



Earthweek: Diary of a Changing World

Fish Bake

With record summer heat and drought threatening wild salmon in California, the Pacific Northwest, British Columbia and Atlantic Canada this summer, experts say many commonly eaten fish could face extinction as global heating makes waters too hot for them to survive. A report in the journal “Nature Climate Change,” warns many species will struggle to keep pace with the deepening climate emergency. “Warming waters are a double whammy for fish, as they not only cause them to evolve to a smaller size, but also reduce their ability to move to more suitable environments, co-author Chris Venditti of Britain’s University of Reading, said. He warns this could threaten global food security.

Earthquakes

More than 2,000 people perished and 10,000 others were injured when an intense temblor caused devastation in Haiti.

- Earth movements were also felt in Canada's southeastern Saskatchewan province, the Alaska Peninsula and northern Vanuatu.

La Niña Return?

A La Niña watch has been issued for the tropical Pacific as the ocean-cooling phenomenon now has a 70 percent chance of developing from November to January. The sea surface between South America and Indonesia is now in a "neutral" phase between El Niño warming and La Niña. La Niña typically pushes the polar jet stream northward, bringing wetter weather to the Pacific Northwest, western Canada and the Ohio Valley. But it may also bring ongoing dry conditions to California and the Desert Southwest, worsening droughts and wildfire threats.

La Niña's cooling can also contribute to an extended and active hurricane season.

Tropical Cyclones

Florida and parts of the neighboring Southeast received downpours and local severe flooding as Tropical Storm Fred passed northward from the Gulf of Mexico and dissipated.

- Haiti's earthquake disaster zone was drenched by Tropical Depression Grace, which strengthened to hurricane force before lashing the Yucatán Peninsula.
- Tropical Storm Henri looped around Bermuda as Hurricane Linda peaked at Category-4 force while tracking over the Pacific.

Tobacco Kills

The first species of wild tobacco plant known to kill insects was discovered next to a remote

highway truck stop in Western Australia. Previously unknown to science, the newly named *Nicotiana insecticida* is covered in sticky glands that entrap and poison small insects such as flies, aphids and gnats. British scientists who discovered the plant say there is no evidence *Nicotiana insecticida* extracts any nutrients from insects it traps, but its poison does seem to prevent damage from the pests. The team says the plant is easy to grow and may one day be used to kill aphids and fungus gnats in greenhouses.

Hottest Month

July was the world's hottest month globally on record, according to the U.S. environment agency NOAA, which said the month's "unenviable distinction" was a cause for concern. The agency calculated that the combined land and ocean-surface temperature was 1.68 degrees Fahrenheit above the 20th-century average of 60.6 degrees. That put the month 0.01 degrees hotter than in the previous hottest Julys of 2016, 2019 and 2020. "This new record adds to the disturbing and disruptive path that climate change has set for the globe," NOAA Administrator Rick Spinrad said in a statement.

Temporary Island

Japan's Coast Guard found a newly formed island about 1,200 km south of Tokyo when a surveillance flight spotted an active eruption in a remote area south of Iwo Jima. The Japan Meteorological Agency says previous eruptions created islands in 1904, 1914 and 1986, with all eventually being eroded by waves and currents.

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