



# PLANETARY HEALTH WEEKLY

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## IS THE WIND TURBINE REALLY A 'NEW APEX PREDATOR'?

The presence of wind turbines can reduce the number of birds and lizards in an area, a new study has found. The early examples of wind turbines date to the 7th century. They look like propellers on sticks. They are now being widely used to provide energy. A 2013 study found that each turbine will cause about five bird deaths a year – but mere avoidance has a big outcome for species down the food chain. Climate change is a much bigger threat to wildlife than windfarms. Says Dr Thaker: “The bottom line for me is that I will pick wind energy over fossil fuels any day.” Windfarms should be sited with care, avoiding ecologically sensitive areas, breeding grounds for vulnerable species and major migratory routes.

[Read more at The Guardian.](#)



Credit: Murdo Macleod / Guardian

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## SCALING UP EFFORTS IN BLOOD DONATION INNOVATION

Three district hospitals in Rwanda have managed to bring maternal deaths down to zero — in part thanks to technology. Dr. Emmanuel Kayitare, director general at Shyira District Hospital and his team have persuaded community health workers and health centers to send pregnant women to the hospital early so they get intensive care. When a woman needs a transfusion, the staff can order blood by drone. In developing countries, although blood transfusions can be used to treat pregnancy-related complications and severe childhood anemia, there are various challenges associated with it from insufficient blood supply, challenges with delivery, and transfusion-transmitted infections. As a result, the national blood systems cannot meet the needs of all patients. There are efforts focused on deploying innovation solutions to blood donation and delivery, and and working with national health care policy and infrastructure.

[Read more at Devex.](#)



Credit: Sarah Farhat / World Bank / CC BY-NC-ND



## GERMANY HAS A MAJOR DIRTY COAL AND CLIMATE PROBLEM

The Hambach mine, the largest of its kind in Europe, is ground zero for the German climate movement: The mine produces 44 million tons of lignite per year. In terms of carbon emissions, lignite is one the dirtiest fossil fuels. Germany is well known for its “energy transition” to renewables, but still burns 188 million tons of lignite per year to generate power. In 2017, burning lignite produced nearly a quarter of electricity in Germany. That number rises to 37% if you include black coal. A short hike across a wasteland of tree stumps and churned mud to the south is Hambach Forest. Or what's left of it. Unlike pit mining, open-cast lignite extraction means removing everything on the surface of the earth and then a thousand more feet of earth and rock to reach a layer of lignite. Despite its commitment to the 2015 Paris Agreement, Germany has failed to reduce its greenhouse emissions for the last nine years. Chancellor Angela Merkel's government recently announced it would miss its 2020 emissions target of a 40% reduction over 1990 levels by a wide margin.

[Read more at The Sierra Club.](#)

Credit: Maurice Frank

## AS TRUMP QUESTIONS GLOBAL WARMING, UN SAYS: US GOV'T WON'T

A top U.N. scientist on Thursday shrugged off an online quip from U.S. President Donald Trump that questioned global warming, saying a U.S. government report will show the “fundamental impacts of climate change on the U.S. continent.” Officials at the World Meteorological Organization also said environmentally minded efforts by the state of California, in parts of the financial sector, among grassroots activists and others will have more of an impact to help the fight against climate change than “political disturbance” and “discourse” will impede it. The science, they said, will have the last word. WMO says globally averaged concentrations of carbon dioxide reached 405.5 parts per million in 2017, up slightly from the previous year and from 400.1 in 2015. Concentrations of other heat-trapping gases, like methane and nitrous oxide, also rose.

[Read more at The Denver Channel.](#)



Credit: Paul Kitagaki Jr.



Credit: imageBROKER/Alamy Stock Photo

## COULD ‘REWILDING’ HELP TO TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE?

As little as 14,000 years ago, lions roamed across most of Earth’s continents, including Europe, Asia and the Americas. Though it is not possible to tell what caused the lions to go extinct, evidence taken from fossils and ancient cave paintings suggests that human hunting could have played a role in their downfall. Now, some researchers say that large animals should be reintroduced to areas where they once thrived. It is argued that this type of conservation, which is known as “rewilding”, could help to restore ecosystems to what they could have looked like before major human interference. One of the 16 research papers in the special issue, which is published in Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B argues that reintroducing large herbivores could help countries to lower their emissions for several reasons.

