



**No. 156 April 18, 2013**

**Local Environmental Observer (LEO) reports sick seal.** April 12, 2013. A hunter in the Yukon Kuskokwim village of Eek harvested a spotted seal this week that was suffering from an unknown illness. Click [here](#) to see the LEO Network's monthly map or to visit our [map archives](#).

**Spring time delayed around circumpolar north.** From Alaska to Finland, lasting cold is delaying spring and resulting in some late season snow storms. The Finns are experiencing severe flooding and in Canada farmers are concerned about the delay to the planting season. Click [here](#) to see updates on our April Circumpolar Climate Events Map, or visit our [map archive](#).

**What is killing California sea lions?** April 10, 2013. So far more than 1,100 emancipated, underweight marine mammals have come ashore, over ten times the normal rate for this time of year. NOAA has declared an "unusual mortality event" and is working on trying to identify a cause. At this early stage, scientists are focusing on food shortages and disease. [Christian Science Monitor](#)

**New diseases and toxins harming marine life** April 12, 2013. The dead sea otters arrived at Melissa Miller's lab with bright-yellow eyes and gums, their livers destroyed. The otters had been poisoned by a "nasty toxin" called microcystin, which is produced by cyanobacteria, or blue-green algae. Scientists are just now beginning to understand how these and other toxins in the water are spurring the resurgence of some diseases and the creation of others, largely by weakening animals' immune systems. [National Geographic](#)

**Road dust can pose serious health risks** April 16, 2013. The removal of the grit and sand that has been used to provide traction on icy roads and pavements throughout the winter is in progress, or soon to commence in many of Finland's cities. It has been delayed by nearly two weeks throughout the country thanks to a long period of sub-zero temperatures. Airborne dust is an irritant to most people, but for some it can be a severe health hazard, even resulting in hospitalization. [Yle](#)

**Video Of The Week – NASA video captures unusual ice breakup** April 18, 2013. NASA's website shows dramatic satellite pictures of the sea ice breaking. People who live in the area and who watch the Arctic are discussing what may have caused this unusual breakup. Meteorologists suspect that because of the record melting of sea ice in 2012, it was easier for wind storms to blow the newly formed ice apart. [CBC](#)

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*Regards – Mike*

Michael Brubaker  
[Center for Climate and Health](#)  
Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium

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