

Environment News Futures

Cargo Ship Leaks Fuel Near Gibraltar Sparking Environmental Concerns

Euronews with AP • Updated: 02/09/2022—16:12

Residents in Gibraltar fear an environmental catastrophe after heavy fuel oil leaked from a ship stranded off its coast following a collision on Monday.

The Port Authority said a small amount of oil escaped the perimeter of a boom placed to contain any spill. A second barrier is planned to be deployed to prevent further damage.

The oil is being collected by two vessels from Gibraltar Port Authority and Spanish Maritime Rescue. Divers sent to the ship have already sealed two vents in the fuel tanks, believed to be the source of the leak.

The ship has stored 215 tonnes of heavy fuel oil, 250 tonnes of diesel and 27 tonnes of lubricating oil, according to Spanish media reports.

The extraction is set to last around 50 hours. But residents are concerned that this is too slow to prevent further damage.

In Historic Move, UN Declares Healthy Environment A Human Right

28 Jul 2022—Story—Environmental Rights and Governance

The United Nations General Assembly declared today that everyone on the planet has a right to a healthy environment, a move backers say is an important step in countering the alarming decline of the natural world.

In a resolution passed Thursday morning at UN headquarters in New York City, the General Assembly said climate change and environmental degradation were some of the most pressing threats to humanity's future. It called on states to step up efforts to ensure their people have access to a "clean, healthy and sustainable environment."

The resolution is not legally binding on the 193 UN Member States. But advocates are hopeful it will have a trickle-down effect, prompting countries to enshrine the right to a healthy environment in national constitutions and regional treaties, and encouraging states to implement those laws. Supporters say that would give environmental campaigners more ammunition to challenge ecologically destructive policies and projects.

A Half-Century of Loss in Northwest Greenland

02 September 2022—Nasa Earth Observatory

A pair of satellite images acquired almost 50 years apart reveals striking changes to the glaciers and ice caps in northwest Greenland. Few other satellite comparisons span this much time, especially in such vivid lifelike color.

Observations of Earth from space are now common. But prior to the 1970s, no Earth-observing satellites had been launched with the specific intent of monitoring our planet's land areas. That changed with the launch of Landsat 1 in 1972. The Landsat mission continues onward through today, with the launch of Landsat 9 in September 2021.

This image pair spans the Landsat era so far, revealing changes across a peninsula north of Thule Air Base (Pituffik). The Multispectral Scanner System (MSS) on Landsat 1 acquired the first image (left) on September 3, 1973. The second image (right), acquired on August 20, 2022, by the Operational Land Imager (OLI) on Landsat 8, shows the same area 49 years later.

Impact of Megafires on Estuaries: World-First Study

02 September 2022—University of Sydney

Climate change is increasing the extent and severity of wildfires around the world. Megafires like Australia's 2019/20 Black Summer fires represent an emerging threat to estuarine and coastal ecosystems, with the extent and proximity of the wildfire influencing the impact on estuaries.

Sydney researchers have explored the impact of bushfires on estuaries in New South Wales, finding fires can increase the load of fire-derived pollutants with potentially profound environmental effects.

Estuaries (where the river meets the sea) are some of the most valuable habitats on earth. As well as being biologically diverse and productive places, they are where ports are located, and a significant portion of the world's population is concentrated.

Published today in the journal *Environmental Pollution*, the researchers say their findings prompt a call for riverside vegetation to be prioritised for protection in fire management plans, and for bushfires to be considered in catchment management plans. These plans are developed to protect the environment and regulate resources, such as fish and water, from the whole catchment area (from tributaries to estuaries).

Researchers Propose New Framework for Regulating Engineered Crops

01 September 2022—North Carolina State University

A Policy Forum article published today in *Science* calls for a new approach to regulating genetically engineered (GE) crops, arguing that current approaches for triggering safety testing vary dramatically among countries and generally lack scientific merit – particularly as advances in crop breeding have blurred the lines between conventional breeding and genetic engineering.

Devastating Floods in Pakistan

31 August 2022—Nasa Earth Observatory

Since mid-June 2022, Pakistan has been drenched by extreme monsoon rains that have led to the country's worst flooding in a decade.

Record-breaking Glacier Melt in Himalayas Accelerating Pakistan Floods

02 September, 2022 01:44 PM IST—Environment Published

Dissolving snow and ice in the iconic mountain range is contributing to floods in Pakistan, droughts in China and changes on Mount Everest.

Every year, as the weather warms, teams of Indian scientists trek the Himalayan mountains to study the Chhota Shigri glacier in India's northern state of Himachal Pradesh. For the past decade and a half, they've recorded the extent of snow cover, checked the temperature of the air and soil, observed the surface of ice formations and measured the discharge from seasonal snowmelt that feeds the river valleys below.

Wildlife Photographer of the Year: Is This Ape Really Cuddling a Pet Mongoose?

By Ella Hambly—BBC News Climate and Science

A tender moment or something more sinister?

The image appears to show a bonobo cuddling a little mongoose like a treasured pet. But instead, maybe the ape took the mongoose pup for dinner after killing its mother.

But that would be unusual - bonobos mainly eat fruit and only occasionally hunt.

The intriguing behaviour was photographed by Christian Ziegler in Democratic Republic of Congo. (See Snapshot) <https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-62724822><https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-62724822>