

GOOD NEWS:

Good News for the Whales

For more than a decade, the US Navy has been pursued through the courts on behalf of whales in the Pacific. On Sept. 14, 2015, the whales won! The Navy finally agreed to meet its obligation under the law, committing to put whale habitat around California and Hawaii off-limits to the use of powerful sonar and high explosives during its training and testing operations.

Because marine mammals depend on their finely tuned sense of hearing to communicate, navigate, and find food, sonar and explosives can cause injuries and even impair their ability to survive. The Navy's own environmental review conceded that sonar use could kill nearly 1,000 marine mammals over the next five years. This court order is especially good news for the endangered blue whale – the world's largest animal – that feeds each year off the coast of southern California.

[From: fall 2015 issue of Nature's Voice, Natural Resources Defense Council]

Governor and Cabinet Vote to Buy Everglades Headwaters Easements

Audubon Action announced great news in early March from Tallahassee as Governor Rick Scott and the Florida Cabinet voted unanimously to buy nearly 4,000 acres of conservation easements over land in the **Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge**. A 1,189-acre tract within the Camp Lonesome Ranch in Osceola County, and a 2,526-acre tract in the SY Hartt Arbuckle Creek Ranch will now be protected under easements that allow cattle ranching to continue, but which perpetually exclude land development, mining, and other uses. Because both tracts are within the boundary of the Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge, they will be accepted into the Refuge under agreements between the State of Florida and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The two easements will be paid for with \$4.3 million from the Rural and Family Lands program of the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and \$2.3 million in Florida Forever funds. Wildlife species that will benefit from the conservation of these lands include Bald Eagles, Crested Caracara, Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, Sandhill Cranes, Wood Storks, and other wading bird species.

From: http://fl.audubonaction.org/site/MessageViewer?em_id=66604.0&dlv_id=83368&pgwrap=n

BAD NEWS:

Those K-Cups Are Filling Landfills

Green Mountain Keurig recently announced it sold \$816 million worth of K-Cups in the third quarter (just 13 weeks) of 2015. These unrecyclable, non-biodegradable plastic cups all end up in landfills. One oft-cited statistic estimates that if you laid the Keurig K-Cups sold last year end-to-end, they would wrap around the planet more than 10 times. Even the creator of the pods has said he regrets inventing them.

Keurig doesn't sponsor any recycling, but there is hope. One Canadian company is making progress in designing fully compostable cups for Keurig machines. "G-KUP" inventor Darren Footz expects to begin production on these pods in the first quarter of 2016, selling them to coffee roasters and manufacturers. The development process has taken time, he says, because creating pods from readily renewable sources that survive the high-temperature brewing cycle and yield tasty coffee was tough.

[from: <http://www.takepart.com/article/2016/1/19/use-k-cups-guilt-free?cmpid=tpenviro-eml-2016-01-23-junkmail> by Melissa Rayworth]

A Danger Lurks Behind the BPA-Free Label

When purchasing a water bottle, a baby bottle, or other products that carry a "BPA-free" sticker, people assume they're getting items made out of chemicals safer than bisphenol A (BPA). But BPA's supposedly benign replacement, bisphenol S (BPS), may not be so safe, according to a study published in February in the journal *Endocrinology*.

Researchers at the University of California, Los Angeles, found BPS accelerated development of zebra-fish larvae exposed to the chemical, leading to premature births. "Our findings are frightening," said Nancy Wayne, the study's lead author and a reproductive endocrinologist at UCLA.

BPA is a chemical often added to plastic products to strengthen them. It's a hormone disruptor that mimics the effects of estrogen and testosterone. More than a decade's worth of research has linked BPA to reproductive development issues, early-onset puberty, and breast and prostate cancers. The Food and Drug Administration in 2012 banned BPA use in baby bottles and children's cups, but the chemical is still used in products ranging from the lining of canned foods to cash register receipts.

From: <http://www.takepart.com/article/2016/02/02/bpa-plastic-substitute-safety-questioned?cmpid=tpenviro-eml-2016-02-06-ocean> by Taylor Hill

Environmental Justice in 1 Minute

Questions about pollution typically begin with *what*, *where*, or *how much*. Environmental justice shifts the focus to *who*. Pollution harms poor communities, people of color, and indigenous groups disproportionately.

