

Climate and Health E-News

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

No 94, December 16, 2011

Circumpolar Climate Events Map - documenting climate incidents and events around the circumpolar north. (If you have problems viewing, try using Firefox or Google Chrome browsers.)

Huge methane release discovered in Arctic Ocean (December 15, 2011) Dramatic and unprecedented plumes of methane, a greenhouse gas 20 times more potent than carbon dioxide, have been seen bubbling to the surface of the Arctic Ocean, according to scientists undertaking an extensive survey of the region. The scale and volume of the methane release has astonished [Dr. Igor Semiletov](#), the head of the Russian research team who has been surveying the seabed of the East Siberian Arctic Shelf off northern Russia for nearly 20 years. [The Independent](#)

More shrubbery in a warming world (December 8, 2011) Computer models predict the northward expansion of vegetation due to warmer temperatures. Now scientists have used satellite data from NASA-built Landsat missions to confirm that more than 20 years of warming temperatures in northern Quebec, Canada, have resulted in an increase in the amount and extent of shrubs and grasses. [ScienceDaily](#)

Polar bears may endanger humans as climate changes (December 15, 2011) In the Canadian Arctic, polar bears are threatening human life and property. "They're killing 30, 40, 50 problem bears each year," says Ian Stirling, a scientist with the Canadian Wildlife Service. Scientists are now suggesting that polar bears are turning on their own young to satiate their hunger as climate change hampers their feeding patterns. "We are seeing a great deal more cannibalism and infanticide in the last ten years than we have seen in the last 25 or 30 years all put together." [CBCNews](#)

Tularemia in Alaska, 1938-2010 (November 18, 2011) Tularemia is a infectious disease that can be transmitted from animals to people. The causative agent, *Francisella tularensis*, is ubiquitous in the Northern hemisphere, including Alaska, where it was first isolated from a rabbit tick in 1938. Since then, *F. tularensis* has been isolated from wildlife and humans throughout the state. A new study by UAF and Northern Arizona University reviews the history of Tularemia in Alaska and recommends, renewed blood testing in both wildlife and humans, "to assess possible changes in Francisella prevalence in a rapidly changing Arctic." [Acta Veterinaria Scandinavica](#)

Videos of the Week: Northern Lights in Finland (September 22, 2011) This 1:56 second clip by *VisitFinland* provides amazing video of the Northern Lights (Aurora Borealis) shot in the Finnish Lapland in the winter of 2011. Enjoy! [Youtube](#)

Climate and Health E-News is received around the circumpolar north by people who are interested in climate change impacts and public health. For back issues or to join the mailing list, visit our [website](#). Click [here](#) if you would like to subscribe or unsubscribe.

Regards - Mike

Michael Brubaker
Center for Climate and Health
Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
Tel. 907-729-2464