[Read more at Carbon Brief.](#)



Credit: Getty Images

## WHO LAUNCHES HIGH IMPACT PLAN TO CHECK MALARIA

From 2010 to 2015, the number of cases of malaria had been decreasing steadily around the world. However, the progress in reducing malaria had stalled because of various factors. The World Health Organization (WHO) and partners launched a new country-led response on November 19. The WHO's 2018 report on malaria shows that for the second consecutive year, the numbers of people affected by malaria has not increased or decreased significantly. In 2017, there was 219 million cases of malaria. In 2016, there was 217 million cases of malaria. In 2015, there were 214 million cases of malaria. The country-focused and -led plan will ensure comprehensive action against malaria by scaling up prevention and treatment, and increasing investment to protect vulnerable people from malaria.

[Read more at DownToEarth.](#)

## INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON FAMILY PLANNING (ICFP) 2018 RECAP

Thanks to \$350 million in funding to global family planning services from the governments of Canada and the United Kingdom as well as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, women in developing countries may get improved access to reproductive health and family planning services. There were almost 4000 delegates at the 5th International Conference on Family Planning (ICFP) in Kigali, Rwanda from November 12th to November 15th of 2018. The delegates shared best practices and discussed future steps to achieve global family planning goals, so important to the world of 2018. To watch a recap of the conference, please visit [YouTube](#).

[Read more at The New Times.](#)



Credit: Carol Natukunda



Credit:

## SCAN OF MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGIES IN CANADA

The National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy (NCCHPP) has updated its Scan of Mental Health Strategies that aim to demonstrate the progress in the field of population mental health across Canada. It provides an overview of mental health and wellness and related strategies through comparative tables and summaries, with a particular emphasis on work related to the promotion of mental health and the prevention of mental illnesses.

The scan is presented in the form of three tables:

1. Provincial and territorial strategies in mental health;
2. Strategies related to suicide prevention;
3. Indigenous-specific mental health and/or wellness strategies.

Click [here](#) to consult the scan of mental health strategies in Canada.



## TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE REQUIRES HEALING THE DIVIDE

The opinion on Canadian climate change opinion is dividing with research demonstrating a divide that is widening. The greatest predictor of people's outlook is political affiliation. This means people's climate change perceptions are being greatly influenced by divisive political agendas instead of science and concern for our collective welfare. Over the past year, the Alberta Narratives Project gathered input from a broad range of Albertans to better understand how they feel about public discourse on global warming. Participants said they want less blame and a more open, balanced and respectful conversation. To tackle climate change, we must heal the divide and act — as individuals, families, neighbours, communities and societies. We must call out those who stall or prevent solutions to serve their own self-interest and political agendas.

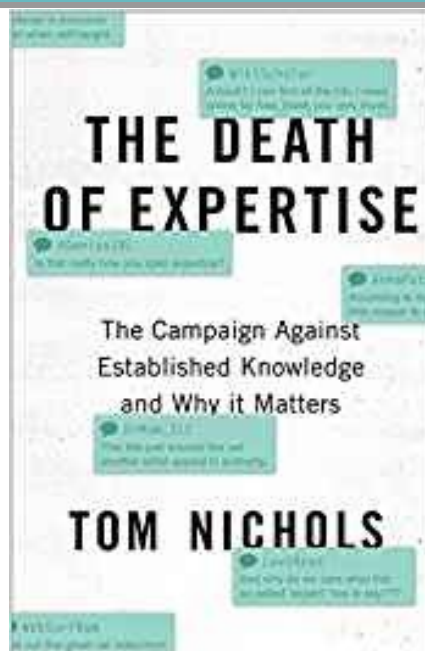
[Read more at David Suzuki Foundation.](#)

Credit: Joshua Rawson-Harris via Unsplash

## SPOTLIGHT ON POLICY: THE DEATH OF EXPERTISE: THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST ESTABLISHED KNOWLEDGE AND WHY IT MATTERS BY TOM NICHOLS

While rise of the internet and other technology has had been able to contribute to equalizing access to knowledge, it has also reduce on the degree of knowledge is needed to be considered an "expert." A cult of anti-expertise sentiment has coincided with anti-intellectualism, which led to massively viral yet poorly informed debates. This surge in intellectual egalitarianism has altered the landscape of debates - all voices are equal, and "fact" is a subjective term. The product of these interrelated trends, Nichols argues, is a pervasive distrust of expertise among the public coinciding with an unfounded belief among non-experts that the opinions of non-experts should have equal standing with the opinions of the experts.

