Ocean Heat Waves
Climate change has caused the number of heat waves in the world’s oceans to soar over the past several decades, which researchers say is killing marine species like “wildfires that take out huge areas of forest.”

Writing in the journal Nature Climate Change, lead researcher Dan Smale says the underwater heat waves are killing kelp forests, sea grass meadows and coral reefs, which are home to many other species.

The study says that the number of ocean heat waves has tripled in recent years.

• Another study, published in Science, documents how climate change is causing the number of some important commercial fish and shellfish species around the world to fall. It says the warming has caused some populations to drop by 35 percent.

Penguin Fatalities
Namibia’s first bird flu outbreak on record has killed more than 500 endangered African penguins at one colony near Lüderitz, and scientists fear the pathogen could spread to other colonies or even other species. The Lüderitz Maritime Research Group noted on social media that most of the fatalities, which began to emerge in mid-December, were near a muddy patch adjoining the colony.

Because the H5N8 strain of avian influenza can survive for weeks in a wet environment, officials dispatched crews to spread buckets of salt over the mud in an attempt to curb infections. Penguin carcasses are being collected and burned.

It is unknown how the virus arrived in Namibia.

Ice Quakes
Researchers studying Antarctica’s McMurdo Ice Shelf have discovered that thousands of tiny “ice quakes” occur there each day. The scientists from the University of Chicago believe they are caused by pools of partially melted ice as they refreeze at night.

“As the temperature cools at night, the ice on the top contracts, and the water below expands as it undergoes freezing,” said glaciologist Douglas MacAyeal. “This warps the top lid, until it finally breaks with a snap.”

Earthquakes
The latest in a series of tremors that began rattling the southern English county of Surrey almost a year ago shook houses for several seconds. London’s Gatwick Airport was shaken as well.

• Earth movements were also felt in southern Peru and parts of neighboring Bolivia, Brazil and Chile, western Pakistan, the far northern Philippines, the Utah-Colorado border area and central Alberta.

Green Icebergs
Scientists think they have solved the century-old mystery of why some Antarctic icebergs appear to be green.

Bubbles and snow particles bend and scatter sunlight in chunks of glacial ice after they break off from the continent. This causes them to appear blue or white.

But researchers found that organic and inorganic particles from the ocean soon freeze to their base, creating what is called marine ice.

Writing in the Journal of Geophysical Research: Oceans, researchers say that if those icebergs collapse, exposing the underside, the red or yellow particles of iron oxide minerals in the marine ice can combine with the blue of the glacial ice to shift the apparent color to green.

They believe icebergs may spread the iron particles across the oceans, providing nutrients for phytoplankton.