

Hornet Sex Traps

The invasive Asian giant hornet that has in recent years ravaged honeybee hives in parts of British Columbia and Washington could possibly be wiped out for good with “sex traps” developed by U.S. and Chinese researchers. Writing in the journal Current Biology, they say key ingredients in the sex pheromones of the “murder hornets” can be put into traps, luring the males from the queens and preventing them from mating. Test traps have proven successful, attracting only males. “In two field seasons, we were able to rapidly collect thousands of males that were attracted to the odor,” said biologist and co-author James Nieh.

Earthquakes

A temblor off northeastern Japan killed at least 5 people, derailed a bullet train and knocked out power as far away as Tokyo and beyond.

• Earth movements were also felt in greater Hong Kong, the northwestern Philippines, central California and south-central Alaska.

Farming Shift

Researchers have developed a map that shows where the world's major food crops could successfully be moved to combat climate change and greatly reduce the need for irrigation. Writing in the journal Nature Communications Earth & Environment, they propose expanding agriculture around the corn belt in the American Midwest and south of the Sahara desert. This would allow vast tracts of farmland in Europe and India to revert to their natural ecology, allowing CO2-eating forests to grow back in the process. By cultivating crops in places where the scientists believe that rainfall would provide all the needed moisture, water resources could be more targeted to the planet's thirsty and growing human population.

Gorilla Thirst

Climate change is causing East Africa's two endangered mountain gorilla populations to have to drink more frequently, which seems to make the primates especially susceptible to the region's warming climate. The rainforest dwellers typically get most of their hydration from the food they eat. But the warmer weather in recent years has caused them to become more reliant on water from streams, puddles and even swamps. "In these conditions, drinking water likely helps to maintain a healthy body temperature range," said Edward Wright of the Max Planck Institute.

Deluge Aftermath

Australian health experts warn that there will likely be a rise in serious mosquito-borne disease, along with more bites from snakes and spiders, as the catastrophic inundation in the southeast subsides. New cases of Japanese encephalitis have already been reported, prompting authorities to expand vaccinations, especially for pig farm workers and their families due to their increased chances of getting bitten by infected mosquitoes. With funnel web spiders being discovered in more homes around the flood disaster zones, anti-venom manufacturers have stepped up production as a precaution.

Vanishing Ice

Fresh data from NASA's ice-monitoring CryoSat-2 and IceSat-2 spacecraft reveal that the sea ice surrounding the North Pole is thinner and disappearing more quickly than previously thought. Using radar and lidar, the satellites can measure the thickness of the ice with a resolution of about a half-inch. With that data, a new report says that the Arctic Ocean has lost about a third of its winter sea ice cover over the past 20 years. Scientists say ice that once did not melt over the summer has lost an average of about 1.5 feet in thickness just since IceSat-2 began operating in 2019. This shrinking leaves only much thinner seasonal ice, which melts completely each summer.

Tropical Cyclones

Cyclone Gombe left at least 15 people dead in Mozambique and 7 other fatalities in neighboring Malawi after roaring ashore as a Category-2 storm.

• Tropical Storm Billy churned the Indian Ocean.

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