



PLANETARY HEALTH WEEKLY

BRINGING YOU CURRENT NEWS ON GLOBAL HEALTH & ECOLOGICAL WELLNESS

Volume 4, Number 35

<https://planetaryhealthweekly.com>

August 30, 2018

GULF STREAM CURRENT AT ITS WEAKEST IN 1,600 YEARS

The current, or the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (Amoc), carries warm water northwards towards the north pole and there it cools, becomes denser and sinks, and then flows back southwards. It is linked to severe and abrupt changes in the climate in the past. But new research shows the current is now 15% weaker than around 400AD, an exceptionally large deviation, and that human-caused global warming is responsible for at least a significant part of that. Global warming hampers the cooling of the water, while melting ice in the Arctic, and floods the area with less dense freshwater, weakening the current. Two new studies show that the weakening is unprecedented in at least 1,600 years. It is clear that human-caused climate change will continue to slow Amoc, with potentially severe consequences.

[Read more at The Guardian.](#)



Credit: Fred Moore

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HOW FORESTS IMPROVE KIDS' DIETS

A first-of-its-kind global study shows that children in 27 developing countries have better nutrition when they live near forests, which suggests that forest conservation could be an important tool to improve the nutrition of children. More than two billion people in the developing world suffer from a lack of micronutrients. The result for children can be brain damage, stunted growth, and even death. There is a growing global awareness that the fight against hunger requires getting people a larger range of nutrients needed to thrive. The new study, led by a team at the University of Vermont found that being close to forests caused children to have at least 25% greater diversity in their diets. Previously proven benefits of forest conservation include supporting the livelihoods of local communities, helping to slow climate change, and protecting wildlife.

[Read more at The University of Vermont.](#)

See Also:

[Impacts of forests on children's diet in rural areas across 27 developing countries](#)



Credit: Ricky Martin/CIFOR



DOMINO-EFFECT OF CLIMATE EVENTS COULD MOVE EARTH INTO A 'HOTHOUSE' STATE

A domino-like cascade of melting ice, warming seas, shifting currents and dying forests could tilt the Earth into a “hothouse” state beyond which human efforts to reduce emissions will be increasingly futile, a group of leading climate scientists has warned. This grim prospect is sketched out in a journal paper that considers the combined consequences of 10 climate change processes, including the release of methane trapped in Siberian permafrost and the impact of melting ice in Greenland on the Antarctic. The authors stress their analysis is not conclusive, but warn the Paris commitment to keep warming at 2C above pre-industrial levels may not be enough to “park” the planet’s climate at a stable temperature. Read more at [The Guardian](#).

Credit: Paul Goldstein/Cover Images

FLORIDA DECLARES A STATE OF EMERGENCY AS RED TIDE KILLS ANIMALS, SICKENS PEOPLE AND DISRUPTS TOURISM

Florida’s governor recently made official what residents of southwest Florida already knew: The bloom of toxic algae that has darkened gulf waters is an emergency. The red tide has made breathing difficult for locals, scared away tourists, and strewn popular beaches with the stinking carcasses of fish, eels, porpoises, turtles, manatees and one 26-foot whale shark. Gov. Rick Scott (R) declared a state of emergency in seven counties stretching from Tampa Bay south to the fringe of the Everglades. Citizens in retirement communities are reporting respiratory distress from the vapors of the microscopic red-tide organism called *Karenia brevis*. A recent study found a 50 percent spike in hospital visits due to respiratory problems during red-tide blooms. Climate change and other human influences are likely responsible.

[Read more at The Washington Post.](#)

See Also

[Florida's Water Crisis & The Last Man Standing. How Polluters & Corrupt on Destroyed Florida](#)



Credit: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

ONLINE SHOPPING IS MAKING US ACCUMULATE MORE JUNK

It’s easier than ever to buy things online. Thanks to a perfect storm of factors, people are amassing a lot of stuff. Before the advent of the internet, we had to set aside time to go browse the aisles of a physical store, which was only open a certain number of hours a day. Now, we can shop from anywhere, anytime. Because of the globalization of manufacturing, the item may be very cheap—so cheap that we add it to our online shopping carts without a second thought. Shopping online also feels good. Humans get a dopamine hit from buying stuff, according to research at Harvard Medical School. But 85% of clothing that is donated to secondhand stores ends up in landfills. Just 9% of plastic that ends up in the municipal-waste stream gets recycled, according to the EPA, and only 15% of textiles get recycled. We are buying more because we can.

