

Monica and Miro

From: Monica and Miro
Sent: Monday, September 9, 2019 7:01 AM
To: <benjamin.friedman@noaa.gov>
Subject: Our Daily Planet: #Sharpiagate Won't Quit, The Week Ahead, and What Climate Change Means for Corals

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SEPTEMBER 9, 2019

By [Monica Medina](#) and [Miro Korenha](#)

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The Week Ahead: Sept 9-15

We hope you had a great weekend #FriendsOfThePlanet. Congress is back in session after a month-long recess, school's back, summer's over and there's a lot to talk about. Here's a quick recap of what you can expect this week:

- **Congress:** The House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis will hold a hearing called “**Solving the Climate Crisis: Manufacturing Jobs for America’s Workers**” on Tuesday, September 10 at 2 p.m EDT. This is an increasingly important topic in the 2020 election and you can livestream the hearing [here.](#)
- **Politics:** The third Democratic debate will be aired on ABC this Thursday from 8-11 p.m. EDT live from Texas Southern University in Houston. You can read our recap of climate and environmental issues that were discussed on Friday.
- **Space:** Asteroid 2000 QW7 will zip past Earth at 14,361 mph this Saturday. The enormous space rock nearly the size of the world's tallest building, the UAE's Burj Khalifa.

ICYMI: Hundreds of cyclists took part in a [staged funeral procession](#) in central London on Saturday before performing a “die-in” near Whitehall to call for greater investment in walking and cycling.

Weather



[Sharpie-Gate Reaches Fever Pitch - Rightfully So](#)

The media frenzy over the doctored Hurricane Dorian map reached new highs (or lows) after NOAA [put out an unsigned statement](#) on Friday night retracting [a tweet that launched the whole debacle](#) -- the Birmingham local National Weather Service forecast office clarifying that the storm track would not impact Alabama. It led to a downward spiral of Presidential map doctoring, successive tweets about the "FAKE NEWS" being wrong about the map being wrong (they weren't), agency gag orders from political bosses, and unsigned statements disavowing the work of the agency scientists who know what they are talking about. Agency morale is now suffering, [according to news reports](#), and [one former NOAA leader called it](#) "the darkest day ever for leadership. Don't know how they will ever look their workforce in the eye again.

Moral cowardice." And hurricane season still has 2 months to go.

Why This Matters: When I (Monica) was at NOAA, less than 10 years ago we first began using Twitter in earnest as a communications tool, and we urged the National Weather Service to start using it too. We knew that it would be a really effective vehicle for quickly disseminating the latest information about storms, floods, hurricanes, blizzards, and other breaking weather news.

- The President [broke the law](#) when he doctored the map, and with the NOAA statement, the Administration may have "broken" the public's faith in the agency that delivers those forecasts.
- His supporters will believe that the President was protecting them -- as he [tweeted on Thursday](#) that he was "with you all the way Alabama."

As if the folks at the National Hurricane Center and local National Weather Forecast office were not? By clarifying that the storm was not heading to Alabama (and note they did not mention the President's mistaken statement in their tweet), the local forecast office did exactly what we needed them to do at that moment. They provided timely, clear and accurate information about the storm's actual track. And then they were ordered by their leaders never to do that again. Shame on those leaders who put the President's ego ahead of public safety.

Why Is It Against the Law to Alter a Forecast? [Read more...](#)



Monica appears on CNN Saturday to explain why Sharpiegate matters



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Air



Rush hour on the Hollywood Freeway, Los Angeles in 2016. Photo: Richard Vogel, AP

[The Trump Administration Investigates California Clean Car Agreement](#)

The Trump administration opened an anti-trust investigation over an agreement the state of California reached with automakers about producing cars that adhere to tougher emissions standards than the federal government now requires. [According to the Wall Street Journal](#) on Friday, "Justice Department lawyers are seeking to determine whether [Ford Motor](#), [Honda](#), [BMW](#) AG and [Volkswagen](#) AG broke federal competition law by [agreeing with California to follow tailpipe-emissions standards](#) beyond those proposed by the Trump administration, according to people familiar with the probe." These [four companies and the state of California agreed](#) in July to one,

nationwide emissions standard, effectively blunting the impact of the Trump rollback.

