wild bird populations, but our study suggests that putting out food for small birds in winter will not lead to an increased dependence on human-provided food,” study co-author Jim Rivers said.

Tropical Cyclone

At least four people were killed as Hurricane Elsa raked parts of the Caribbean. After drenching eastern Cuba, the weakened storm passed well off Florida’s west coast, sparing the state significant damage. Elsa later soaked a long stretch of the eastern U.S.

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