

# Concerned Scientists' Weekly News Bulletin

## [October 4, 2021]



*Our weekly bulletin collects and digests news of the past week.  
Contributions welcome.*

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### **NEWS ITEMS AND ARTICLES**

*Live Science: [Scientists officially list 23 species as extinct, including the largest woodpecker in the US](#)*

*The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has removed 23 species from those protected under the Endangered Species Act because they have not been seen in the wild for decades, meaning they are most likely extinct. The delisted species include the ivory-billed woodpecker, formerly the largest woodpecker in the U.S., as well as 10 other birds; eight freshwater mussel species; two freshwater fish species; a fruit bat species; and a plant species.*

*The Guardian: [Signs of encouragement as US sees drop in Covid cases and hospitalizations](#)*

*Experts said they do not expect another surge as big as previous ones during the pandemic, they emphasized the virus remains a significant threat due to the large number of people who have not been vaccinated and the risk of a new variant, possibly even emerging from the unvaccinated population.*

*Nature: [Climate change to loom large in talks to form new German government](#)*

*Climate change was a key issue in this election, and the new government will need to lay out a plan to achieve the country's climate goals—a 65% reduction in greenhouse-gas emissions relative to 1990 levels by 2030 and becoming carbon neutral by 2045.*

*Chemistry World: [End of an era as Merkel walks away leaving German science in good shape](#)*

*Funding for science grew steadily under the chancellorship of Angela Merkel, a trained physical chemist. The budget of the research ministry was €8.5 billion (£7.3 billion) in 2005 when Merkel became chancellor. By 2021, it had grown to €20.8 billion. The Federal Statistical Office estimates total R&D spending was €109.5 billion in 2019, with about two-thirds coming from industry. This is 3.2% of its GDP, up from 2.5% in 2007,*

and the government is still aiming for 3.5%. It puts Germany above than the US (3.1%) and neck and neck with Japan.

## **REGIONAL NEWS**

WFYI Indianapolis: [Diabetes advocates say Eli Lilly's generic insulin price reduction is not enough](#)

*Eli Lilly recently decreased the price of their Insulin Lispro injection from \$137 to \$80 per vial. However, many insurance companies do not cover this form of the drug. The T1International diabetes advocacy group argues that the cost of insulin is still “unaffordable and inappropriate” for many people.*

US Department of Interior: [Department of the Interior announces host for Midwest Climate Adaptation Science Center](#)

*The Midwest Climate Adaptation Science Center is the final in a series of 9 centers across the US aimed at providing science to help managers of the country's fish and wildlife resources adapt to climate change. The Midwest CASC consortium will be hosted at the University of Minnesota's Institute on the Environment and will include the University of Wisconsin, the College of the Menominee Nation, the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, Michigan State University, Indiana University, the University of Illinois, and the Nature Conservancy.*

Inside Indiana Business: [Indiana Department of Environmental Management presents environmental awards](#)

*The Governor's Awards for Environmental Excellence recognize organizations for their efforts in innovation, waste reduction, and improvements to Indiana's environment. This year's recipients include DePauw University, the Environmental Resilience Institute at IU Bloomington, Toyota Material Handling Inc., Fort Wayne City Utilities, and the Indiana Soybean Alliance, among others.*

WBEZ Chicago: [After another chemical spill, environmentalists urge action to protect Indiana Dunes](#)

*Iron-contaminated wastewater from the U.S. Steel Midwest leaked into the Lake Michigan tributary on Sunday, closing beaches at the national park and stalling operations at the plant. Although the spill poses no public health risk, Portage Mayor Sue Lynch said the entire episode is troubling, especially after the plant's costly violations of the Clean Water Act in 2019.*

Indiana Public Media: [Midwest states to collaborate on electric vehicle charging network](#)

*Gov. Eric Holcomb and governors in four other states signed an agreement on Thursday to set up an electric vehicle charging network across the Midwest. Among other things, the partnership hopes to “futureproof” interstate commerce, grow jobs related to the electric vehicle industry, and improve public health.*

