

Concerned Scientists' Weekly News Bulletin [October 25, 2021]



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

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NEWS ITEMS AND ARTICLES

CBC: [Deforestation of Amazon rainforest helps push greenhouse gases to record high](#)
Greenhouse gas concentrations hit a new record high last year and increased at a faster rate than the annual average for the last decade despite a temporary reduction during pandemic-related lockdowns. In its annual report on heat-trapping gases in the atmosphere, the United Nations weather agency also pointed to signs of a worrying new development: Parts of the Amazon rainforest have gone from being a carbon “sink” that sucks carbon dioxide from the air to a source of CO₂ due to deforestation and reduced humidity in the region.

Center for Biological Diversity: [Biden administration won't appeal decision shutting down Western Arctic oil drilling project](#)
The Biden administration cemented a climate victory today by not appealing a federal district court decision halting ConocoPhillips' Willow Master Development Plan. Willow would have been the largest oil-and-gas drilling project in the Alaskan Arctic, located in a vast and biodiverse landscape.

AIP: [White House seeks ideas for advancing equity in science](#)
Under the Biden administration, the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) has elevated issues of diversity and equity to a top priority. The question raised in the challenge, “how can we guarantee all Americans can fully participate in, and contribute to, science and technology?” was included in the letter President Biden sent to OSTP Director Eric Lander in January, and it is a central concern within the portfolio of OSTP Deputy Director for Science and Society Alondra Nelson.

Indiana Environmental Reporter: [Environmental Protection Agency releases “roadmap” for PFAS regulations during Biden administration](#)

The Biden administration released a roadmap for setting the national strategy for addressing a family of man-made “forever chemicals” known as PFAS. Some environmental groups called the EPA’s plan “a good start” that could result in major changes over time while others note that it is “too timid.”

Scientific American: [Nominees for a science award were all white men—nobody won](#)

Tasked with reviewing candidates for the American Geophysical Union’s fellows program, the most prestigious award given by the world’s largest earth and space science society, the nation’s top ice scientists discovered that all nominees were white men and declined to recommend anyone, a decision that has triggered a spirited dialogue among AGU members and other earth scientists about the persistent lack of diversity in science awards—and how to address it.

The Guardian: [The heat is on: from the Arctic to Africa, wildlife is being hit hard by climate chaos](#)

As well as undergoing physical changes, animals across the world are changing their behavior—murrelets, for example, are spending more time getting into the water to cool off, leaving their eggs exposed to gulls and Arctic foxes. For parents, it’s a trade-off between keeping cool enough to avoid heat stress and protecting their young.

REGIONAL NEWS

Indiana Public Media: [Southern Indiana residents concerned about Mid-States project](#)

Project managers are considering 5 route proposals that would connect Northern Kentucky with Indianapolis. Opponents caution that the cave system and limestone of Southern Indiana would make the projects dangerous and destructive, not to mention that “parts of Hoosier National (forest) would never ever be the same.”

The Journal Gazette: [Indiana to begin offering Moderna, J&J booster shots](#)

The Indiana Department of Health announced Friday that it will begin offering booster doses of Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccine to eligible Hoosiers following federal authorization of the additional dose. Booster doses of the Pfizer vaccine have been available since late September.

Energy News Network: [Indiana energy task force turns its attention to small nuclear reactors](#)

In a recent meeting, the 21st Century Energy Task Force discussed small modular reactors as a replacement for fossil fuel power plants. Critics say the technology is a risky distraction from existing solutions such as wind, solar and demand response, but some experts and legislators are attracted to the reactors because coal plant workers could be retained for similar positions at nuclear plants.

OPINION AND ANALYSIS

Common Dreams: [Kunming Declaration sets path toward a more just global biodiversity framework](#)

Human rights defenders have urged for a rights-based approach to conservation that would protect and honor the stewardship of biodiversity routinely practiced by the Indigenous and other "ecosystem peoples" in the global South and around the world.

Climate Home News: [A US coal-state senator makes losers of us all](#)

With the infrastructure and reconciliation bills likely to be radically scaled down or still not passed when Cop26 starts next Sunday, Joe Biden has a real credibility problem heading to Glasgow. Every year of delay and incrementalism puts the goals of the Paris Agreement further out of reach. And it gives Biden little moral authority—or practical capacity— to persuade other countries to put their best foot forward.

CarbonBrief: [How power shortages might “accelerate” China’s climate action](#)

As China’s president Xi Jinping stepped up the nation’s climate commitment last month by pledging that it “will not build new coal-fired power projects abroad,” China was experiencing widespread power shortages. In response, China’s leadership gave a series of instructions in two high-level meetings held on consecutive days last week. The directives—ranging from increasing coal production capacity to revising electricity prices—aim to address the mix of causes that have led to the situation.

Mongabay: [With Bachman’s warbler and others added to the “extinct” list, we must support biodiversity agreements](#)

IU’s own Christoph Irmscher on Bachman’s warbler, a beautiful yellow bird among the 23 species recently determined to be extinct by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Of all the areas of environmental degradation, biodiversity loss cannot be undone. Now is the time to raise our voices in support of global biodiversity agreements.

TAKE ACTION AND RESOURCES FOR ACTIVISTS

Climate Cardinals: [Volunteer to translate climate documents](#)

Climate Cardinals is an international youth-led nonprofit working to make the climate movement more accessible to those who don’t speak English. Volunteers work to translate and source climate information into over 100 languages.

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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.

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