



Week ending Friday, May 28, 2021

Tree Farts

Forests along the U.S. Eastern Seaboard that are being killed by saltwater intrusion are releasing greenhouse gases that scientists have nicknamed “tree farts.” These “ghost forests,” have been created by rising sea levels and storm surges that force salt water to seep into the coastal soil. A North Carolina State University study has measured how much carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide the trees are emitting as they decay. “Even though these standing dead trees are not emitting as much as the soils, they’re still emitting something, and they definitely need to be accounted for,” lead researcher Melinda Martinez said.

Earthquakes

At least three people were killed by a strong temblor in southwestern China’s Yunnan Province.

- Earth movements were also felt in China's Qinghai province, far northern India, far southern Philippines, Hawaii, western Nicaragua, northwestern Oklahoma and southern Quebec.

Sea Snot Invasion

Climate change and pollution are being blamed for the growing marine threat known as sea snot, mucus-like organic matter that currently threatens coral and the fishing industry in parts of the Mediterranean. Globbs of sea snot can also be found elsewhere in the planet's waterways, and it can host dangerous bacteria such as E. coli. Sea snot's coverage is currently exploding in Turkey's Marmara Sea near Istanbul, where fishermen have not been able to cast their nets for months. When the marine mucilage forms a layer over the water's surface, it prevents fish from being able to breathe. This kills them and depletes oxygen levels in the water, eventually choking other marine life.

Antarctic Giant

A huge iceberg, similar in shape to Manhattan, but 73 times larger, is likely to drift around the Southern Ocean and South Atlantic for years, having broken off from Antarctica's Ronne Ice Shelf. Dubbed A-76, it is currently the world's largest, measuring about 4,320 square km as it floats on the Weddell Sea. It was spotted in satellite images by the British Antarctic Survey in mid-May. A larger iceberg, A-68, calved from the Larsen C ice shelf in 2017 and finally disintegrated earlier this year.

Devilish Births

The first Tasmanian devils to be born on the Australian mainland in more than 3,000 years brought hope that the world's largest surviving marsupial carnivore could reestablish its former habitats. The animals, notoriously bad-tempered when threatened, were wiped out on the mainland by dingoes and have since been confined to the island of Tasmania. But the group Aussie Arc released 26 adults into the wild in late 2020, and they have since produced seven new joeys. Those devils relocated to New South Wales' fenced-in Barrington Wildlife Sanctuary, are free of the contagious mouth cancer that has decimated up to 90 percent of the wild population on Tasmania.

Congo Eruption

Fast-flowing lava and accompanying tremors from Nyiragongo volcano in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo killed at least 32 people around the provincial capital of Goma. The lava flows destroyed scores of suburban homes, but stopped just short of the partially evacuated city. Strong tremors continued for days, damaging numerous buildings and causing the ground to break open. That released toxic gas, which killed several of the victims. Mount Nyiragongo is considered one of the world's most active and dangerous volcanoes.

Tropical Cyclones

Powerful Cyclone Yaas battered India's Odisha and West Bengal states, killing at least nine people as it destroyed thousands of mud homes.

- Subtropical Storm Ana formed east of Bermuda as the first named storm of the Atlantic hurricane season.

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