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Like 'giant knife,' tornadoes slash eastern Alabama, killing 23



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China accuses Canadian, Huawei to sue as spat escalates

NEW YORK (Reuters) - China's government and its leading smartphone maker Huawei Technologies Ltd on Monday stepped up pressure on U.S. and Canadian governments in a dispute over market access that has ensnared Huawei's CFO, who faces U.S. criminal charges. China on Monday accused a detained Canadian man of stealing trade secrets passed on to him from another detained Canadian, while the telecom gear maker is also preparing a lawsuit against the U.S. government over a law that restricts its market access. They were the latest escalation of an unprecedented crisis for Huawei, the world's largest telecommunications equipment maker and no. 2 manufacturer of smartphones, as Washington calls on governments around the world to stop using its gear, particularly in 5G networks. China accused detained Canadian citizen Michael Kovrig of stealing state secrets which were passed on to him from another detained Canadian, businessman Michael Spavor, in a move likely to increase tension between Ottawa and Beijing.

"We are obviously very concerned with this position that China has taken," Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said about the accusations on Monday. "We've been engaging and standing up for the two Canadians who have been arbitrarily detained by China from the very beginning." Spavor, who worked with North Korea, and former diplomat Kovrig were picked up in December, shortly after Canada arrested Huawei Technologies Co Chief Financial Officer Meng Wanzhou, who faces extradition to the United States.

Lawyers for Meng are suing the Canadian government, its border agency and federal police, alleging their client was detained, searched and interrogated for three hours in violation of her constitutional rights. Canada arrested Meng in Vancouver on Dec. 1 at the request of the United States, which has charged her with bank and wire fraud to violate American sanctions against Iran by doing business through a subsidiary it tried to hide.

In another escalation of the trans-Pacific dispute, Huawei plans to announce a lawsuit against the United States government on Thursday on grounds related to a defense bill, a source with knowledge of the matter told Reuters.

Huawei will challenge an addition to the U.S. National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) signed last year, that controlled U.S. government contracts with Chinese companies and strengthened the role of the panel that reviews foreign investment proposals. Beijing has condemned the NDAA act as targeting China.

Trump last year signed the law that limits Huawei and ZTE Corp's access to U.S. government and military contracts. This is part of an all-out U.S. effort on the two companies to close their access to not only the U.S. market, but also major telecoms markets around the world where next-generation, 5G, networks are being designed and built.

U.S. lawmakers earlier this year introduced bills that would ban the sale of U.S. chips or other components to Chinese telecommunications companies that violate U.S. sanctions or export control law.

U.S. officials have alleged Chinese telecom manufacturers are producing equipment that allows their government to spy on users abroad, including Western researchers working on leading-edge technologies. Beijing and the Chinese companies have repeatedly denied such claims.

Trump is considering declaring a national emergency that would bar U.S. companies from using telecommunications equipment made by Huawei and ZTE, three sources familiar with the situation told Reuters in December.

The Justice Department has also charged Huawei with stealing robotic technology from T-Mobile US Inc.

Trump said in February he may or may not include Huawei and ZTE in the trade deal being negotiated with China. Trump told reporters at the White House that U.S. officials are not talking about dropping charges against Huawei.



A woman walks past a Huawei store in Beijing, China March 2, 2019. Picture taken March 2, 2019. REUTERS/Jason Lee

In major blow to Canada's Trudeau, second minister quits over scandal

OTTAWA (Reuters) - In a serious blow to Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, a second member of his Cabinet resigned on Monday, saying she had lost confidence in how the government had dealt with an escalating political scandal.

The departure of recently appointed Treasury Board President Jane Philpott, who was in overall charge of government spending, deprives Trudeau of another powerful female member of cabinet just months ahead of an election that polls show he could lose.

Philpott expressed unhappiness about the government's response to allegations that officials inappropriately pressured former justice minister Jody Wilson-Raybould last year to help major construction company SNC-Lavalin Group Inc avoid a corruption trial.

"Sadly, I have lost confidence in how the government has dealt with this matter and in how it has responded to the issues raised," Philpott said in a statement. "I have concluded that I must resign as a member of cabinet."

Philpott is a close friend of Wilson-Raybould, who herself resigned on Feb. 12 after she was unexpectedly demoted in January. Wilson-Ray-

bould said last week she was convinced her refusal to help SNC-Lavalin was behind the demotion.

