

Earthweek: Diary of a Changing World

By Steve Newman

Week ending Friday, March 7, 2025

Northward Shift

Lobsters are migrating away from a warming Gulf of Maine into cooler Canadian waters, contributing to a steady decline since 2021 in Maine's annual catch.

In 2024, Maine fishermen hauled in approximately 86 million pounds of lobster—the lowest in 15 years—compared to 111 million pounds in 2021. But the industry is said to remain economically strong.

Scientists warn that if current trends continue, most of Maine's lobsters could shift to Canadian waters within 30 years, driven by the warmer waters and declining juvenile lobster survival.

Maine officials say they are preparing for other climate-related disruptions, such as rising sea levels and extreme weather.

Earthquakes

A rare tremor jolted Australia's northern Queensland coast, knocking out power.

Tremors were also felt in the Myanmar-India border region, Nepal, southeastern Iran, southern Mexico, West Texas, northwestern Washington and Los Angeles.



Eruptions

La Soufrière volcano on the southeastern Caribbean island of Saint Vincent erupted explosively, sending a 20,000-foot ash column into the sky and forcing mass evacuations.

More than 16,000 people from a high-risk zone were ordered to leave, with evacuees heading to shelters, cruise ships or neighboring islands offering refuge.

The volcano last erupted in 1979, and a 1902 eruption killed approximately 1,600 people.

Costa Rica's Turrialba and Poás volcanoes suddenly began to show increases in activity, with Poás emitting sulfur gas and small plumes of steam and ash.

Volcanologists say Turrialba experienced a collapse within its main crater.

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Grounded Giant

The world's largest and oldest iceberg, A23a, has run aground in the Atlantic Ocean about 45 miles from South Georgia, easing concerns that it would disrupt the island's vital ecosystem.

The 1,545-square-mile, trillion-ton iceberg had been drifting northward, with long pauses, since it broke off from Antarctica in 1986. There had been recent fears that it could block penguins and seals from reaching their feeding grounds.

While the iceberg's future remains uncertain, researchers say its grounding could stir up nutrients that may actually benefit wildlife.

Ravenous Invaders

Invasive Asian hornets (*Vespa velutina*) are rapidly spreading across Europe, preying on hundreds of native insect species that include some key pollinators.

Researchers analyzed the gut contents of more than 1,500 hornet larvae from nests in the U.K., France, Spain and the island of Jersey, finding that 43 of the 50 most commonly eaten species were flower-visiting insects.

While honeybees are the hornets' primary prey, they also target bumblebees, butterflies, moths, flies and other wasps. This poses an additional threat to already-declining insect populations across the continent.



Iceberg A23a "fertilizes" the Atlantic with minerals as it melts. Photo: BAS

Heat Aging

A new six-year study suggests that prolonged exposure to extreme heat may speed up biological aging in older adults, raising concerns about the long-term health impacts of climate change.

Researchers from the University of Southern California analyzed blood from over 3,600 adults aged 56 and older, finding that those living in areas with frequent high temperatures (90 degrees Fahrenheit or above) aged up to 14 months more at the cellular level than those in living cooler climates.

The study measured chemical changes in DNA that affect how genes function, a process linked to aging and disease.

Tropical Cyclones

At least five people were killed by high winds and flooding on the island of Réunion when the Category-3 Cyclone Garance inflicted significant damage.

Cyclone Honde left at least three people dead and numerous buildings wrecked in southern Madagascar.

Tropical Storm Alfred brought heavy rain around Brisbane, Australia.