

Best of Last Week-Soft robot finger, missing link in blood pressure control found and COVID-19 antibodies last 7 months

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It was a good week for Earth science as an international team of researchers [found a link between the rise of oxygen on early Earth and](#)

[changes to the planet's rotational speed](#)—microbial communities at the bottom of a sinkhole in Lake Huron showed that longer days could have helped increase the amount of oxygen in the atmosphere. Also, a team at Florida State University found [an early atmospheric oxygen spike followed by a drop coincided with an ancient global extinction](#). And in another international effort, researchers found evidence of [a massive, ancient lake that spread across prairies in what is now Canada, which emptied quickly enough to set off an ice age](#) approximately 12,000 years ago.

In technology news, a team of researchers at security firm ThreatFabric announced that they had found that [Vultur malware was using a new technique to steal banking credentials](#). Also, Ali Ahmad, a researcher at Harvard University, found that [climate change leads to increases in the frequency of nuclear power outages](#). And a combined team from Fraunhofer FKIE and the University of Bonn developed [a theoretical approach for designing a self-organizing human-swarm system](#)—one that could lead to more advanced search and rescue mission assistance. Also, a team at Beihang University announced that they had developed [a tactile sensing mechanism for soft robotic fingers](#) that more closely resembles that of humans than other systems.

In other news, a team at the University of California-Riverside, found that [common pesticides based on neonicotinoids are deadly to non-target insects](#) regardless of the amount used on either food or ornamental plants, and in any amount used. Also, a team at the University of Virginia School of Medicine found [the missing link in our body's blood pressure control](#). After a 60-year effort, the researchers found mechanotransducers inside renin cells detect pressure changes and transmit signals calling for changes.

And finally, if you have survived a COVID-19 infection, you may want to check out research conducted by a consortium coordinated by the

Barcelona Institute for Global Health—they found that [antibodies to the SARS-CoV-2 virus remain stable, or even increase, up to seven months after infection.](#)

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