Andrew Scheer, head of the official opposition Conservative Party, repeated calls for Trudeau to quit amid "ethical rot" he said was undermining the rule of law.

"Jane Philpott's resignation from cabinet clearly demonstrates a government in total chaos led by a disgraced prime minister consumed with scandal and focused only on his political survival," he told reporters in Toronto.

Trudeau has accepted the resignation and will address the matter later on Monday, said a spokesman.

The departure of Philpott, who was appointed on Jan. 14, is another setback for a prime minister who came to power in November 2015 promising "sunny ways," more accountability in politics and a greater number of women ministers.

"What should be worrisome for the Trudeau Liberals is that the two cabinet resignations have been on issues of principle and ethics," said Nanos Research pollster Nik Nanos.



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Like 'giant knife,' tornadoes slash eastern Alabama, killing 23

BEAUREGARD, Ala. (Reuters) - Alabama residents and rescue teams on Monday sifted through the splintered remnants of homes torn apart by a string of tornadoes that killed at least 23 people, including three children, in the deadliest burst of twisters to hit the United States since 2013. The tornadoes, spawned by a late-winter "super-cell" thunderstorm, ripped through Lee County on Sunday with cyclonic winds of up to 170 miles (274 km) per hour, at step four of the six-step Enhanced Fujita (EF) scale of tornado strength. Mobile homes were tossed on their sides and dripped open, their contents strewn over a ravaged landscape littered with debris and gnarled, uprooted trees. In some places, shreds of houses hung from the limbs of the few trees left standing. "It looks almost as if someone took a giant knife and just scraped the ground. There are slabs where homes formerly stood, debris everywhere, trees are snapped," Lee County Sheriff Jay Jones told a morning news conference.

At least three twisters struck the area, in eastern Alabama near the Georgia border, within a few hours on Sunday afternoon.

The worst of the damage and all of the known fatalities occurred in and around the tiny community of Bearegard, about 10 miles (16 km) southeast of Auburn, said Chris Darden, chief meteorologist for the National Weather Service office in Birmingham.

Besides one EF-4 tornado, storm trackers have confirmed two smaller twisters classified as EF-1, each of which packed winds of up to 110 mph (177 km per hour), according to Darden. "We'll be examining more areas tomorrow," he said. In addition to 23 confirmed deaths, more than 50 people were reported injured, authorities said, marking the greatest loss of life from a tornado since an EF-5 storm tore through Moore, Oklahoma, in May 2013, killing 24 people and injuring 375 others.

Three of the dead were children, ages 6, 9 and 10, County Coroner Bill Harris said at an afternoon news conference. Family members identified two of the young victims.

An initial canvass of the stricken area turned up no additional bodies, but Jones left open the possibility that more victims could be found once the search was completed.

A Coca-Cola truck is seen tipped over on its side after two deadly back-to-back tornadoes, in Bearegard, Alabama, U.S., March 4, 2019.

REUTERS/Elijah Nouvelage

Darden said in an interview that "a few people" remained unaccounted for, though he said he did not know the precise number. All the dead were in the Bearegard area, he said.

All but six of the victims were identified, and investigators think they know the identities of the others, Harris said.

'THAT'S HALF MY HOME'

Jenifer Vernon, a 40-year-old grocery store attendant, surveyed the wreckage of her flattened home, spread in piles on either side of her Bearegard street.

"That's half my home," said Vernon, pointing to the debris. "That's the other half." She was in the nearby town of Opelika with her husband and 14-year-old daughter when the tornadoes hit. Looking over splintered pieces of wood and the remains of kitchen appliances, Vernon said she had lost another home to fire last year.

"We'll bounce back from this," she added.

U.S. President Donald Trump wrote on Twitter on Monday that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) would be helping.

"FEMA has been told directly by me to give the A Plus treatment to the Great State of Alabama and the wonderful people who have been so devastated by the Tornadoes," Trump said.