[Read more at The Atlantic.](#)



Credit: GENE J. PUSKAR / AP



MEASLES CASES HIT RECORD HIGH IN EUROPE

Cases of measles in Europe have hit a record high. More than 41,000 people have been infected in the first six months of 2018, leading to 37 deaths. Last year there were 23,927 cases and the year before 5,273. Experts blame this surge in infections on a drop in the number of people being vaccinated. Public Health England say the outbreaks in England are largely due to people who have travelled to areas of mainland Europe that have had outbreaks. Measles is highly infectious and spreads by droplets in coughs and sneezes. The infection lasts seven to 10 days. But while most people recover completely, it can cause some serious complications, including: encephalitis (infection and swelling of the brain), meningitis, febrile convulsions, pneumonia, and liver infection (hepatitis). The vaccine can prevent infection but discredited research 20 years ago that erroneously linked it to autism has stopped some people from trusting the vaccine.

[Read more at BBC News.](#)

Credit: Lowell Georgia / Science Source

BROKEN BONES AND MISSING TEETH: SCOOTER INJURIES ARE BECOMING COMMON AT HOSPITALS

The dockless motorized scooter craze has been controversial as startups Bird and Lime have suddenly swept into more cities, without any regulation or approval from the local government. While much of the ire has been directed at how riders leave hundreds of the scooters strewn about sidewalks and streets like abandoned flotsam, there's another scourge: Emergency rooms are taking in lots of people with scooter injuries. Despite the lack of official data, doctors, city officials, and riders that BuzzFeed News spoke with all agreed: They just don't know how safe these things are. Officials are eager to get their hands on this information as they consider imposing new scooter regulations. San Francisco has already banned them.

[Read more at BuzzFeed News.](#)



Credit: Mario Tama / Getty Images



Credit: Stuart Ling

MALNUTRITION PERSISTS DESPITE HIGHER INCOMES FOR WOMEN IN LAOS

In reality however, the social pressure to achieve a modern lifestyle means that rural families are deliberately choosing to undertake more agricultural labour in return for a higher income. Thousands of women from ethnic minorities such as Hmong, Khmu and Lahu (many of them migrants) work seven days a week with their husbands to manage their allocated plantations on a contract basis. Women are also preferred as day labourers in nursery work and washing/packing bananas, and they must work strictly 8 to 5 to get their daily payment of about \$10 USD. Since men haven't caught up yet to the changing gender roles needed in this new economy, women still end up taking most responsibility for the nutrition of infants and children. These women have money, but lack time.

[Read more at Water, Land, and Ecosystems.](#)



Credit: Jamila Akweley Okertchiri/IPS

HOW GHANA'S RAPID POPULATION GROWTH COULD BECOME AN EMERGENCY AND OUTPACE BOTH FOOD PRODUCTION AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Ghana's economy is predominately dependent on agriculture, particularly cocoa, though the government has taken steps to ensure that the cultivation of staples is also enhanced. FAO says that 52% of the country's labour force is engaged in agriculture, which contributes 54% of the country's gross domestic product. However, the country's agricultural sector is driven predominately by smallholder farmers, and about 60% of all farms are less than 1.2 hectares and are largely rain-fed. The National Population Council stated last August that the country's current 2.5 percent population growth rate was high, above the global rate of 1.5 percent, calling it a disturbing trend. Ghana currently has a national population policy with strategies to manage the country's population for long-term benefit, but implementation lacks political will.

[Read more at Inter Press Service News Agency.](#)

SPOTLIGHT ON POLICY: THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT UNVEILS CANADA'S FIRST POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY

On August 21, 2018, the Government of Canada released its first Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS), detailing its plan to help struggling Canadians. The result of years of advocacy from many individuals and groups, this strategy seeks to address the fact that 3.7 million Canadians live in poverty. The Official Poverty Line will be based on the cost of a basket of goods and services estimating a basic standard of living. This is encouraging, as it is the only measure based on the actual cost of living. Two poverty-reduction targets are set: the first, to reduce poverty by 20% from 2015 levels by 2020; and the second, to reduce it by 50 per cent by 2030. Even if the government meets its 2020 mark, 10% of Canadians will still remain below the poverty line.

