

Local Environmental Observer (LEO) Network – Please see our new [LEO Network – Fall 2014](#) map for a new post about a sleeper shark caught in Shishmaref and a skin illness in trout from Quinhagak. Visit our map [archive](#) and follow us on [Facebook](#).

Climate Events in the Circumpolar North - View our [Fall 2014 Map](#) for news reports about Arctic fox and sea bird population collapse in Iceland, and a storm related train derailment on Sakhalin Island, Russia. See our map archive [here](#).

Sea star mystery in Alaska October 24, 2014. *Anne Brice* - Patty Dick teaches 6th grade biology at Blatchley Middle School. She often takes her students on field trips to learn about marine animals, and they usually find dozens of sea stars. But one morning last month, Dick noticed something was wrong with the sea stars. "I just looked over and I just stopped. There were these big, huge, white spots all over them and they were just wasting away. My heart just sank." [Alaska Public Media](#)

Researchers uncover novel viruses in long-frozen caribou feces October 27, 2014. *Geoff Brumfiel* - Deep ice samples from mountainous regions preserve relics from the past, including shoes, arrowheads and -- of great interest to biologists -- viruses. Researcher Eric Delwart discovered two novel viruses in 700-year-old caribou feces from northern Canada. The viruses don't appear to be dangerous to humans, but the discovery reinforces the viability of viruses in cold conditions and suggests warming of frozen regions could unleash long-frozen pathogens. [NPR](#)

Alaska's uncertain food future August 18, 2014. *Elizabeth Grossman* – St. Lawrence Island relies on the annual bowhead whale hunt and the walrus hunt that follows – along with fishing – for the mainstay of their food supply. But last year, unusual weather patterns brought powerful winds that pushed offshore ice into huge pressure ridges that reached all the way to the sea floor along the coast, blocking access to the water. By the time the ice receded enough for boats to launch, most of the walrus had moved on, and only about one-third of the typical number were captured. [High Country News](#)

Kenai Moose and the Funny River Fire November 2014. *Riley Woodford* - The Funny River Fire - Alaska's biggest fire of the year - burned a huge swath of the Kenai Peninsula in the spring of 2014. Fish and Game is investigating how the fire may benefit moose in the area. The flammable spruce combined with three other factors: low humidity (20 percent), a dry wind from the north, and an abundance of dry grass. In the wake of the Kenai Peninsula's spruce bark beetle epidemic in the mid-1990s, there are a lot of dead spruce trees and *Calamagrostis* grass, a tall, reedy grass that can burn well under the right conditions. [Alaska Fish and Wildlife News](#)

Video of the week – Iceland Puffins January 22, 2010. This week [Iceland Review](#) reported on the collapse of the sea bird population in Western Iceland, which is linked to declines in forage fish. This 2014 short National Geographic film shows some of the efforts by Iceland's children to help puffin chicks to survive. [YouTube](#)

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

Michael Brubaker, Director
[Center for Climate and Health](#)
Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
907-729-2464

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