

Climate Scientist Dubious About Global Warming Octopus Study

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A climate scientist is dubious global warming is causing octopus and cephalopod populations to increase, as claimed by a Australian University of Adelaide study.

The study published Monday analyzed the number cephalopods caught and speculated the ecologically and commercially important invertebrates could be benefiting from rising ocean temperatures. The study's lead author stated in a press release cephalopods are very adaptable animals which could allow them to adapt quickly to changing environmental conditions.

Even though the study did not attempt to correlate temperature trends spatially or temporally to trends in the cephalopod population or examine other explanations for the rising population, media outlets promptly claimed the study showed that "Swarms of Octopus Are Taking Over the Oceans" due to global warming.

"The new study linking cephalopod population increases to human-caused climate change is long on speculation and short on facts," Chip Knappenberger, climate scientist at the libertarian Cato Institute, told The Daily Caller News Foundation. "There are undoubtedly complex interactions between the large number of factors at play in shaping the reported cephalopod trends, although the authors look at none of them in detail. To prominently play up the role of global warming is to elevate hype over substance—an all too common characteristic of this type of study."

Knappenberger pointed out in a blog post scientists and media outlets have an "overwhelming tendency to relate global warming to all manner of bad things and a great hesitation to suggest a potential link when the outcome is seemingly beneficial." He points out that the science behind global warming doesn't "make for great scare stories. Global-warming-fueled bands of marauding octopuses and giant squid certainly do."

The study's lead author believes the impacts are extremely unclear, but states in the press release that "increases in cephalopod populations could benefit marine predators which are reliant on them for food, as well as human communities reliant on them as a fisheries resource."

This is the latest scientific study to show nature is considerably more resilient to global warming than scientists suspected. Global warming even has many positive environmental impacts such as helping Canadian trees recover from a devastating insect infestation, creating more food for fish in the ocean, making life easier for Canadian moose and causing deserts to bloom with foliage.