The basic statistics are beyond dispute. The lower the median income in a neighborhood, the dirtier the air. Studies show that African-Americans and low-income Americans are more likely to live near hazardous waste sites. Chemical plants located near African-American communities cause more spills than those in predominantly white areas. Native Americans occupy their own special category, with everyone from nuclear mining companies to chemical manufacturers using reservations as dumping sites. The academic literature is filled with these correlations.

For all the progress the environmental movement has made, it has not yet produced equality. One of the latest examples of environmental injustice can currently be found in Flint, Michigan, where a largely African-American community was exposed to lead-contaminated drinking water for months before the government took any action to address the problem.

[From: http://www.onearth.org/earthwire/environmental-justice-is-future-environmental-movement?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=linkewire2&utm_campaign=email]

Hawaii Revealed as Major Market for Illicit Ivory

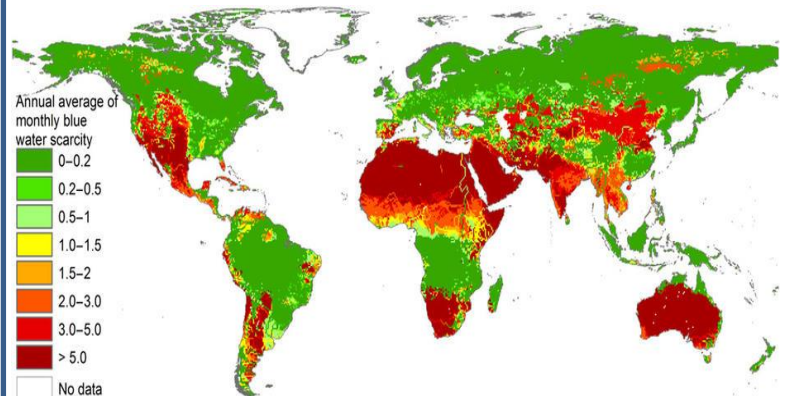
An investigation by conservation organizations has found that Hawaii is the third-largest market for illegal ivory in the U.S., behind New York and California. The illegal ivory trade is responsible for the plummet in African elephant populations in recent decades. Between 2010 and 2012, poachers killed 100,000 elephants for their ivory tusks.

Sellers identified during the investigation included retail stores, as well as art galleries, artist associations, estate liquidators, auction sites, and individuals on Craigslist. Most if not all of this activity was likely illegal, according to the investigation. The sale of ivory is highly regulated in the United States. Under regulations passed two years ago, only the sale of antique ivory certified as having been imported prior to 1976 is allowed. The research suggested that these documents are all too easy to fake.

[<http://www.takepart.com/article/2016/03/09/hawaii-revealed-major-market-illicit-ivory?cmpid=tpnews-eml-2016-03-12-StrangeBehaviors> by John R. Platt]

Water scarcity affects four billion people worldwide

New research says water scarcity is a much bigger problem than we thought. While previous studies estimated that between 1.7 and 3.1 billion people experience severe water shortages (defined as when the amount of water consumed is double the amount available) during at least part of the year, a paper published earlier this year in *Science Advances* puts that figure at a staggering four billion. That's two-thirds of the global population.



Nearly half of those affected live in India or China, but the United States (California), Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nigeria, and Mexico are also hot spots of dry times. Population growth, improved living standards, changing consumption patterns, and agriculture are all driving the upswell in water shortages, which can affect businesses, crop yields, human welfare, and biodiversity. And climate change may only make it worse.

[From: http://www.onearth.org/earthwire/global-water-scarcity-4-billion?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=linkewire5&utm_campaign=email by Clara Chaisson]

National Boycott of Wendy's Declared by CIW

Join the Coalition of Immokalee Workers in expressing our collective disappointment and anger at Wendy's continued disregard for human rights for the workers that pick the produce that make their profits possible. This boycott action comes as news breaks that Wendy's has not only shifted purchasing tomatoes from Florida to Mexico, completely divesting from growers that are implementing human rights for farmworkers through the Fair Food Program — but it has also been revealed that Wendy's now purchases from a grower who in 2013 was found to be holding hundreds of workers against their will in egregious conditions.

For more information, go to www.allianceforfairfood.org