A house with an X painted on it is seen across a hillside of wreckage after back-to-back tornadoes in Bearegard



Julie Morrison sits on a salvaged chair, surrounded by friends, as she looks at the wreckage of her home after two deadly back-to-back tornadoes, in Bearegard, Alabama

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Editor's Choice



FILE PHOTO - A vendor rests in her market stand that sells rice in Quezon City



FILE PHOTO: Canada's Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould and Health Minister Jane Philpott attend a news conference in Ottawa



Subsecretary of Human Rights and Governor of Veracruz watch a screen in a public apology offered to relatives of five youths killed in 2016 after police kidnapped them and then turned them over to members of a drug gang, in Mexico City



Relatives of five youths killed in 2016 after police kidnapped them and then turned them over to members of a drug gang, react during a public apology by the Veracruz state government, in Mexico City



U.S. first lady Melania Trump visits Microsoft Headquarters during her two-day, three state tour promoting her "Be Best" initiative in Redmond



U.S. first lady Melania Trump listens during a visit to Microsoft Headquarters during her two-day, three state tour promoting her "Be Best" initiative in Redmond



U.S. President Trump speaks to the National Association of Attorneys General at the White House



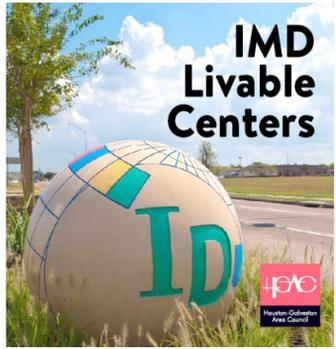
A masked reveller dressed as U.S. President Donald Trump takes part in a spontaneous carnival characterised by improvisation, satire and the macabre, in the village of Ghaxaq

Happening Today In The IMD
IMD Conducts Livable Centers Study

The International District, in partnership with H-GAC, is conducting a Livable Centers Study.

Livable Centers are places where people can live, work, and play with less reliance on their cars. Livable Centers, with concentrations of residential and employment, support more trips by foot, bicycle, transit, or carpool. H-GAC's Livable Centers program works with local communities to identify specific recommendations, such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities, that can help spark the creation of Livable Centers.

The IMD is home to almost 99,000 people in a district that is only 12 square miles, making it one of most densely populated areas in Houston. Not only is IMD unique for its density, but it is also one of the most culturally diverse areas in the city. There is a variety of strong cultural identities all within the district that have unique representation through local businesses and places of worship. Because of the growing population in this district and need for connectivity, IMD is conducting a livable centers study to determine how the area can be transformed into a community where people can live, work and play with less reliance on their car for transportation. The vision for transforming IMD is to increase walkability and connectivity in a way that embraces local culture to make this area a destination within Houston.



IMD Facts
99k PEOPLE **12 SQUARE MILES**
2007 IMD CREATED
Livable Centers

While all Livable Centers are distinctive, they all are based on similar concepts of development, such as:

CONNECTING -Connecting residences, stores and office spaces through mixed-use developments.

IMPROVING-Improving access to transit and multiple transportation modes, including roadways, walking and biking.

ENHANCING-Enhancing streetscapes, sidewalks and overall community aesthetics.

EXPANDING -Expanding housing and employment opportunities.

CREATING -Creating a public engagement strategy that encourages stakeholder involvement in the formation of the plan.

The 2019 International Management District Livable Centers Study

The IMD livable centers study will combine knowledge from previous studies with community engagement to understand the needs of the District. Through this study, IMD will formulate strategies and identify necessary changes to the area that will transform it into a destination that embraces its international characteristics. (Courtesy Inter-

national Management District)

Houston TranStar Urges Motorists: Move Over, Slow Down – It Saves Lives

Every day, law enforcement, fire fighters, emergency personnel and tow operators risk their lives responding to calls for help. In 2018, more than 1,100 crashes in the Houston/Galveston area involved emergency vehicles, according to the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT).

The Texas Move Over/Slow Down law requires that passing motorists move

out of the lane closest to an emergency vehicle stopped on the roadway, or if they can't safely move, reduce driving speeds to 20 miles below the posted limit. Move Over/Slow Down also applies when passing stopped TxDOT vehicles and tow trucks displaying warning signals such as traffic cones or flashing lights.



HOUSTON TRANSTAR

"Move Over/Slow Down is designed to prevent secondary crashes and protect first responders as well as drivers and passengers," said Dinah Massie, Executive Director at Houston TranStar. "It's about improving safety for all, particularly emergency personnel who work in dangerous conditions along Texas roadways."

