How One Heat Wave Killed 'A Third' of a Bat Species in Australia

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Source of the article: This article was published online through BBC News, specifically in the environmental and science section. The author is named Frances Mao, who is based out of Sydney, meaning he specializes in Australian news.

What? An estimated 23,000 spectacled fruit bats died of fatal heat stress during a record heat wave, with temperatures higher than 42C (which is 107.6 degrees fahrenheit).

Who? This heat wave affected everyone in Australia, from humans to animals, but the spectacled fruit bats took a massive hit. Dr Justin Welbergen was the head researcher on the event and is also the president of the Australian Bat Society.

Where? This event occurred mainly in the north of Australia. This particular species of bat is only found in a small rainforest region of northern Queensland.

When? The heat wave occurred on November 26th and 27th of 2018. It only took two days to wipe out over a third of the bat population. Researches from Western Sydney University finalized this conclusion a week before the article was published.

Why? The scary part is that flying foxes are no more sensitive to extreme heat than other species. But because they often gather in urban areas in large numbers, their deaths can be more conspicuous, and easily documented. This is alarming when considering the possibly unknown damages to more secretive and reclusive species.

Relevance to Society: As climate change causes our planet to warm, natural disasters like this will only intensify. These record breaking heat waves are likely to become more and more common. This event signifies the beginning of the end of biodiversity in our world. This mass death of spectacled fruit bats is an indicator of the severity of the problem.

Relevance to Class: While researching this heat wave I noticed that most of the articles had the term "natural disasters" in the headline. The term "natural disasters" might distract from the

underlying theme of human related impact. We are existing in the Anthropocene, or the dawn of a human-influence age. Humans the primary drive of physical changes in Earth's ecosystems. These natural events, although weather and climate related, are not truly brought on by natural causes anymore. If we shift this mindset and make our role in the problem a central theme, maybe we will be able to put ourselves in context. This might cause the reaction of responsibility for our influence on the world and even create a movement of action.

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