[Read more at Community Food Centres Canada.](#)



Credit: Jonathon Harrington



Credit: Courtesy of the Un Alto en el Desierto Foundation

SPOTLIGHT ON INDIGENOUS HEALTH:

SCIENTISTS WARN OF THE IMMINENT DEPLETION OF GROUNDWATER IN CHILE'S ATACAMA DESERT

Eighteen national science prize-winners in Chile have called for a halt to the unsustainable over-extraction of water in the four regions over which the Atacama Desert spreads in the north of the country, a problem that threatens the future of 1.5 million people. In their Tarapacá Manifest, which takes its name from one of the affected regions, the scientists call for water in the area to be treated as a non-renewable resource because mining companies, agriculture and large cities consume underground reservoirs of water that date back more than 10,000 years and are not replenished with equal speed.

[Read more at Inter Press Service News Agency.](#)

Tim Flach, award winning photographer and author

“Humanity's well-being, and ultimately our survival, is wrapped up in how we manage our relationship with nature.”

Read more at
[The National Magazine of the Sierra Club.](#)

Credit: Tim Flach



EVENTSTABLE

DATESma	CONFERENCE	LOCATION	REGISTER
Sept. 12th - 14th	Climate Action Summit	San Francisco USA	http://globalclimateactions summit.org/
Sept. 29th	7th Annual Action Global Health Network Conference	Ottawa Canada	Early Bird deadline for abstract is July 20th, 2017, please e-mail aghn2017.research@gmail.com for more information
Oct. 8th-12th	5th Global Symposium on Health Systems Research	Liverpool England	http://healthsystemsresearch.org/
Oct. 18th	Integrative Health Institute Conference	Edmonton Canada	https://www.ualberta.ca/integrative-health-institute
Nov. 8th-9th	Workshop: Rules of the Road 2.0	Washington USA	https://www.cugh.org/events/workshop-rules-road-20
Nov. 15th-19th	4th People's Health Assembly	Dhaka Bangladesh	https://archive.phmovement.org/en/node/10805
Nov. 19th-21st	Canadian Conference on Global Health	Toronto Canada	https://archive.phmovement.org/en/node/10805
Mar. 8th-10th	10th annual CUGH Conference - Translation and Implementation for impact in Global Health	Chicago USA	Panel and Abstract proposal deadline - August 25, 2018



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SPOTLIGHT ON MEDIA: THE NEW FACE OF MEDICAL ADVICE: THE ONLINE PREGNANCY FORUM



Credit: Yuri Argus / Getty Images

Expecting moms are turning to the Internet for issues they can't or won't discuss with their doctors. Last September, three months pregnant with my first child, I began to feel shooting pains in my abdomen. I surmised that this was round ligament pain, a typical pregnancy symptom that occurs as the uterus expands. Later that night, wondering when I could expect the pain to subside, I Googled "round ligament pain how long." The top results were from pregnancy message boards, where women asked (and answered) a flurry of questions. I clicked on post after post, reading about the experiences of dozens of women, and learned that the pain would probably subside by the third trimester.

The next week, I Googled "itchy nipples pregnancy." Again, I landed on forums, where I learned that this weird symptom was completely normal. Same for "itchy bellybutton pregnancy," "dark nipples pregnant" and "chicken nauseous pregnancy."

As my pregnancy progressed, I found myself relying on two entirely disconnected sources for medical advice. The first was my obstetrician's office, where I was seen in person once a month throughout most of my pregnancy. The second source was the Internet.

[Read more at The Washington Post.](#)



THE SHOCKING ORIGIN OF VEGETABLE OIL—GARBAGE!



Credit: Shutterstock.com

We are switching to ‘heart healthy’ vegetable oils, like cottonseed, corn, safflower and soy oils. But recent evidence suggests it is a Faustian bargain. The industrially processed seed oils are much, much worse. It was all a terrible mistake that began with Crisco, made from cotton. Cotton is actually two crops—the fiber and the seed. For every 100 pounds of fiber, there was 162 pounds of cotton seeds which were largely useless. Only 5% of this seed was required for planting. Some could be used for livestock feed but there was still a mountain of garbage. What could be done with this garbage? Mostly it was left to rot or simply dumped illegally into rivers. It was toxic waste. With lots of cottonseed oil, but no demand, it was added illicitly to animal fats and lards. There was no evidence that this was, in any way safe for human consumption. Similarly, cottonseed oil, being light in flavor and slightly yellow was blended with olive oil to reduce costs. This led to Italy completely banning the adulterated American olive oil in 1883. The Proctor & Gamble company used cottonseed oil for the manufacture of candles and soap, but soon discovered that they could use a chemical process to partially hydrogenate cottonseed oil into a solid fat that resembled lard. This process produced what are now called ‘Trans’ fats, making this product extremely versatile in the kitchen, even if nobody actually knew whether we should be shoving this former toxic waste into our mouths.