## **OPINION AND ANALYSIS**

NRDC: [The biodiversity crisis is HERE: 5 ways Biden can stop it](#)

*Extinctions are speeding up, with the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) predicting that one million species face*

*extinction, many within decades. Unless we change course—and quickly—extinction will be an everyday occurrence, not something children reference in the hushed, incredulous tone they use when referencing Voldemort.*

*Project Syndicate:* [Award the Nobel Peace Prize to nature’s protectors](#)

*The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) has been nominated for the 2021 Nobel Peace Prize by the former President of Colombia, the Environment Ministers of Germany, Spain, Luxembourg, U.K., and the Chair of the EU Parliamentary Committee on the Environment. IPBES has shone a spotlight on threats to pollinators and food security, documented trends in land degradation, and assessed the biodiversity status of every region in the world, thereby helping to reduce the risk of species extinctions. (Indiana University’s Eduardo Brondizio co-led/edited the IPBES’ Global Assessment of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.)*

*The MIT Press Reader:* [Why science can’t settle political disputes](#)

*Discerning exactly where science ends and politics begins is no simple matter. Although it is clear to most people that certain kinds of politics are problematic (e.g., sowing doubt in bad faith), other political influences go unquestioned (e.g., funding biases toward weapons and new consumer gadgets). The framing of science as pure until it is externally politicized therefore prevents a broader debate of the question “What kinds of political influences on science are appropriate and when?”*

*Debunking Denial:* [Debunked? A review of Steven Koonin’s book Unsettled?](#)

*According to Indiana University’s Steve Vigdor and Tim Londergan, Steven Koonin’s Unsettled? What Climate Science Tells Us, What It Doesn’t, and Why It Matters (2021) fails to consider striking correlations among measured quantities and thus places undue emphasis on uncertain global climate models in raising questions about human contributions to global warming, the impacts of climate change, and the wisdom of government action to mitigate global warming. Misrepresenting results and promoting half-truths, he calls actions intended to alter human impacts on climate “a practical impossibility.”*

*The Washington Post:* [The booster shot debate shows that public health is not only about science. It’s about values.](#)

*The Biden administration would do well to clarify that public health is about much more than getting the science right. Sound health policy should be informed by science but must also consider the will of the people. Public health hinges on public trust, and its effectiveness depends on winning over hearts and minds.*

*The Scientist:* [Policymakers’ harmful anti-China obsession](#)

*We shouldn’t condemn Asian hate crimes and tweet about #StopAsianHate in one breath and then use anti-China xenophobia to support increased science funding in the next. Scapegoating China is politically expedient; it allows policymakers on both sides of the spectrum cover to come to a bipartisan consensus. However, scientists, and particularly those who work at the intersection of science and public policy, must ask themselves: What is the cost?*

**TAKE ACTION AND RESOURCES FOR ACTIVISTS**

Purdue University: [Virtual forum on IN Wetlands II: Where are we now?](#)

*Register for the Indiana Wetlands Forum held virtually on Tuesday, Oct. 5 from 3-5 p.m. Researchers, policy experts and environmental management professionals will discuss changes in legal protections for Indiana's wetlands and how those changes could alter ecosystem services.*

*The CSIU Weekly News Bulletin is now available on the web. To view this page online go to <https://csiub.org/weekly-news-bulletins>. To view archives of past bulletins, see <https://csiub.org/bulletin-archives>.*

*Our CSIU news bulletin is intended to provide a brief update on recent news, editorials, as well as action items related to science integrity and science policy. Note that editorial pieces and action items are assembled from a variety of sources and organizations; they do not necessarily reflect the opinions or policy priorities of Concerned Scientists @ IU. This week's news bulletin was compiled by CSIU member Christoph Irmscher of IU's Department of English and by ASIU member and biology sophomore Rose Schnabel, an aspiring science writer. If you'd like to volunteer—or if you have additional links you'd like to share for future bulletins, send them to Christoph at [cirmsche@indiana.edu](mailto:cirmsche@indiana.edu).*

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