[Read more at Amazon.ca.](#)



Credit: Tom Nichols

## SPOTLIGHT ON INDIGENOUS WELLNESS: YOU CAN'T UNDERSTAND INDIGENOUS HEALTH WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING INDIGENOUS HISTORY

The Ojibway (Rainy River First Nation) researcher has a PhD in neuroscience psychology. Since 2014, she has been teaching at Dalhousie University's department of psychiatry and its nursing school since 2014. She has led many research projects exploring factors related to the well-being and mental health of Indigenous adults and youth. Most of her research examine how residential school trauma is transmitted across generations. In addition to the the immediate survivors, the impacts of residential schools are felt by their children, grandchildren and beyond. Unfortunately, there are non-Indigenous people suggesting the long-term effects of residential schools are "myths" that need debunking. Fortunately, Bombay's body of work over the past decade has successfully influenced policy related to Indigenous health.

[Read more at The Star.](#)



Credit: Yvette D'Entremont



**Carbon Brief:** On the topic of the recent IPCC report on 1.5C, which is in response to the aspirational Paris Agreement goal, do you personally feel that 1.5C is still possible? Globally, could we limit temperatures to that? If so, how? If not, what are the issues with that?

**KM:** I mean never say never, but my sense is absolutely not. I think it's very, very unlikely that we are going to limit warming to 1.5C. But I feel like 1.5C is an arbitrary target, as is 2C, as is 3C, as is 4C. Obviously, the damages increase with levels of warming, but I did not make this up and I wish that I did, but as my boss Gavin [Schmidt] says, it doesn't make sense to argue where you're going to park if you're still driving in the wrong direction. So my sense is that 1.5C is fairly unlikely, barring some sort of miracle, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't try to limit warming as much as possible.

**Dr Kate Marvel** is an Associate Research Scientist at Columbia University and the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies (GISS) in New York. She received a PhD in theoretical physics from the University of Cambridge in 2008 and has worked at the Carnegie Institution, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory and Stanford University. Her research focuses on climate modeling and clouds. She writes the Hot Planet column for Scientific American and in 2017 gave a TED Talk on clouds and climate change.

Read more at Carbon Brief.

Credit: Bret Hartman / TED

## EVENTS TABLE

DATES	CONFERENCE	LOCATION	REGISTER
Mar. 8th-10th	10th annual CUGH Conference - Translation and Implementation for impact in Global Health	Chicago USA	<a href="#">Panel and Abstract proposal deadline - August 25, 2018</a>
Mar. 20th-22nd	2019 Climate Leadership Conference and Awards	Baltimore USA	
Apr. 30 <sup>th</sup> – May 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Public Health 2019 (CPHA)	Ottawa Canada	



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## SPOTLIGHT ON MEDIA

### VIDEO ON CLIMATE CHANGE FROM INDIA PRESENTS AN INDIAN PERSPECTIVE



Credit: TheDigitalArtist

Vijaya Sawan shares his perspective on how global warming effects on us in the following six-minute video on [Facebook](#).

The Global Climate Risk Index 2019 released at the Katowice summit in Poland. The Global Climate Risk Index 2019 assesses the degree to which climate change has impacted countries and regions across the world, which found that countries in South Asia are among the most vulnerable globally.

[Read more at India Climate Dialogue.](#)



Credit: Biomimicry Institute

This year's Bioneers Conference also served as the culmination of the third-annual Biomimicry Global Design Challenge. There is a \$100,00 prize associated with the Biomimicry Global Design Challenge. The Biomimicry Institute in partnership with the Ray C. Anderson Foundation sponsors the prize. There are teams of scientists, designers, and social entrepreneurs from all over the globe who develop innovative solutions to address the theme, Climate Change: Reversal, Adaptation, and Mitigation. There were hundreds of entries. The entries address a wide range of issues from reforestation, carbon capture, food systems, heating, to cooling. During the past year, six finalist teams incubated their ideas with support from the Biomimicry Institute. The finalists were ExtrACTION, Cooltiva, Refish, Rootlink, Biothermostart, and Nucleario.

