

Climate and Health E-News

Raising Awareness about Climate Change and Public Health in the Circumpolar North

No. 160, May 16, 2013

Map: Local Environmental Observer (LEO) Network An unusual orange bloom on Annette Island, spring salmon catch in St. Marys, a big canid visits Anchorage, and a snowy arrival for waterfowl. [ANTHC](#) You can also visit our [archives](#) or follow LEO on [Facebook](#)

Map: Circumpolar Climate Events a late break-up and a remarkable landslide in Alaska, fire season, floods and ice storms in Canada, and a heat wave in Russia. [ANTHC](#) You can also visit our [map archive](#).

Climate change brings disease threat for polar bears May 15, 2013. Diana Weber with the American Museum of Natural History in New York led a team that sequenced DNA from 98 polar bears in Canada. They looked specifically for genes coding the major histocompatibility complex, a crucial component of the immune system. Polar bears may be particularly vulnerable to new pathogens moving northwards. [New Scientist](#)

Arctic biodiversity assessment released May 15, 2013. The Arctic Biodiversity Assessment has involved over 250 scientists including some of the world's leading experts. It was presented to the Foreign Ministers of the Arctic Council countries on May 15 by the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) working group. The [report](#) encourages [immediate actions to help sustain vast, relatively undisturbed ecosystems of tundra, mountains, fresh water and seas and the valuable services they provide](#). [Barents Observer](#)

Deadly cat feces killing thousands of marine mammals – April 30, 2013 Pathogens from people, cats and other land animals are entering the oceans and sea mammals. Such is the findings of a recent article published in [Scientific America](#). A parasite from opossums is killing California sea otters and a parasite from cats is killing dolphins. These "pollutagens" and related events seem to be on the rise but by thoroughly cleansing wastewater and expanding wetlands that buffer land from sea we could lessen the pollutagen threat. [MSN News](#)

Decline in snow cover spells trouble for many plants, animals May 7, 2013 For plants and animals forced to tough out harsh winter weather, the coverlet of snow that blankets the north country is a refuge, a stable beneath-the-snow habitat that gives essential respite from biting winds and subzero temperatures. In a report published May 2 in the journal *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment*, a team of scientists from the University of Wisconsin-Madison describes the gradual decay of the Northern Hemisphere's "subnivium," the term scientists use to describe the seasonal microenvironment beneath the snow, a habitat where life from microbes to bears take full advantage of warmer temperatures, near constant humidity and the absence of wind. [ScienceDaily](#)

Video of the Week – A wind-blown wall of ice May 13, 2013. Strong winds are fraying nerves in the Manitoba community of Ochre Beach, where a windstorm recently crashed a wall of ice into shoreline cottages. Thirteen cottages were destroyed and 27 others were heavily damaged, but no one was hurt, as the wind last week peaked at 90 km/h. This event and other from the across the circumpolar north are posted on this month's Circumpolar Climate Events [Map](#). [ABC World News](#).

Climate and Health E-News is received around the circumpolar north by people who are interested in climate change and public health. For back issues click [here](#). To subscribe or unsubscribe, click [here](#).

Regards – Mike

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Safe, Healthy, Sustainable Communities