Why This Matters: The Trump Administration has now gone on offense to stop the car companies and California from continuing to work toward cleaner cars even after the administration rolled back the federal clean car rule put in place by the Obama Administration earlier this year. Since the [Clean Air Act specifically and unequivocally allows the state of California to](#) enact stricter tailpipe standards because of its historic problems with smog caused by cars, this investigation seems like a witch hunt to us.

Why Does California Get To Set Its Own Tailpipe Standards? [Read more...](#)



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[The Use of Cyanide Bombs in Predator Culling Left Uncertain by EPA](#)

Sodium cyanide "bombs" or M-44s are devices used to kill predators by the USDA's Wildlife Services in Western states where ranchers complain that these animals kill their herds. This outdated method of killing "nuisance" animals is not only inhumane but also not effective in protecting livestock. Additionally, these devices also kill pets and nearly [killed a boy](#) in Idaho who was out playing with his dog (you can see his story in the video above). In early August, the EPA (which under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) requires that EPA "register" pesticides that are to be sold and/or used in the U.S.) issues a "final interim decision" which would have allowed the use of M-44s but with additional restrictions.

Then, abruptly and without much explanation, the [EPA withdrew the decision](#) leaving the environmental community wondering if the EPA was bowing to industry pressure to do away with the newly proposed restrictions or if the agency truly will cancel registration altogether (which would effectively ban M-44s).

Why This Matters: There is very little transparency from the government about the manufacturing and use of M-44s. These devices have been proven time and again that they cannot be used safely and jeopardize public safety. **“In the case of M-44s, EPA use restrictions have come to represent a false promise to the American public and a source of cover for Wildlife Services,”** explained Carson Barylak, Campaigns Manager at the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) to Our Daily Planet. **“Cyanide bombs are fundamentally unsafe and do not belong on public or private lands in the U.S.; accordingly, IFAW will continue to work with leaders in Congress to ban these deadly devices nationwide.”**

What You Can Do: [Let your member of Congress know](#) that you want them to support legislation that would end the taxpayer-funded use of M-44s.

The History: [Read more about the U.S. government's history of killing predators in the wild](#). This isn't new but perhaps we can finally learn from our mistakes and stop these cruel practices that haven't been proven to keep livestock any "safer."

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Oceans



Close up shot of corals spawning. Image: Tom Shlesinger

[Warming Seas Disrupt How Corals Spawn, Putting Them At Increased Risk](#)

According to the [Scripps Institute](#), healthy coral reefs are among the most biologically diverse and economically valuable ecosystems on earth and provide our planet with valuable and vital ecosystem services. Not to mention they're a source of food for millions and also protect coastlines from storms and erosion. **But scientists recently discovered that a warming planet is making it far more difficult for corals to spawn with the synchronization necessary for their survival.** Corals instinctually have very precise timing for spawning, as the [Atlantic explained](#), "They know the right night from the phase of the moon. The setting sun cues the right hour. Pheromones help them coordinate to the

minute."

Why This Matters: For many species, reproduction happens in incredibly precise cycles that have existed for millennia that people and human-induced climate change are increasingly disrupting (we've seen this with other species like [salmon](#)). We've [written about biodiversity](#) and its important many times but we're seeing the ways in which we're diminishing nature become more evident each year. Scientists have warned that coral reefs could be [gone in 30 years](#) and along with them critical ecosystem that supports large swaths of our planet including our own wellbeing.

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People



[One Ridiculous Thing: The President's Cat Tweet about Sharpie-Gate](#)

There are no words for this one. The President [in this tweet](#) ridiculed the media for its extensive coverage of his incorrect, illegal and dangerous tweets and (mis)statements about the track of Hurricane Dorian. This is funny - but not really. When you consider the suffering and devastation Hurricane Dorian caused in the Bahamas, or the people in North Carolina [still stranded on Ocracoke Island](#) because they would not or could not evacuate, this tweet is callous and beneath the dignity of the office and the oath he took to protect and defend the nation.



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