The Move Over/Slow Down Law requires you to:

Move out of the lane next to the stopped vehicle(s) when on a highway with two or more lanes going the same direction, if it can be done safely and legally

- OR -

Slow to 20 miles per hour below the posted speed

Slow to 5 miles per hour if the posted speed is 25 miles per hour or less

Heightened enforcement of the Move Over/Slow Down law is happening across the state, with fines from \$200 to \$2,000, depending on the offense. Last year, TxDOT reports the Department of Public Safety issued more than 41,000 warnings and citations to motorists violating the law.

For more information on road safety and to learn more about how to Travel Smart with TranStar, visit www.HoustonTranstar.org

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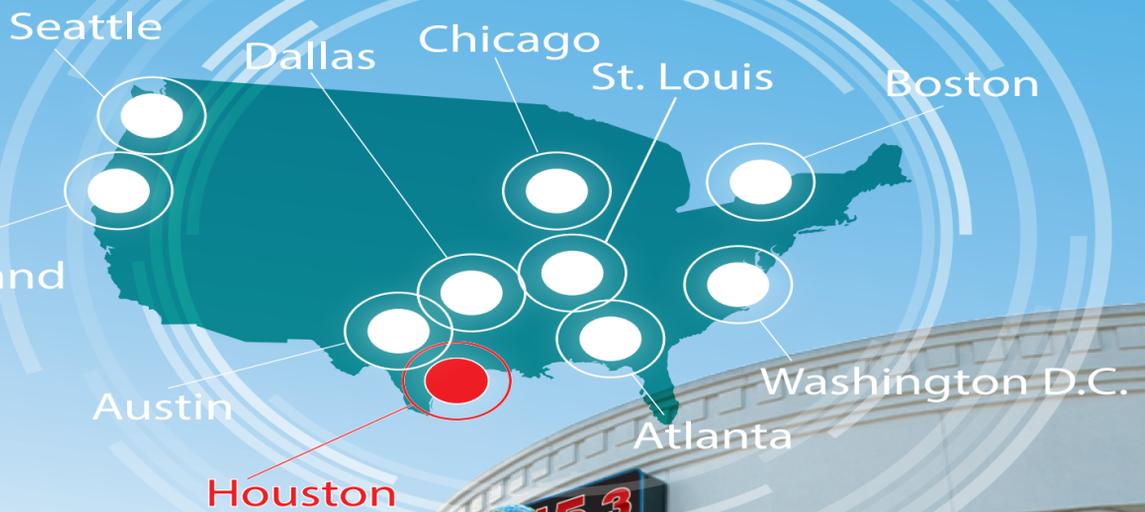
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The World Is Losing Edible Fish As Oceans Warm, Study Finds



A fresh catch at the port of Sakaiminato, on the west coast of Honshu, Japan's main island. (Photo/Getty Images)

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

Fish populations are declining as oceans warm, putting a key source of food and income at risk for millions of people around the world, according to new research published Thursday.

The study found that the amount of seafood that humans could sustainably harvest from a wide range of species shrank by 4.1 percent from 1930 to 2010, a casualty of human-caused climate change.

"That 4 percent decline sounds small, but it's 1.4 million metric tons of fish from 1930 to 2010," said Chris Free, the lead author of the study, which appears in the journal Science.

Scientists have warned that global warming will put pressure on the world's food supplies in coming decades. But the new findings — which separate the effects of warming waters from other factors, like overfishing — suggest that climate change is already having a serious impact on seafood.

Fish make up 17 percent of the global population's intake of animal protein, and as much as 70 percent for people living in some coastal and island countries, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

"Fish provide a vital source of protein for over half of the global population, and some 56 million people worldwide are supported in some way by marine fisheries," Dr. Free said.



As the oceans have warmed, some regions have been particularly hard-hit. In the northeast Atlantic Ocean and the Sea of Japan, fish populations declined by as much as 35 percent over the period of the study. "The ecosystems in East Asia have seen some of the largest decline in fisheries productivity," Dr. Free said. "And that region is home to some of the largest growing human populations and populations that are highly dependent on seafood."

Now a postdoctoral researcher at the University of California, Santa Barbara, Dr. Free began the research while a Ph.D. student at Rutgers University.

Marine life has been subjected to some of

the most drastic effects of climate change. The oceans have absorbed 93 percent of the heat that is trapped by the greenhouse gases that humans pump into the atmosphere.

