



### Polar Flashes

Scientists say they are alarmed at the sudden and rapid increase in lightning strikes across the high Arctic during the past few years. Once very rare, the 7,278 lightning bolts north of 80 degrees latitude during 2021 were nearly double the number in the previous nine years combined. The trend was highlighted by the Finnish scientific instrument manufacturer Vaisala, which issues an annual report on global lightning. The more frequent lightning bolts are being caused by disappearing sea ice, which means more water is able to evaporate, and the greater atmospheric instability caused by Arctic warming that is occurring at four times the global average.

### Earthquakes

A temblor in China's Qinghai province caused scattered damage. • Earth movements were also felt from northern Greece to Albania, Cyprus and other parts of the eastern Mediterranean, Indonesia's North Maluku province, central New Zealand and interior Southern California.

### **Methane Alarm**

The global level of the potent greenhouse gas methane has reached a record high, growing at twice the rate of the long-term average in what scientists are calling a "fire alarm moment" for curbing climate change. NOAA says methane concentrations reached a record 1,900 parts per billion in September, the highest in almost four decades of regular monitoring. The gas is 80 times more potent in contributing to global heating than carbon dioxide. While most of the rise has occurred from the gas being released through changes in wetlands and by agriculture in the tropics, leaks from oil and gas operations are also major contributors. More than 100 countries pledged to cut their methane emissions at last year's COP26 climate summit.

### **Summer Scorch**

The height of southern summer has brought some of the hottest weather on record to northern Argentina and parts of western Australia. The Argentine heat wave caused the power grid around Buenos Aires to collapse, leaving 700,000 without electricity as temperatures in the north of the country approached the hottest ever recorded in South America. An afternoon temperature of 50.7 degrees Celsius in Pilbara, Western Australia, tied for the hottest ever recorded in Australia, and the entire Southern Hemisphere, since 1960.

### History's Hottest

Europe's Copernicus Climate Change Service says the past seven years have been the hottest on record, with 2021 coming in as the world's fifth-hottest year. A new report says the trend is obvious "by a clear margin" and that the average global temperature last year was 1.1 to 1.2 degrees Celsius above 1850-1900 levels. Another report, published in *Advances in Atmospheric Sciences*, says that Earth's oceans are warming eight times faster than prior to the late 1980s. Researchers say the top 2,000 metres of the oceans were the hottest on record during 2021 despite the expanding La Niña cooling across the tropical Pacific. Warmer oceans are helping to supercharge storms and are contributing to more devastating floods worldwide.

### Tropical Cyclones

Tropical Storm Cody left one person dead and caused significant damage in Fiji as it triggered widespread flooding while forming just to the west of the island nation. Remnants of Cody were approaching northern New Zealand late in the week.

- Cyclone Tiffany was the second cyclone to douse Australia's Queensland state in less than two weeks. The storm passed over remote areas of the Cape York Peninsula and Gulf of Carpentaria before bringing much-needed rain to parts of the drought-plagued Northern Territory.

### Galapagos Lava

Written by Gallupsun Staff

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Ecuador's Wolf Volcano, the tallest in the Galapagos archipelago, spewed lava across parts of Isabela Island, home to only 211 surviving pink iguanas. But officials said the eruption appeared not to have harmed wildlife and occurred far from any human settlements. The mountain last erupted in 2015 after remaining quiet for 33 years.

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