Physical Sciences In the News

This week, a story about lightning strikes the news world.
Tuesday, April 06, 2021
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UCI School of Physical Sciences

A recap of how far word of the research at the School of Physical Sciences is spreading.

Picture Credit:
Fe Valencia

It was the lightning strike heard 'round the world. It struck in 2019, and it struck in a place where lightning strikes are supposed to be as rare as, well, getting struck by lightning: within 300 miles of the North Pole. It was such a special event that the National Weather Service in Alaska published a special announcement about it. As climate change continues unfolding, however, spotting lightning strikes in the Arctic may become about as mundane as spotting a reindeer, for, as research scientist Yang Chen of the UCI Department of Earth System Science reported on Monday this week in the journal *Nature Climate Change*, alongside a team of

researchers that includes Professor James Randerson, also of ESS, lightning strikes in Arctic and boreal latitudes stand to double by the end of the century.

Word of the discovery struck the web this week, and ignited news feeds in the following places:

Popular Science

In his coverage of the work, Philip Kiefer succinctly captures the fundamental science at play in the new work. He wrote: “Right now, the Arctic is cold and fairly dry, and so lightning is rare. But by comparing satellite records of Arctic lightning with global climate models showing where those conditions were likely to occur in the future, the team could predict at a fine scale how likely lightning strikes might be as time went along. Even if emissions slow down, they found, there will be about 40 percent more lightning for every degree Celsius.”

The Academic Times

Journalist Kate Baggaley delves into the domino effects of increased lightning strike frequency. She wrote: “Right now, the Arctic is cold and fairly dry, and so lightning is rare. But by comparing satellite records of Arctic lightning with global climate models showing where those conditions were likely to occur in the future, the team could predict at a fine scale how likely lightning strikes might be as time went along. Even if emissions slow down, they found, there will be about 40 percent more lightning for every degree Celsius."

The story also appeared in the following places:

National Geographic

Wired

Nature Climate Change

United Press International

Inside Climate News

AZoCleantech

IFLScience

Lawrence Berkeley Lab

The Science Times

News Briefs
In the Media
Climate Change
The Future of Energy and the Environment
Earth System Science
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