



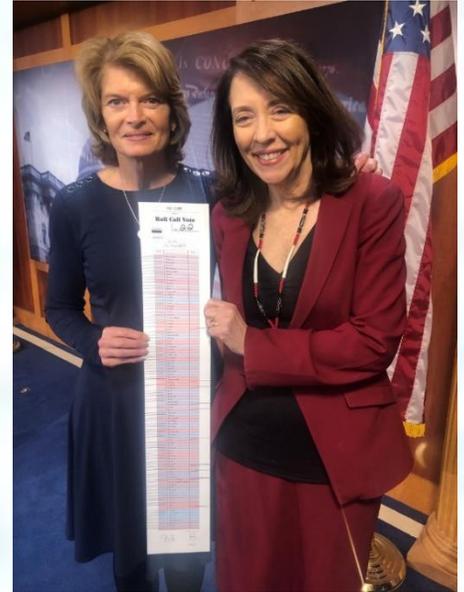
# the weekly anthropocene

*dispatches from the wild, weird world of humanity and its biosphere*



By Sam Matey

**USA: Natural Resources Management Act.** In an age of divided government, partisan rancor, and many politicians' inability to even recognize the existence of climate change, a recent Senate vote proved that bipartisan environmental action is still possible. On February 12<sup>th</sup>, the Natural Resources Management Act passed the Senate by a landslide vote of 92 to 8, meaning it is almost certain to become law. (Pictured: Senators Lisa Murkowski, R-AK, and Maria Cantwell, D-WA, the cosponsors of the bill). This is the most important land conservation law for years and is jam-packed with amazing new accomplishments. First, the bill reauthorized the Land and Water Conservation Fund in perpetuity, thus ensuring that the highly successful LWCF program, which funnels revenue from oil and gas drilling into conservation actions, will continue to do its good work. Second, the bill recategorizes 1.3 million acres of federal land across the country as "wilderness," America's most stringent land protection category, in which all roads and motorized vehicles are banned. That's an area larger than Delaware now preserved in its wild state forever! Third, the bill upgrades protections for 620 miles of river across 7 states, protecting waterways from Oregon to Massachusetts from new damming and development. Fourth, the bill permanently withdraws mining claims from the areas around Yellowstone and North Cascades National Parks. Fifth, the bill reauthorizes and funds the Neotropical Migratory Birds Conservation Act and makes permanent President Obama's pledge to allow all US fourth-graders and their families to visit national parks for free. Finally, the bill expands eight existing national parks and national monuments and establishes several more historic sites as national monuments. And those are just the highlights-the NRMA has 170 separate provisions! Taken together, this act is a monumental, widespread boost to the protection of America's glorious natural heritage. This is spectacular news, and a sign that on at least some issues, America's lawmakers can still act together to make the nation a better place by preserving our common environment. For more, check out [goo.gl/GkT6Ng](http://goo.gl/GkT6Ng) and [goo.gl/oa5Yy](http://goo.gl/oa5Yy)



**New Projections: Future Climate Shifts Map.** Researchers from the University of Maryland have used data from 27 different climate simulations to map how climate change will affect 540 different cities in the US and Canada, and what city is the modern-day analogue of their future climate. For example, sans major emissions reductions, 2080's Portland, Maine will have the climate of 2019's Baltimore, Maryland, while 2080s New York City should feel like 2019's Jonesboro, Arkansas. For more, see [goo.gl/ZDrSyk](http://goo.gl/ZDrSyk). To see the map itself, check out <https://fitzlab.shinyapps.io/cityapp/>.



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## Amazing Animal Life: New Catfish Species. In a

fascinating new discovery, researchers have found six new species of catfish from the Amazon and Orinoco river basins. All six are bristlenose catfish, from the genus *Ancistrus*, known for their spiny and tentacle-covered faces. Another interesting characteristic of *Ancistrus* species is that the fathers assist in guarding their nests of eggs and juveniles from predators. This unusual behavior has inspired the scientific name for the catfish pictured on the right—*Ancistrus patronus*, from the Latin for “protector.” These fishes’ habitat is currently under threat from gold mining and knowing of their existence offers the first hope that they could receive some legal protection. Another fascinating discovery of a new animal species with which we share the Anthropocene! For more, see [goo.gl/3ZwHQm](http://goo.gl/3ZwHQm).



## Amazing Animal Life: Laysan Albatross.

“Wisdom” (pictured, right, with chick) is an endangered Laysan albatross (*Phoebastria immutabilis*) who may have done more to preserve her species than any other individual. The Laysan albatross was devastated by hunting for their feathers in the early 1900s, and the species reproduces very slowly, with just one egg per female per year. Wisdom has just hatched out another chick, continuing her contribution to her species’ recovery. The most amazing part? She’s also the oldest known wild bird in the world, at least 68 years of age. Wisdom was first tagged by a scientist in 1956 and has been monitored by the US Fish and Wildlife Service for years. She has raised at least 36 chicks over the course of her long life and is estimated to have flown millions of miles across the ocean. Wisdom and her mate Akeakamai have used the same nesting site, on Midway Atoll, every year since 2006. Congratulations to this albatross supermom on her latest chick! Mazel tov! For more on Wisdom’s incredible life story, check out [goo.gl/kcG29k](http://goo.gl/kcG29k).

