



## Concerned Scientists' Weekly News Bulletin [June 22, 2020]

### NEWS ITEMS AND ARTICLES

CBS News: [Arctic records its hottest temperature ever](#)

*Alarming heat scorched Siberia on Saturday as the small town of Verkhoyansk (67.5°N latitude) reached 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, 32 degrees above the normal high temperature. If verified, this is likely the hottest temperature ever recorded in Siberia and the hottest temperature ever recorded north of the Arctic Circle, which begins at 66.5°N.*

New York Times: [Public health experts reject president's view of fading pandemic](#)

*Public health experts counter the president's claim that the rise in coronavirus cases is due to increased testing. Cases have increased 15% in the last two weeks, with infection rates on the rise in 22 states.*

New York Times: [Wildlife trade spreads coronaviruses as animals get to market](#)

*Studies done in 2013 and 2014 show how many common coronaviruses are passed from animal to animal in large markets. The use of wild animals for dishes in urban settings results in animals being shipped and stored in close proximity, allowing for the rapid spread of viruses.*

Science: [A cheap steroid is the first drug shown to reduce death in COVID-19 patients](#)

*Studies of the common steroid dexamethasone showed a 1/3 reduction in deaths of patients on ventilators who were given a 6mg dose for 10 days. It is the first COVID-19 drug proven to reduce mortality. It did not benefit patients not receiving respiratory support.*

Reuters: [Antibody levels in recovered COVID-19 patients decline quickly](#)

*The research, published in Nature Medicine on June 18, highlights the risks of using COVID-19 'immunity passports' and supports the prolonged use of public health interventions such as social distancing and isolating high-risk groups, researchers said.*

New York Times: [Climate change tied to pregnancy risks, affecting Black mothers most](#)

*A study of 32 million US births showed that pregnant women exposed to air pollution or high temperatures are at greater risk of having underweight, premature, or stillborn babies. Minority communities in the US are more likely to be exposed to pollution sources, and often experience higher temperatures due to the heat island effect. Black women are already 2.4x more likely to have children with low birth weights than white women, and with rising global temperatures, the problem is expected to grow.*

NPR: [NIH halts hydroxychloroquine study; says "unlikely" to help COVID-19 patients](#)

*The National Institutes of Health and the World Health Organization have ended their trials of hydroxychloroquine as a possible treatment for COVID-19 after finding it provided no*

additional benefit compared to a placebo. The FDA has also revoked its emergency authorization for it to be tested as a possible treatment.

Morning Ag Clips: [EPA defends decision to allow continued dicamba use](#)

The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals banned the herbicide dicamba on June 3rd. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency defended its decision to allow farmers to continue to spray a recently banned herbicide through July 31 in a court filing on Tuesday evening. The agency argued that it has the power to regulate existing stocks of herbicides that have been canceled.

Huff Post: [Mississippi set to become the 13th state to criminalize fossil fuel protests](#)

A bill intended to have a chilling effect threatens seven years in prison for protesters and up to \$100,000 in fines for groups supporting them.

The Guardian: [Plan to release genetically modified mosquitoes in Florida gets go-ahead](#)

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services has approved the release of 750 million mosquitoes that contain a protein that will kill female offspring. Many environmentalists and scientists criticized the EPA's approval of the project last month.

Science: [U.S. science groups wary of new Senate bills to curb foreign influences](#)

A group of senators has proposed legislation aimed to put restrictions on how US scientists interact with foreign partners. The legislation is designed to protect US funded research from exploitation by other countries, particularly China. Many academics fear it could severely limit international cooperation and harm US research.

## **REGIONAL NEWS**

WTIU: [State told local health departments how to hide long-term care data](#)

COVID-19 disproportionately affects older populations and people of color. The extent is unclear, in part, due to data inaccuracies. Local health departments in Indiana say they've received directives via email and over the phone from ISDH representatives not to release data.

The Counter: [Dicamba has killed tens of millions of trees across the Midwest and South](#)

Forest health experts said trees are being damaged from Indiana to Kansas, from North Dakota to Arkansas. Cupped up leaves, the most easily recognized symptom, can be seen in towns miles away from agricultural fields, as well as in nature preserves and state parks set aside as refuges for wildlife, experts said.

## **OPINION AND ANALYSIS**

BBC: [Who is really to blame for climate change?](#)

We know that climate change is caused by human activity, but pinning down exactly who is responsible is trickier than it might seem.

Grist.org: [What does pollution have to do with police violence?](#)

What does particulate matter pollution have to do with police violence? An interview with University of California professors Julie Sze, co-author of a paper that looks closely at the police killings of Eric Garner in 2014 and Mario Woods in 2015 and the role that environmental factors played in the way their deaths were understood.

Grist.org: [Does city living spread coronavirus? It's complicated.](#)

The biggest problem for COVID-19 infection isn't density, the general metric of people per square mile, but overcrowding, i.e. how many people are forced into cramped housing with no way to keep 6 feet apart.

*The Guardian:* [Why lockdown silence was golden for science](#)

*Global lockdowns have dramatically decreased anthropogenic noise, allowing research to be conducted on human seismic activity, mental, emotional, and economic effects of urban noise, low-level earthquake activity, and acoustic signaling in marine life. A decrease in air pollution has allowed further examination of the relationship between aerosols and climate.*

*The Guardian:* [Deadly heat is killing Americans: A decade of inaction on climate puts lives at risk](#)

*Heat-related deaths across the US have increased as the number of annual heatwaves in 50 US cities has tripled in the past 60 years. The CDC's climate program has struggled with low funding for many years, with Trump's budget proposals trying to eliminate the program entirely.*

*Debunking Denial:* [Conspiracy Theory "True Believers," Part I: Science Denial Conspiracy Theories](#)

*In contrast to the misleaders, the true believers generally have little understanding of the scientific method or of the motivations of scientists. And this lack of knowledge aids them in erecting defense mechanisms to protect their easily debunked false notions.*

## **TAKE ACTION**

*Nature:* [What Black scientists want from colleagues and their institutions](#)

*Nature spoke to six Black academic researchers about the effects of racism on their careers, their advice to white colleagues and their thoughts on meaningful institutional actions.*

*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 ASIU and IU biology major Emma Hand and CSIU member Christoph Irmischer of IU's Department of English. We're looking for volunteers! 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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