Ocean Tracking

A new project to track wildlife in the world’s oceans by using electronic tags was announced at a gathering of scientists at Canada’s Dalhousie University. The Ocean Tracking Network will tag a vast range of ocean wildlife with small, low-cost devices. Individual animals will then be followed through an extensive international array of acoustic receivers on the sea floor. The effort is designed to eventually provide scientists and resource managers with a highly detailed picture of marine conditions and the migrations of fish and ocean animals throughout the world.

U.S. Flood Disaster

Flash flooding from freak torrential rains, falling for days across a broad swath of the eastern United States, virtually shut down the nation’s capital and killed at least 10 people across the region. States of emergency were declared from Virginia to upstate New York as surging flood waters washed away roads and bridges. Hundreds of people in north-eastern Pennsylvania were believed trapped by rising water in the upper floors or roofs of their homes. Between 150,000 and 200,000 people around Wilkes-Barre were ordered to evacuate their homes due to the rising Susquehanna River.

Tropical Cyclone

The second tropical cyclone of the season in the north-western Pacific brought heavy rainfall and gusty winds to China’s Hainan and southern Guangdong provinces. Tropical Storm Jelawat forced the cancellation of several flights and disrupted shipping in the region.

Earthquakes

A moderate earthquake in southern Iran injured more than 70 people and damaged buildings and roads around Zarand. A stronger tremor on a nearby Strait of Hormuz island five days later injured nine people.

• Earth movements were also felt in western Greece, the Greek capital of Athens, western India, Tokyo, Indonesia’s Sulawesi Island and Maluku Islands, the Aleutian Islands and Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Winter’s Worst

The second Antarctic blast to strike New Zealand this winter swept through the length of the country, producing heavy snow, ice and landslides that severed the main roads between the capital of Wellington and the commercial center of Auckland. The storm also dumped fresh snow on the South Island, hammering efforts to restore power to about 1,400 households still blacked out from a storm in early June.

Volcanoes

Scientists at the Montserrat Volcano Observatory warned that a fresh swarm of tremors beneath the Soufrière Hills volcano were unlike any that have been seen by the observatory in years. The government on the eastern Caribbean island raised the volcano’s alert level, advising that the seismic swarm increases the possibility that serious eruptive activity could affect inhabited areas.

• Ecuador’s National Geophysical Agency warned that the country’s Tungurahua Volcano registered 50 explosions within a 24-hour period. Groups of villagers living near the volcano voluntarily left their homes, saying the loud explosions made it hard for them to sleep at night.

Chameleon Snake

A new species of snake, with the ability to change color at will, has been discovered in a mountainous rain forest in Borneo. The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) said the newly named Kapuas Mud Snake was collected by a WWF consultant and a German reptile expert in the wetlands along the Kapuas River in West Kalimantan more than a year ago. It’s believed that since the snake is poisonous, it uses the ability to change color as a disguise to catch prey, rather than to ward off predators. By changing from a light to dark shade, the snake may also control its temperature by regulating how much sunlight it absorbs.

Bavarian Bear Killed

The first wild brown bear to be seen in Germany since 1835 was shot by hunters after attempts to tranquilize and relocate the animal failed. The young brown bear, dubbed “Bruno” by the media, was initially welcomed after it wandered around Zarand. A stronger tremor on a nearby Strait of Hormuz island five days later injured nine people.

• Earth movements were also felt in western Greece, the Greek capital of Athens, western India, Tokyo, Indonesia’s Sulawesi Island and Maluku Islands, the Aleutian Islands and Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Winter’s Worst

The second Antarctic blast to strike New Zealand this winter swept through the length of the country, producing heavy snow, ice and landslides that severed the main roads between the capital of Wellington and the commercial center of Auckland. The storm also dumped fresh snow on the South Island, hammering efforts to restore power to about 1,400 households still blacked out from a storm in early June.

Volcanoes

Scientists at the Montserrat Volcano Observatory warned that a fresh swarm of tremors beneath the Soufrière Hills volcano were unlike any that have been seen by the observatory in years. The government on the eastern Caribbean island raised the volcano’s alert level, advising that the seismic swarm increases the possibility that serious eruptive activity could affect inhabited areas.

• Ecuador’s National Geophysical Agency warned that the country’s Tungurahua Volcano registered 50 explosions within a 24-hour period. Groups of villagers living near the volcano voluntarily left their homes, saying the loud explosions made it hard for them to sleep at night.

Chameleon Snake

A new species of snake, with the ability to change color at will, has been discovered in a mountainous rain forest in Borneo. The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) said the newly named Kapuas Mud Snake was collected by a WWF consultant and a German reptile expert in the wetlands along the Kapuas River in West Kalimantan more than a year ago. It’s believed that since the snake is poisonous, it uses the ability to change color as a disguise to catch prey, rather than to ward off predators. By changing from a light to dark shade, the snake may also control its temperature by regulating how much sunlight it absorbs.

Bavarian Bear Killed

The first wild brown bear to be seen in Germany since 1835 was shot by hunters after attempts to tranquilize and relocate the animal failed. The young brown bear, dubbed “Bruno” by the media, was initially welcomed after it wandered across the border from Austria. Bruno was blamed for killing dozens of sheep, and his wanderings near populated areas finally convinced officials to kill him. He was an offspring of bears released under an Italian attempt to reintroduce the species to the Alps. The World Wildlife Fund condemned the killing, saying the animal was too dangerous. But other environmental groups blasted the killing. The German Nature Protection Ring claimed other nations manage to coexist in peace with bears. Bruno would be stuffed and displayed in a Munich museum next to the last bear killed in Germany 170 years ago.

Distributed by: Universal Press Syndicate
E-mail: contactauthor@earthweek.com

© MMVI Earth Environment Service