



Week ending Friday, November 5, 2021

Melt Floods

Increased runoff from the melting of Greenland's ice sheet is heightening the risk of global coastal flooding, according to new research. Scientists from Britain's University of Leeds say Greenland's runoff has risen by 21 percent over the past four decades, and has become 60 percent more erratic from one summer to the next. They found that global heating has melted 3.5 trillion tonnes of ice during that period, which flowed into the ocean. Over the past decade alone, that melt has lifted sea levels by 1 cm. The study concludes that the rising sea levels from that melt heighten the risk of flooding for coastal communities worldwide, and disrupt marine ecosystems of the Arctic Ocean.

Earthquakes

Northern Sumatra was jolted by one of the strongest temblors in years. • Earth movements were also felt in eastern Indonesia's Seram Island, central India's Telangana state, Tunisia, northwestern Spain and along the central Chile-Argentina border.

Quieter Spring

The natural soundscape of chirping birds across much of North America and Europe appears to have become quieter and less diverse over the past 25 years, in which researchers say bird numbers have plummeted. Simon Butler of Britain's University of East Anglia analysed sound clips with acoustic modeling of more than a thousand bird species that were recorded in Europe and North America between 1996 and 2018. He and colleagues found there was a sharp decline in both the diversity and intensity of birdsongs, mirroring the loss of bird populations during the study period. It has been documented that the calls and other sounds made by the winged creatures can have a positive effect on human well-being and connect us with the natural world.

Lava and Ash

Residents and workers on Spain's La Palma Island are fighting a losing battle to clean the vast clouds of ash that almost continually rain down on their neighbourhoods from the ongoing eruption of the Cumbre Vieja volcano. Relentless flows of lava have rushed to the sea, and the entire island was rocked by a magnitude 5.1 volcanic quake — the strongest of an eruption that has caused chaos in the Canary Islands for well over a month. Vulcanologists cautioned that a decrease in tremors and emissions late in the week does not mean the eruption is ending.

Climatic Famine

The deepening food crisis affecting Madagascar after five years of extreme weather events is being dubbed the first climate-induced famine by the UN's World Food Programme (WFP). About 1.3 million people there are suffering from acute hunger, with 30,000 in the grip of famine due to loss of crops and livestock. Some are eating cactus leaves and insects to survive. WFP Deputy Country Director in Madagascar Aduino Mangoni said huge numbers have moved to urban centres in search of help. He added that while famines elsewhere have mainly been driven by conflict, "This is basically the only, maybe the first climate-change famine on Earth."

Cricket Confusion

Light pollution has been found to make crickets chirp during the day instead of nocturnally, which researchers fear is disrupting their breeding success. Male crickets typically chirp at night as an invitation for females to come and mate with them. A team from Tel Aviv University and the Open University of Israel found that field crickets exposed to 12 hours of light followed by 12 hours of darkness began to chirp when the lights went out and stopped when the light returned. But those exposed to more light during 24-hour periods lost their natural rhythms and developed a different synchronization with their environment, or they lost all natural rhythm when exposed to constant light.

Tropical Cyclone

The Atlantic hurricane season has been so busy that all of the names used for the storms have yet again become exhausted. Tropical Storm Wanda formed in the mid-Atlantic, then skirted the Azores.

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