



Week ending Friday, October 22, 2021

CO2 Surge

On the eve of the COP26 climate conference, established under the Paris Agreement to cope with the climate crisis, scientists say emissions from rich nations have risen sharply in 2021. “The Climate Transparency Report” says emissions will rise four percent in the world’s 20 largest economies in 2021 after dropping about six percent last year due to COVID. With the world currently around 1.1 degrees Celsius warmer than pre-industrial times and with the goal to keep warming to only 1.5 degrees, the report says nations will have to put ambitious policies in place to curb the worst of global heating.

Earthquakes

At least three people perished in Bali when a strong temblor triggered landslides and destroyed dozens of homes. • A powerful quake beneath the Mediterranean was felt widely from Greece to Jerusalem and Cairo. • Earth movements were also felt in central Iran, central Nepal, northeastern Taiwan, the Cayman Islands and Trinidad and Tobago.

Humpback Return

The population of humpback whales in the South Atlantic has made a sharp recovery in recent years, with an estimated 24,543 of the marine mammals feeding in sub-Antarctic waters each southern summer. More than that number were slaughtered by whalers there between 1900 and the 1950s. The species was rarely seen in the three decades after whaling ended in the 1960s. But scientists say the whales are increasingly feeding in the South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands during summertime. “Good news environmental stories have sadly become rare these days, so we are very pleased to confirm the recovery of the humpback whale population in the southwest Atlantic,” lead researcher Mick Baines said.

Spanish Eruption

Vast amounts of lava have spewed from Spain’s La Palma volcano for more than a month in a historic and unusually destructive eruption for the volcanic Canary Islands. Accompanied by strong tremors, the eruption has flattened nearly 2,000 buildings as it engulfed 763 hectares in deep lava, the size of 1,000 soccer fields. Scientists say they have no idea how long the eruption will continue.

Roaming Carriers

Domestic cats may be infecting wild animals with a potentially fatal parasitic infection, especially creatures living around cities. Scientists from the University of British Columbia say that toxoplasmosis infects between 30 percent and 50 percent of the human population and can lead to chronic illness and death in humans and animals with weak immune systems. They say people who let their house cats roam freely could be helping to spread the parasite into the wild.

Nuclear Aftermath

Wildlife around Japan’s crippled Fukushima nuclear power plant appears to have survived

exposure to radiation from the meltdowns of the plant's three nuclear reactors without serious consequences, according to a new international study. Massive releases of radioactive material from the March 2011 disaster contaminated the Fukushima landscape and forced the evacuation of over 150,000 residents. But scientists writing in the journal "Environment International" say DNA and other markers in the region's wildlife did not show any adverse health effects. They did find unusually low levels of cortisol, a stress indicator, in some wild animals living in the evacuated Exclusion Zone.

Tropical Cyclones

Flash flooding triggered by the remnants of Hurricane Pamela swept two to their deaths in a Texas creek near San Antonio. • Months of high tropical cyclone activity across the North Pacific, North Atlantic, and Indian Ocean basins came to a sudden end.

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