



Week ending Friday, September 25, 2020

Summer Melt

Arctic sea ice melted to its second-smallest expanse on record on Sept. 15, covering only 1.44 million square miles around the North Pole, according to the U.S. National Snow and Ice Data Center. Only during the summer of 2012 did the polar ice cap shrink farther. And since the unprecedented drops in sea ice extent in 2007 and 2012, there have been fewer areas with thick, multiyear ice that has accumulated over countless winters. Experts believe this and global heating will keep the ice from recovering, and will soon lead to ice-free summers across the Arctic.

Earthquakes

More than 100 buildings were damaged when a magnitude 5.3 temblor struck southern Turkey's Nide province.

- Earth movements were also felt in southern England, India's Jammu and Kashmir territory, the southern Philippines, northeastern New Zealand and coastal Southern California.

Super Pigs

Experts are warning of a “feral swine bomb” that could go off at any time. It would be due to a population explosion that has seen numbers of hybrid wild pigs soar to 6 million and spread from 17 to 39 U.S. states within the past three decades. The National Feral Swine Damage Management Program at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) says that the female “super pigs” can reproduce twice a year, beginning at only 3 months of age, with litters of around 10 piglets each. The USDA says the hybrids of European boars and domestic pigs cause major damage to property, crops, livestock, native species and ecosystems. The super pigs also threaten the health of people, wildlife, pets and other domestic animals.

Medicane Ianos

Greece was pounded by a cyclonic storm swirling over the central Mediterranean that looked very similar to a tropical storm or hurricane. Dubbed Medicane Ianos, the storm triggered flooding and inflicted wind damage responsible for at least three deaths in the Ionian Islands and the western Peloponnese before the storm moved inland over central Greece. The first such storm on record occurred during the autumn of 1995, and they have become more frequent in recent years. One in 2017 triggered floods that killed 25 people and left hundreds homeless.

Warming Awash

An international team of scientists warns that sea levels will rise by 8.5 feet even if global warming is limited to only 2 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels, as outlined in the Paris Agreement. Writing in the journal *Nature*, the team says that while the rise won't be immediate or even rapid, it will be relentless as Antarctica's ice melts farther into the next century. And if efforts to curb carbon emissions aren't successful and the Earth warms an additional 3 degrees, the Antarctic melt will eventually lift ocean levels by 21 feet. That would render parts of many coastal communities around the world either submerged or uninhabitable.

Scorching Summer

Scientists have calculated that this June, July and August were 2.2 degrees Fahrenheit warmer than the 20th-century average, making the season the hottest Northern Hemisphere summer on record. During the same period, the Southern Hemisphere experienced its third-warmest winter yet. NOAA predicts this abnormal warmth could lead to 2020 being one of the five hottest years on record.

Tropical Cyclones

The Atlantic hurricane season continued to be one for the record books.

After the list of official names became exhausted with Tropical Storm Wilfred, storms Alpha and Beta were given names from the Greek alphabet for the first time since 2005.

- Remnants of Hurricane Paulette regenerated into what meteorologists dubbed a “zombie” tropical storm near the Azores.
- Nearby, Tropical Storm Alpha soaked northern Portugal and Spain.
- Hurricane Teddy raked much of Atlantic Canada while Tropical Storm Beta inundated eastern Texas.

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