



Week ending Friday, August 6, 2021

Wild COVID

A U.S. survey of wild deer in four states found that many of the animals showed signs of being infected with the COVID-19 virus.

The finding suggests that even if the virus is brought under control in the human population, wild animals could act as reservoirs for the virus in the future. The U.S. Department of Agriculture says the percentage of deer with antibodies for SARS-CoV-2 ranged from a low of 7 percent in the samples from Illinois to a high of 60 percent in Michigan's deer. In total, a third of the deer tested positive. None of the infected animals appeared to be ill, and it is not certain how they were exposed. Experts say those wanting to feast on cooked wild game are unlikely to contract COVID-19 from eating infected animals.

Tropical Cyclones

Tropical Storm Lupit brought rain to China's Guangdong and Fujian provinces as Tropical Storm Mirinae threatened Japan.

- Hurricane Hilda churned the eastern Pacific.

Brazilian Snow

A wide swath of southern Brazil received a blanket of extremely rare snowfall and freezing rain that shocked many residents accustomed to a more temperate climate. “I am 62 years old and had never seen the snow,” truck driver Iodor Goncalves Marques told Globo TV. The Antarctic chill also reached Rio de Janeiro, causing the city’s homeless to struggle to keep warm. It also brought freezing temperatures to São Paulo and Minas Gerais states, which are major producers of commodities such as sugar, citrus and coffee. The last time southern Brazil received significant snowfall was in 1957, when more than 1.2 metres accumulated on the ground in the state of Santa Catarina.

Massive Melt

A midsummer heat wave across parts of the northern Atlantic caused enough of Greenland’s ice cap to melt in a single day to submerge the entire state of Florida beneath 5 cm of water. The warmest temperatures on record across the world’s largest island caused a weeklong “massive melting event,” according to Danish researchers. They say the area melting this summer is larger than during the record summer melt of 2019 and is averaging about 8 billion tonnes of loss per day. Greenland’s ice would raise sea levels by 6 to 7 metres if completely melted.

Volcanic Therapy

Philippine scientists say they have discovered that the slopes of the country’s Mayon volcano contain bacterial species that show potential antibiotic and anti-colorectal cancer properties. Kristel Mae Oliveros and colleagues from the University of the Philippines Los Baños say the most promising of 30 bacteria found in the volcanic soil really caught their attention. “Streptomyces sp. A1-08 stood out because it has shown antagonistic effects on all test microorganisms and the methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, or simply MRSA,” they said in a statement. Should the researchers confirm it to be a new bacterial species, they will

rename it *Streptomyces mayonensis* A1-08, after the volcano.

Climate Perils

New studies find that Earth will suffer a growing number of devastating floods and deadly heat waves. Chinese and UK scientists say that unless greenhouse gas emissions are significantly curbed, wet regions such as the tropics and areas with monsoons will not only get wetter, but they will also swing widely between wet and dry. More frequently stalled weather patterns will bring prolonged periods of heavy rain and their resulting flood disasters, such as those this summer in China and Western Europe. The stalled patterns will create more frequent “heat domes,” such as those triggering firestorms in western North America and southeastern Europe this summer.

Earthquakes

A strong temblor damaged buildings in northwestern Peru.

- Earth movements were also felt in New Zealand’s lower North Island, eastern Japan, northern Pakistan and eastern Afghanistan, Kuwait, Turkey’s Aegean islands, northeastern Morocco and east-central Wyoming.

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