[Read more at The Sierra Club.](#)

## MEET THE MOMS REDUCING PLASTIC POLLUTION AND CHANGING LIVES IN CAMBODIA



Credit: Rehash Trash

Rehash Trash is a local, female-led Cambodian initiative. Rehash Trash is an initiative of Green Gecko, a Cambodian social enterprise. Over the past decade, the social enterprise worked with 100+ former street children and their 32 families. Green Gecko believes that the long term success of each child is strongly reliant on having long term solutions for their families. Rehash trash aims to provide steady income in a safe environment for mothers of the children involved with Green Gecko. A number of the women had never gained or has access to formal education or training, or experienced stable work. There are some women who suffer from disabilities, while other women have experienced addiction, abuse and poverty. Therefore, an empowering work program needed to be inclusive, easy and cost-effective, with minimal or no raw materials. Recognizing the (unfortunate) abundance of plastic in the community, Rehash Trash began as a daily workshop that transform discarded plastic into beautiful products.

[Read more at Cause Artist.](#)

## SENTINELESE TRIBE THOUGHT TO HAVE KILLED AMERICAN IS WORLD'S 'MOST ISOLATED'



Credit: John Allen Chau/Instagram

American John Allen Chau may have been killed on remote North Sentinel Island in the Bay of Bengal. The Sentinelese are protected by Indian law to preserve their way of life and protect them from modern illnesses to which they have no immunity. There are laws that ban outsiders from going within five nautical miles of the island because the tribe, which has lived on the island for tens of thousands of years, has a history of forcefully drive away strangers. In recent years, their numbers have declined, but the specific count is unknown because the Sentinelese can only be observed from a distance due to the dangers in approaching the tribe. According to India's 2011 census, only 15 Sentinelese were estimated to remain on the island. Norwegian geneticist Erika Hagelberg describe the tribe as "arguably the most enigmatic people on our planet".

[Read more at CNN.](#)



## THE PERFECTLY RECTANGULAR ICEBERG NASA FOUND IS MORE NORMAL THAN YOU THINK



Credit: NASA Icebridge/@NASA\_ICE

Although precise right angles are challenging to find, there are approximate right angles everywhere. While salt crystals are cubic, a number of trees form approximate right angles with the ground. Recently, NASA found an Antarctic iceberg that's very rectangular—or potentially square. The iceberg is afloat in the Weddell Sea, just off the Larsen C ice shelf on the Antarctic peninsula. It probably broke off from Larsen C recently although its edges are crisp and pointy – it does not seem like it has been eroded by the waves and water just yet. Larsen C is one of the largest ice shelves on Antarctica. Although the rectangular iceberg shape may seem shocking, scientists who are familiar with icebergs are not at all surprised with its sharp edges given sheet-cake shaped icebergs are quite common.

[Read more at Quartz.](#)

## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN UNIVERSITIES BECOME 'PARTY STRONGHOLDS'



Credit: Sarah Mazzetti

As China's economic woes threaten to undermine President Xi Jinping's authority, the government has intensified its political control on campuses. In Mr. Xi's words, universities should become "party strongholds." Over the past decade, many Western educators and researchers are attracted to going to China. Beijing has invested in its elite educational institutions as well as its Chinese researchers financially. These spending by Beijing has incited many Western private universities to set up ventures there. However, there's an increasingly elaborate surveillance network and a repressive political environment. Many new classrooms are equipped with closed-circuit cameras through which authorities monitor students and professors to eliminate Western values, or comments that are critical of the Chinese government. If someone was found violating the "ethical" guidelines, they could be demoted or dismissed. While higher education is important to strengthen China's global status, and a many university graduates will contribute to China's continued economic boom, intensified ideological controls on academia will prevent creativity and critical thinking.

[Read more at New York Times.](#)



Credit: David Zakus

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