



**Week ending Friday, February 18, 2022**

### **A Foot Higher**

Sea level rise is accelerating along the U.S. coast and is expected to bring an additional hike of up to 12 inches by 2050, according to a new NOAA study. That will double the amount of sea level rise that has already occurred over the past century. Such a rise would threaten cities such as Miami, Boston and New York, where flooding is already occurring during the highest astronomical and storm-surge tides. While the amount of rise will vary from location to location, the new data is a blinking “code red” for the deepening climate emergency, said Gina McCarthy, NOAA’s National Climate Advisor.

### **Earthquakes**

A strong quake in southwestern Guatemala uprooted trees and triggered landslides that blocked roads.

- Earth movements were also felt in far northern India, the Armenia-Georgia border region, Portugal's Madeira archipelago, islands of the northeastern Caribbean and greater Los Angeles.

### Antarctic Greening

Scientists have documented what they call a “striking” expansion of Antarctica’s two native flowering plants, driven mostly by a rapidly warming climate. Writing in the journal *Current Biology*, scientists document how Antarctic hair grass and Antarctic pearlwort have expanded on Signy Island, off the Antarctic Peninsula, as the average summer air temperature increased by almost 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit since 1960. They note that this spread will alter the local ecology, including changes in soil chemistry, the bacteria and fungi content in the soil and how organic material decomposes.

### Bird Crash

Hundreds of yellow-headed blackbirds were filmed plummeting to the ground in the northern Mexican city of Cuauhtémoc, with some dying in impact. Others were able to recover from the crash and fly off. After viewing terrifying security camera video of the incident, some blamed the tragedy on pollution or even new 5G mobile signals. But experts later said the flock was driven into houses and adjacent pavement by a predatory bird that made them swirl tightly and dive bomb to the surface.

### Pharma Pollution

Active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) that are being flushed into the world's rivers in sewage are now a "global threat to environmental and human health." Scientists at the University of York say they tested water from more than 1,000 sites in more than 100 countries and found many of them polluted with such APIs as epilepsy and diabetes drugs and painkillers. The report also warns that the increase in antibiotics found in rivers could also lead to the more "superbugs." Hot spots were in Pakistan, Bolivia, Kenya and Ethiopia. But Madrid, Dallas and Glasgow, Scotland, were in the top 20% of contaminated cities.

### Arctic Refreeze

Bitter cold around the North Pole so far this year has caused Arctic sea ice to expand to its greatest coverage since 2009. Despite the rapid expansion during January to 5.20 million square miles, it was still the sixth-smallest January extent in 43 years of satellite observations. Experts believe it will be only a temporary recovery from the long-term shrinking trend caused by the Arctic warming at up to three times the global average. This is in contrast to the near record-low January sea ice coverage observed around Antarctica. NOAA climate scientists say that overall, the planet experienced the seventh-warmest January since reliable records began in 1880.

### Tropical Cyclones

Tropical Storm Dumako damaged homes and forced thousands to evacuate in northern Madagascar.

- High winds and downpours from the remnants of Cyclone Dovi downed trees, knocked out power and triggered flooding on New Zealand's North Island.

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