[Read more at Medium.](#)

WHAT'S KILLING THE MONARCHS? OUR ROADS.



Credit: Andy Davis

Over the past decade the number of monarchs that make it to Mexico has been shrinking, and scientists are racing to figure out why. Andy Davis, a research scientist at the Odum School of Ecology at the University of Georgia, points out that the breeding range for monarchs is huge—48 U.S. states and eight Canadian provinces—but the numbers are declining in Mexico. This tells us, he says, that something is happening along the journey. There are a number of natural risks and stressors that monarchs face during their migration: Some get caught over the Great Lakes and drown before they make it to the other side. Others die in storms. And monarchs traveling the Eastern Seaboard fight an often-losing battle with wind before making it to a rest area. But Davis discovered another hazard for the tiger-striped migrants—cars and trucks. In a recent study, published in the journal *Biology Letters*, Davis found that the single-largest cause of monarch mortality is roadways, where some 25 million butterflies die each year—often run over or caught in windshields or grills. An obvious takeaway from Davis's research is that roadside plantings of pollinator-friendly plants put monarchs at risk.

One way or the other, it's up to humans whether the iconic monarch continues its reign.

[Read more at The National Magazine of the Sierra Club.](#)

INDIGENOUS INTERPRETER CAPACITY BUILDING & LINGUISTIC JUSTICE TRAINING

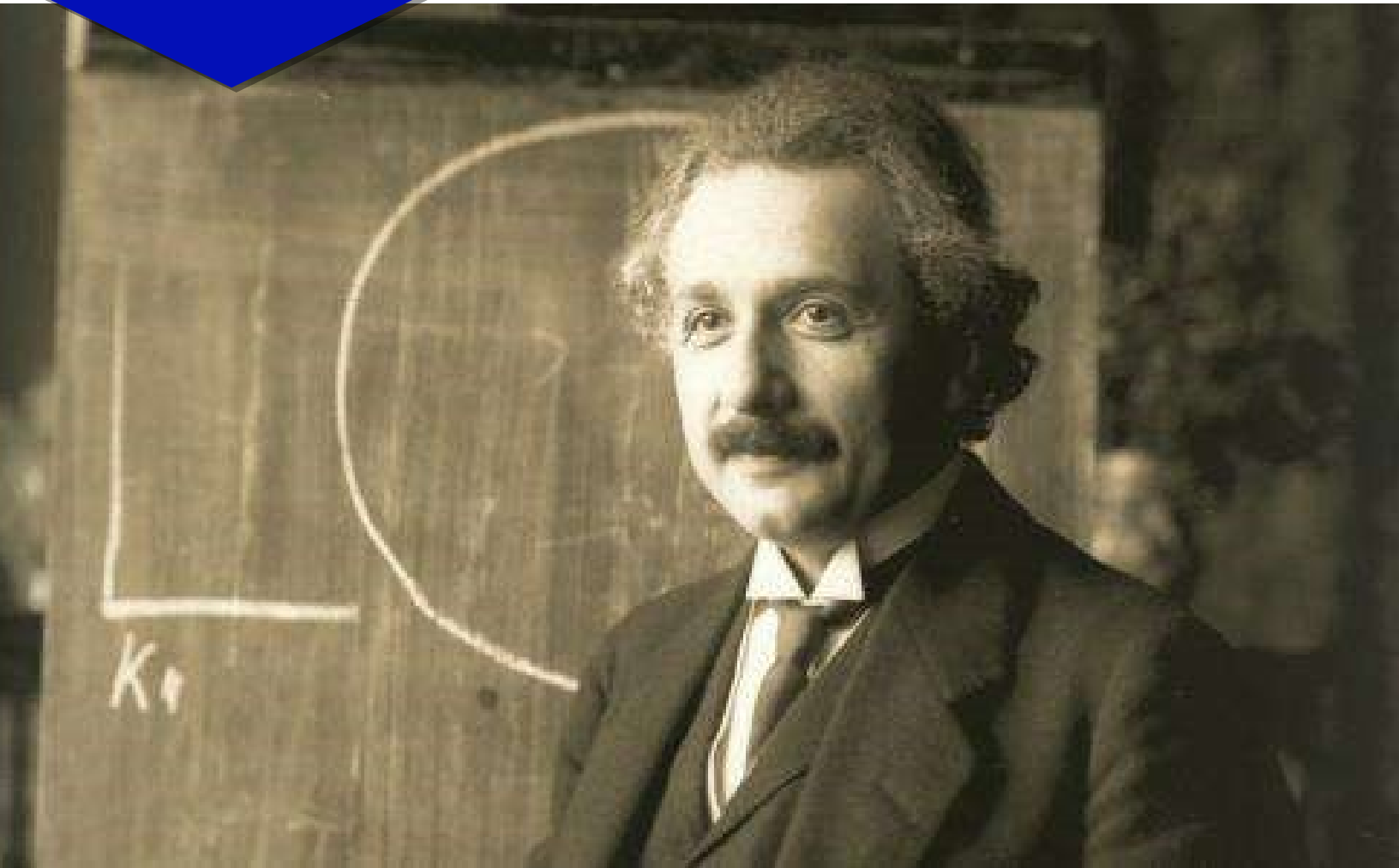


The Accountability Research Center, along with Frente Indígena de Organizaciones Binacionales (FIOB), the International Mayan League, and Comunidades Indígenas en Liderazgo/Indigenous Community Leadership (CIELO) (Los Angeles) hosted indigenous interpreters and indigenous rights advocates in Washington, DC from August 10-12, 2018. The three day training brought together over 20 Maya, Mixteco, Zapoteco and Nahuatl peoples from across the U.S. to improve interpretation and advocacy skills and to address the pressing language access challenges facing indigenous people from Central America and Mexico who are currently detained in the U.S. due to the family separation policy. This exchange is informing ARC reflections about the broader issue of how the field of transparency, participation and accountability addresses language rights issues.

[Read more at Accountability Research Center.](#)



AMERICA IS SACRIFICING THE FUTURE



Credit: Ferdinand Schmutzer, Public Domain

