

Earthweek: Diary of a Changing World

Week ending Friday, June 6, 2025

By Steve Newman

Fish Parasites

More than 90% of fresh-water fish sampled from Southern California lakes contained parasitic worms that can infect humans.

A study, published in the *Journal of Infectious Diseases*, says two species of flatworms, typically found in Southeast Asia, are widespread in U.S. waters due to invasive snails that have carried the parasites to 17 states and Puerto Rico.

While most infections cause mild gastrointestinal issues, long-term or repeated exposure can lead to serious complications. Researchers say the risk is low if fish are properly cooked or frozen.

Earthquakes

A strong temblor in southwestern Turkey left one person dead and dozens of others injured.

- A shallow quake near Karachi, Pakistan, damaged buildings, including a jail where hundreds of prisoners escaped the facility during the ensuing panic.

- Earth movements were also felt in Crete, China's Yunnan province, northern Thailand, Japan's Hokkaido island and northern Kansas.

War Emissions

A new study cautions that NATO's planned rearmament could boost global greenhouse gas emissions by up to 220 million tons annually, roughly equivalent to adding emissions from a country the size of Pakistan.

Researchers say the surge in military spending, sparked by global conflicts and rising tensions, will worsen the climate crisis and reduce resources available for combating global warming.

Militaries are among the most carbon-intensive sectors due to their fuel use and manufacturing of heavy equipment.

Separately, another study found Israel's war on Gaza generated more carbon emissions in 15 months than many countries, largely due to relentless bombardment and the use of tanks and aircraft in the conflict.

Global Heating

Nearly half of the world's population experienced at least 30 additional days of extreme heat over the past year due to human-caused climate change, according to a new study.

Researchers at World Weather Attribution, Climate Central and the Red Cross-Red Crescent Climate Center compared recent temperature data with a simulated world without global warming and identified climate change as a driver in all 67 major heat events.

The Caribbean island of Aruba was hit hardest, enduring 187 extreme heat days — 45 more than it would have without climate change.

Clever Birds

Sulfur-crested cockatoos in Sydney have mastered the ability to operate drinking fountains, using their feet and beaks to twist handles and sip water.

Researchers observed the birds with remote cameras, capturing over 500 attempts in 44 days with about 70% of the local flock trying the technique.

Scientists believe the cockatoos learned the skill by watching people and each other, turning the activity into both social and playful behaviors.

This fountain-opening skill follows a previous urban innovation by the same birds — lifting garbage bin lids.



Experts say the cockatoos' social learning and curiosity allow them to thrive in urban environments. Image: Klump et al./*Biology Letters*

Solar Threat

Solar storms are causing Elon Musk's Starlink satellites to fall back to Earth faster than expected, according to a new study.

Researchers at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center showed that heightened solar activity increases atmospheric drag, shortening the satellites' lifespans by up to 12 days and potentially increasing the chance of their debris hitting the ground.

One Starlink fragment landed on a Canadian farm in 2024, raising safety concerns as SpaceX already has more than 7,500 satellites in orbit and plans to launch tens of thousands more.

The sun is near the peak of its 11-year cycle of activity, with several major storms occurring in recent months.

Etna Blast

The most powerful eruption of Sicily's Mount Etna in four years produced a massive column of superheated gas and ash that soared miles into the sky.

The eruption sent tourists fleeing the volcano's slopes and spewed lava that flowed into an unpopulated area.

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