A study published in January, also in Science, found that ocean temperatures were increasing far faster than previous estimates.

Amid these changing conditions, fish are shifting where they live, in search of their preferred temperatures. High ocean temperatures can kill off both the fish themselves and the sources of food they depend on.

"Fish are like Goldilocks: They don't like their water too hot or too cold," said Malin L. Pinsky, an associate professor in the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences at Rutgers University and a co-author of the new study.



Atlantic cod drying in the Lofoten Islands of Norway. (Photo/Getty Images)

In about a quarter of the regions studied, fish had expanded their range. Off the Atlantic coast of the United States, sustainable catches of black sea bass increased by 6 percent over the study period.

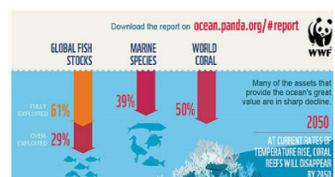
Another quarter of the regions saw no significant changes in fish populations, like the northwest Atlantic Ocean, where Atlantic herring are abundant.

But half the regions did not fare as well. The northeast Atlantic Ocean — home to Atlantic cod, the mainstay of fish and chips — saw a 34 percent decline in sustainable catches.

Over all, more populations of fish declined than increased over the eight decades in the study.

The researchers focused on sustainable catches, using a measure developed by the United Nations that quantifies the amount of food that can be repeatedly harvested from a base population of fish. "Fisheries are like a bank account, and we're trying to live off the interest," Dr. Pinsky said.

Several previous studies have predicted that climate change would lead to fewer ocean fish in the future, but the new research looked at historical data to determine that the declines had already begun.



"This is going to be one of those groundbreaking studies that gets cited over and over again," said Trevor Branch, an associate professor at the University of Washington's School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences, who was not involved in the study. "Most of what I've seen before in terms of climate-change impacts have been speculative, in terms of, 'We think this is what's going to happen in the future.' This one's different."

The researchers used a data set of 235 fish populations located in 38 ecological regions around the globe. The detailed data told them not only where the fish were but also how they reacted to environmental effects like changing water temperatures. The team compared that data to records that showed how ocean temperatures had changed over time, broken down by the

various regions. These regional analyses were important, because some parts of the ocean have warmed faster than others.

"We then connected those to which populations responded positively, negatively, and which didn't respond at all," Dr. Pinsky said.

The data revealed some other trends. Fish populations in the colder parts of their ranges tended to fare better than those located in warmer areas — for those fish, the extra heat was too much. This was especially troubling to the researchers, because the data they used was less detailed in the tropics. Fish losses in those regions may have been higher than in the regions the study focused on, Dr. Pinsky said.



Warm areas fared even worse when they were overfished. The researchers suggested that overfishing made fish even more vulnerable to temperature changes by hurting their ability to reproduce and damaging the ecosystem.

Guarding against overfishing and improving the overall management of fisheries can help, the researchers said. But ultimately, they said, the solution lies in slowing or halting climate change.

A separate study, published Wednesday in the journal Science Advances, found that limiting warming to 2.7 degrees Fahrenheit, or 1.5 degrees Celsius, above pre-industrial levels — a goal of the Paris climate agreement — could result in billions of dollars in extra revenue for fisheries globally. Much of that would be in the developing world, where many people rely on fish for protein.

"We hope that this highlights the importance of accounting for the fact that climate change is driving shifts in productivity," Dr. Free said of his research.

"Fishery managers need to come up with new innovative ways of accounting for those shifts. That includes reducing catch limits in warm negative years, but it can also include increasing catch limits in cooler positive years. Having regulations that are adaptive to climate change is going to be really important for maximizing food potential." (Courtesy nytimes.com)

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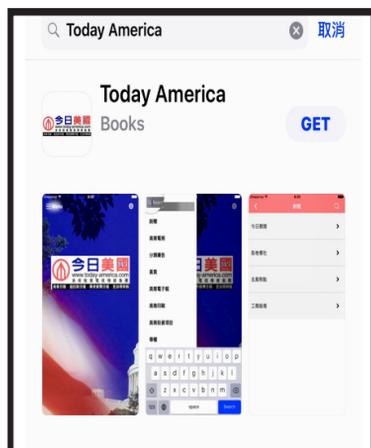
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