



Week ending Friday, January 7, 2022

Gravity Effect

A new study documents how all living things on the planet appear to be impacted by the effects of gravity wielded on the planet by the sun and moon. Writing in the “Journal of Experimental Botany,” scientists say that beyond the obvious cycles of the tides and their influence on marine life, the rhythms of extraterrestrial gravity “are a perceptible and potent force” in the behaviour of all living organisms. They also point to studies that found how gravity cycles affect seed germination. Humans kept in the dark tend to establish daily sleep and eating cycles lasting 24.4 to 24.8 hours, in sync with lunar cycles.

Earthquakes

At least 22 people were injured when a sharp quake rocked the border region of China’s Yunnan and Sichuan provinces. • Earth movements were also felt in Taiwan, Hawaii’s Big Island, South Asia’s Hindu Kush region, southern Turkey, southwestern Spain, South Carolina, West Texas and greater Los Angeles.

Tsunami Alerts

New research says the movement of ocean water within a tsunami generates its own magnetic field ahead of the big changes in sea level, which could possibly lead to better warnings of the hazardous phenomena. Using magnetic and sea level change data from tsunamis that hit Samoa in 2009 and Chile in 2010, the study authors found that the tsunami-generated magnetic fields are so clearly evident that even a wave height of only a few centimeters can be detected. Writing in the “Journal of Geophysical Research: Solid Earth,” the researchers say this could lead to more accurate predictions of when a tsunami arrives on land and how large it might be.

Avian Flu

A severe outbreak of avian influenza among some migratory birds in Israel has forced officials there to order the culling of tens of thousands of turkeys and a half- million egg-laying chickens in farms across the country. More than 5,000 migrating cranes have already died from the virus at the Hula Nature Reserve in what is being called “the worst blow to wildlife” in Israel’s history. While no humans have so far been infected, those in close contact with infected birds have been treated with antiviral medications.

Marine Heat Wave

The waters off Sydney are approaching their hottest on record for January, with some

swimmers and surfers saying the water already feels more like February and March (late in the southern summer) than early January. Satellite images indicate that the water is almost three degrees Celsius above normal for the month. University of New South Wales oceanographer Moninya Roughan says the abnormal heat is caused by a combination of overall global heating of the ocean, the current La Niña pushing warmer waters from the tropics southward and some unusual atmospheric conditions. “Marine heat waves are having severe consequences on ecosystems and they can kill habitats,” Roughan said.

Congo Rumbblings

Officials in the Democratic Republic of Congo are warning residents around Goma that the Nyiragongo volcano is still dangerous many months after an eruption and accompanying tremors killed 32 people and destroyed hundreds of homes. Lava once again filled the volcano’s crater during September, leaving the volcano in an ongoing state of unrest. The Goma Volcano Observatory warns that toxic gases, which killed several of the victims in May, will continue to be a threat. Frequent ash falls are also poisoning the landscape. Residents are urged to continue washing their hands and vegetables, and not to use any rainwater that may be contaminated with the ash.

Coral Sea Storm

Minimal Tropical Storm Seth formed near the Great Barrier Reef, then churned the open waters of the Coral Sea, well off Australia’s Queensland state.

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