

SEVEN DAYS

The news in brief

POLICY

Gun research

The US Institute of Medicine (IOM) has recommended a broad firearms-research agenda for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, Georgia. The 5 June IOM report poses questions on topics from the value of background checks to the influence of violent media and games on gun-related violence. The CDC requested the report after US President Barack Obama made an order in January for it to resume research on gun violence, which the agency had stopped in 1996 when Congress forbade it from using money to “advocate or promote” gun control. See go.nature.com/rufroe for more.

Brazil emissions

Brazil’s greenhouse-gas emissions fell by nearly 39% between 2005 and 2010, according to an inventory released on 5 June by the country’s government. The sharp drop was entirely due to falling rates of deforestation. However, it was tempered by rising emissions from the agriculture and energy sectors — a concern if Brazil wants to cut emissions further. Overall, the country is on track to meet goals announced at the 2009 United Nations climate summit in Copenhagen. See go.nature.com/xll3ht for more.

Watchdog backs off

The US federal office that punishes breaches in human-research protections said on 5 June that it would not issue sanctions over a controversial university study on how best to treat premature infants with oxygen. In March, the Office for Human Research Protections had said that investigators in the study,

which was overseen by the University of Alabama at Birmingham, did not sufficiently inform parents of the risks to infants in the trial. In its letter last week, the office said that the issues raised were complex enough to require new guidance for future studies.

Grey-wolf revival

Grey wolves (*Canis lupus*), once on the verge of extinction, have recovered sufficiently to be removed from the federal list of threatened and endangered species, the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) proposed on 7 June. That would return management of the animals to state wildlife agencies. The FWS says that wolves are expanding their range and have exceeded

population targets by up to 300%, but environmentalists fear that state hunting initiatives will inhibit that recovery. The FWS proposal would maintain federal protection for the Mexican wolf in the southwest.

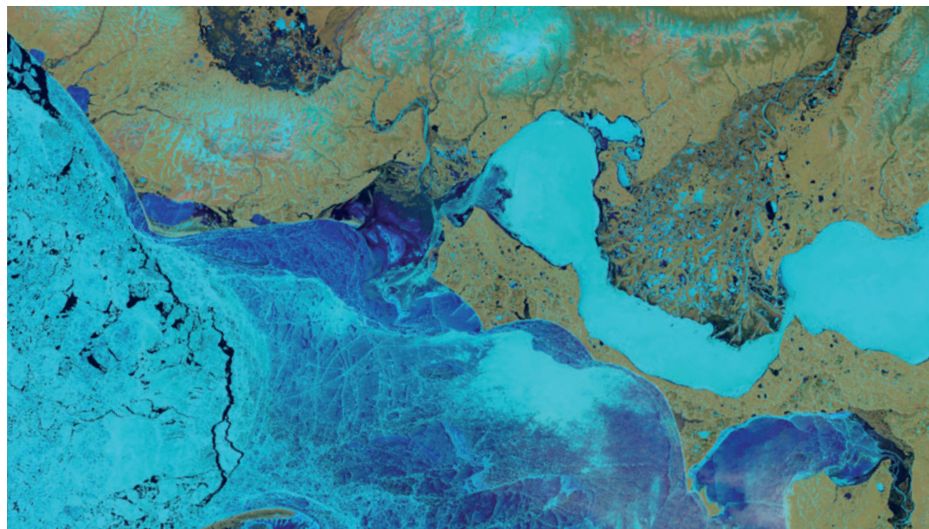
Montreal accord

China agreed on 8 June that it will “work together” with the United States and other countries to use the Montreal Protocol to regulate the potent greenhouse gases known as hydrofluorocarbons. Introduced to replace the ozone-destroying compounds outlawed by the Montreal treaty, these refrigerants are currently managed under the United Nations climate framework because of their greenhouse effects. Many argue

project, which has documented global land-use trends through more than 3.7 million images dating back to 1972. Landsat 8 will collect at least 400 images per day at several visible and near-infrared frequencies, covering the planet every 16 days. The USGS has accommodated 11 million downloads since 2008.

Eye in the sky

The US Geological Survey (USGS) says that data from its latest environmental satellite, Landsat 8, are now publicly available (at go.nature.com/u81wkh; shown, an image over Northwest Arctic Borough in Alaska). The US\$855-million spacecraft extends the world’s longest continuous Earth-observation



USGS

EVENTS

Accelerator shut

Following a radiation leak, no experiments will take place at the Japan Proton Accelerator Research Complex (J-PARC), in Ibaraki prefecture, until early next year, the facility’s director, Yujiro Ikeda, said on 10 June. The leak occurred at the Hadron Experimental Facility on 23 May, when a proton beam damaged a gold target, releasing material that exposed 34 workers to low-dose radiation. A malfunction of the beam extraction unit was blamed, and an

AXEL GRIESCH/MPFS

investigation is under way. All experiments up to the end of July are cancelled. J-PARC was already scheduled to close from August this year until late January 2014 for maintenance.