It has been said that the great moments in science occur not when a scientist exclaims “Eureka!” but when he or she murmurs “That’s strange.” Flexner thought the most fertile discoveries come from scientists “driven not by the desire to be useful but merely the desire to satisfy their curiosity.”

As 10,000 baby boomers retire each day into the embrace of the entitlement state, rapid economic growth becomes more imperative and, because of the increasing weight of the state, more difficult to maintain. Entitlement spending and the cost of servicing the surging national debt increasingly crowd out rival claims on scarce public resources, including those for basic science. Because it is politically expedient to sacrifice the future, which does not vote, to the consumption of government services by those who do, America is eating its seed corn.

The future's vital, and only, constituency is the conscience of the present.

[Read more at The Washington Post.](#)

BEYOND CELEBRATING DIVERSITY: 20 THINGS I WILL DO TO BE AN EQUITABLE EDUCATOR



Credit: 123RF

1. I will learn to pronounce each student's full given name correctly.
2. I will step out of my comfort zone by building a process for continually assessing, reflecting upon, and challenging my biases, prejudices, and socializations and how they influence my expectations for, and relationships with, each student, family, and colleague.
3. I will review all learning materials, ensuring that they are free of bias whether in implicit or explicit forms.
4. I will learn and teach about the ways people in the subject areas I teach have used their knowledge to advocate for either justice or injustice.
5. I will reject deficit ideology—the temptation to identity the problem of outcome disparities (such as test scores) as existing within rather than as pressing upon marginalized communities.
6. I will teach about issues like racism, sexism, poverty, and heterosexism
7. I will understand the relationship between intent and impact.
8. I will reject the myth of color-blindness.
9. I will keep in mind that some students do not enjoy the same level of access to educational materials and resources, such as computers and the Internet, as other students.
10. I will build coalitions with educators who are different from me in terms of race, sexual orientation, gender, religion, home language, class, (dis)ability, and other identities.

[Read more at EdChange Initiative.](#)



**Chippewas of Rama First Nation
Powwow
Orillia, Ontario
August 26, 2018**

Credit: David Zakus

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