

Best of Last Week – A warped Milky Way, the ocean to change color and the impact of marijuana on sperm count

11 February 2019, by Bob Yirka



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It was a good week for space science as a team at the National Astronomical Observatories of the Chinese Academy of Sciences found that [the Milky Way is warped](#)—they report that our galaxy becomes increasingly twisted in its outer regions. And Andrew Hsu, at the University of California, led a Hubble team that found [revealed the dynamic atmospheres of Uranus and Neptune](#)—they found a dark storm on Neptune and a long-lived storm circling Uranus's northern pole.

In Earth news, an international team of ocean researchers announced that [project MERMAID has revealed secrets from below the ocean floor](#)—they released nine submerged seismometer robots that surfaced periodically to broadcast records of seismic activity below the seafloor. Also, a team from West Virginia University announced that they had unearthed [an ice age in the African desert](#)—they found land formations in Namibia that resembled drumlins, which are usually formed by glaciers, and report additional evidence to show that the region was once covered in ice. And a team at MIT found that [much of the surface ocean](#)

[will shift in color by end of the 21st century](#)—due to shifts in plankton population levels.

In technology news, a team at Wuhan University developed [a new hierarchical CNN-based method for crack segmentation](#) called DeepCrack—a neural network-based approach to detecting cracks in materials. And a team at Telecom ParisTech developed [a new approach to protecting data from key exposure](#)—a method that reveals all or nothing. Also, a team with members from several institutions in the U.S. discovered [a new type of magnet](#)—a singlet-based magnet that has fields that pop in and out of existence. They believe it might prove useful for data storage applications. And a team at Duke University developed [a breakthrough device that lures aggressive brain tumor cells out of the patient](#)—they call it the Tumor Monorail.

And finally, if you are one of the millions of men around the world who smoke [marijuana](#), you might want to check out a report by a team working at the Fertility Clinic at Massachusetts General Hospital—they found [evidence linking marijuana smoking with higher sperm concentrations](#).

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