China in space

China launched its fifth crewed space mission on 11 June. The *Shenzhou 10* space capsule, carrying three astronauts, is scheduled to dock with the country's orbiting *Tiangong 1* space module on 13 June, and aims to return to Earth on 26 June. It will be the last mission to *Tiangong 1*. China plans to launch two more modules before 2016, in the run-up to building a crewed space station by 2020 (see *Nature* 473, 14–15; 2011).

PEOPLE

Max Planck chief

Martin Stratmann (pictured), a chemist at the Max Planck Institute for Iron Research in Düsseldorf, Germany, was elected on 6 June as the next president of the Max Planck Society in Munich, Germany's largest non-university basic-research organization. Stratmann, 59, will take office in June next year, replacing developmental biologist Peter Gruss, who has presided over the Max Planck Society since 2002. The society runs more than 80 research institutes in Germany, with an overall



budget this year of about €2 billion (US\$2.6 billion). See go.nature.com/1jccau for more.

RESEARCH

How to cut carbon

With carbon emissions climbing by 1.4% to 31.6 gigatonnes in 2012, the world is headed for a long-term temperature rise of 3.6–5.3 °C, said the International Energy Agency in a 10 June report. The agency, based in Paris, endorsed four cost-effective policies to help set the world on path to a 2 °C rise. Its major recommendation is the adoption of energy-efficiency measures such as performance standards for lighting, heating and road vehicles. Other policies involve limiting the construction and use of inefficient coal-fired power plants; minimizing methane leaks from the oil and gas industry; and phasing out fossil-fuel subsidies.

BUSINESS

Science networking

A professional networking site for researchers has raised US\$35 million from investors including Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates. ResearchGate, headquartered in Berlin, was founded in 2008 by two virologists and says it now has more than 2.9 million members. It is one of a number of sites (including Academia.edu and Mendeley) that aim to be hubs for scientists to connect and share publications. ResearchGate announced the latest funding on 4 June, but declined to disclose investment raised in two previous funding rounds.

Ups and downs

Pharmaceutical firm AstraZeneca will pay US\$560 million up front for Pearl Therapeutics in Redwood City, California, which is developing an inhaled treatment for lung conditions such as bronchitis and emphysema (collectively known as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease). London-based AstraZeneca announced the purchase (which could cost up to \$1.15 billion if other milestones are met) on 10 June. Six days earlier, it said that it had pulled the plug on a once-promising rheumatoid arthritis drug, fostamatinib, after a series of

COMING UP

17 JUNE

The European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union negotiate the final details of their 2014–20 research-funding programme, Horizon 2020.

17–21 JUNE

The latest research into detecting nuclear explosions is presented at a conference hosted by the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization in Vienna. go.nature.com/xtgtso

late-stage clinical-trial failures. The company returned licensing rights for the drug to biotechnology firm Rigel in South San Francisco, California, from whom it bought the rights for more than US\$100 million in 2010 (see *Nature* <http://doi.org/fcxh6c>; 2010).

Diabetes debate

Advisers to the US Food and Drug Administration say that the agency should ease its restrictions on access to Avandia (rosiglitazone), a diabetes drug linked to increased heart risk. Three years ago, US regulators sharply curtailed access to the drug, which is made by London-based GlaxoSmithKline. European authorities pulled the drug from the market altogether (see *Nature* 467, 505; 2010). But the advisory committee, meeting on 6 June, noted that a re-analysis of a pivotal clinical trial suggested that people taking the drug were not more likely than others to die from heart complications. See go.nature.com/4zlsua for more.

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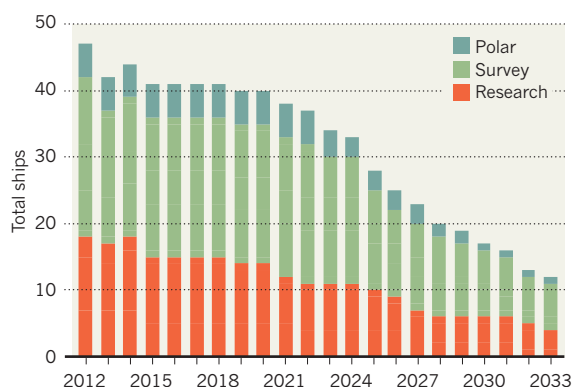
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TREND WATCH

A government report on the status of the US oceanographic fleet says that fuel costs for research ships have increased by 400% since 2003, and that pressure on budgets has led to some US vessels being disposed of or laid up. As vessels are retired, the fleet is set to shrink rapidly unless new ships are built or old ones overhauled (see chart). Even new vessels currently being built will not stem the fleet's decline if they enter service as scheduled. See go.nature.com/fvcs5z for more.

US RESEARCH FLEET NEEDS RESUPPLY

The US oceanographic fleet is on course to roughly halve by 2026 as ships are retired from service.



SOURCE: NATL OCEAN COUNCIL