

Earthweek: Diary of a Changing World

Week ending Friday, October 17, 2025

By Steve Newman

La Niña Returns

The cool counterpart to El Niño has officially returned to the tropical Pacific Ocean, according to NOAA.

Meteorologists there say this La Niña is weak and likely to be short-lived, with a 55% chance it will fade by early 2026.

Despite concerns that it could intensify the Atlantic hurricane season, scientists say this event is too mild and late to have much impact.

In another development, the U.N. announced that atmospheric carbon dioxide hit a new high last year, amplifying warnings that a climate crisis is already claiming lives and livelihoods.

The heat trapped by CO2 is said to be “turbo-charging” the climate and causing a greater frequency and intensity in extreme weather.

Earthquakes

The strongest in a series of quakes just off the southern Philippines left at least seven people dead while damaging homes, bridges and other structures.

- Earth movements were also felt in the central Philippines, northern Ethiopia and Indian-controlled Kashmir.

Iguana Return

Ecuador has relocated 1,500 land iguanas to Santiago Island in the Galapagos as part of a major conservation effort.

The project, led by the Galapagos National Park Directorate and the Galapagos Conservancy, aims to restore a key herbivore species to its natural habitat while easing overpopulation on North Seymour Island.

The reintroduction followed a three-phase process that included health checks, quarantine and microchipping to prevent disease or ecological disruption.

Officials said the iguanas will now have to fend for themselves without supplemental feeding, to encourage their natural behavior.

Calico Crustacean

A rare calico lobster, seen in only about 1 in 30 million lobsters, has been caught off the Massachusetts coast and donated to Northeastern University’s Marine Science Center.

The female lobster, with vivid orange-and-black coloring, is named Jackie after “jack-o’-lantern.” She joins Neptune, a blue lobster already housed at the center.

Outreach coordinator Sierra Muñoz said the calico’s mottled pattern comes from a mix of pigments, including astaxanthin and the protein crustacyanin.

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Tipping Point

Scientists say the world’s coral reefs have passed a critical tipping point after record ocean heat caused the mass bleaching and death of warm-water corals.

The Global Tipping Points Report 2025, compiled by 160 researchers from 23 countries, warns that coral ecosystems are collapsing as global temperatures exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

Coral reefs, which support about 25% of marine species and nearly a billion people with food, are undergoing irreversible decline in many regions.



Rare colors like those in “Jackie” make such lobsters more vulnerable to predators and therefore scarce. Photo: Alyssa Stone/Northeastern Univ.

Global Threat

The World Health Organization warned that drug-resistant bacterial infections are surging, threatening the effectiveness of antibiotics that save millions of lives each year.

The agency says 1 in 6 bacterial infections confirmed in laboratories worldwide in 2023 showed antibiotic resistance, with resistance rates rising 5% to 15% annually across more than 40% of monitored drugs.

Over 40% of *E. coli* and 55% of *K. pneumoniae* infections are now resistant to standard treatments, the report said. WHO officials called the trend “deeply concerning,” noting that many countries are “flying blind” against the spread of antimicrobial resistance.

Tropical Cyclones

Japan’s Hachijō-jima Island was raked in quick succession by typhoons Halong and Nakri.

- Tropical storm Lorenzo threatened only shipping lanes in the Atlantic.

- Karen became the northernmost named storm on record to form in the Atlantic.

- Tropical Storm Raymond skirted Mexico.

