

YONHAP NEWS/YMA/NEWS.COM
Institute in Washington DC published the statistics on 8 July in an update to its 2011 *Reefs at Risk Revisited* report (see *Nature* 471, 10; 2011).

PEOPLE

Funding head

Peter Strohschneider, a historian at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, has been elected the next president of Germany's main research-funding agency, the DFG. From 1 January 2013 he will take over from engineer Matthias Kleiner, who has headed the agency for two three-year terms. Strohschneider, who was elected on 4 July, has plenty of experience with research funding and politics: he was chairman of the German Council of Science and Humanities from 2006 to 2011.

POLICY

Korean whaling

South Korea announced on 4 July at a meeting of the International Whaling Commission that it plans to begin hunting whales for research purposes — a move that could legitimize existing whale catches by South Korean fishermen (pictured). The country says that it needs to measure populations of minke whales off the Korean coast. But anti-whaling groups say



that is merely an excuse to justify a commercial hunt. Japan is the only country that currently practises 'scientific' whaling, an exception permitted under the 1986 whaling moratorium. See go.nature.com/bu2huy for more.

Nuclear inquiry

The Fukushima nuclear meltdown was a "man-made" disaster that could have been foreseen and prevented, according to a scathing report from a Japanese parliamentary commission, released on 5 July. The report blames poor safety protocols resulting from the negligence of government regulators, who were compromised by close ties to industry. It also suggests that safety equipment might have been damaged in the earthquake, not just the

tsunami — a possibility that Japan's nuclear industry has tried to play down because restarting the nation's 50 functional reactors depends on them being earthquake-safe.

Endangered species

The US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) routinely brushed aside advice from scientific experts when setting critical habitats for endangered species, according to a study led by analysts from the Center for Biological Diversity in Tucson, Arizona (D. N. Greenwald, K. F. Suckling and S. L. Pimm *BioScience* 62, 686–690; 2012). The study looked at 42 critical habitats set by the FWS between 2002 and 2007, and found that in 92% of the cases in which experts had recommended extending the area, the agency had ignored the advice. The agency contends that it must consider economic and national security concerns, and not just science. See go.nature.com/dar8ps for more.

Deep-sea mining

India will invest in technology to scour the ocean floor for minerals, including rare-earth minerals, science minister Ashwani Kumar said on 4 July in New Delhi, after a meeting to discuss the country's research priorities. India's National Institute of

COMING UP

14–21 JULY

Scientists undertake the last scheduled mission to the Aquarius undersea laboratory off Key Largo, Florida (see *Nature* 457, 141–143; 2009). The lab's funding has been cut in the 2013 budget.

20 JULY

The American Civil Liberties Union and the Public Patent Foundation will challenge a court ruling that allows companies to patent DNA, in a federal appeals court in Washington DC.

go.nature.com/lq5rnm

Ocean Technology in Chennai already has one ship that can launch submersibles for deep-sea mining in the Central Indian Ocean Basin, said Kumar; it will gain a second on 31 July, and two further ships are being constructed.

Libel win

Nature Publishing Group and *Nature* news reporter Quirin Schiermeier on 6 July won a long-running libel suit brought by the theoretical physicist Mohamed El Naschie. The expense and time required to defend the case demonstrates the need to reform English libel laws, say campaigners. See Editorial, page 139; World View, page 141; and page 149 for more.

CORRECTION

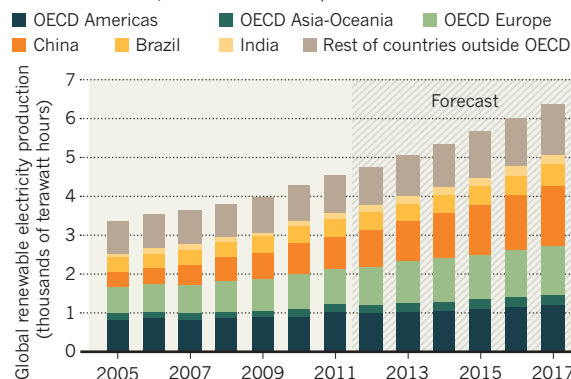
The story 'Nobel laureate dies' (*Nature* 486, 11; 2012) wrongly stated that Andrew Huxley worked on the axon of the giant squid. In fact, he worked on the giant axons of ordinary squid.

TREND WATCH

China will supply almost 40% of the world's added renewable electricity capacity over the next 5 years. In a 5 July forecast by the International Energy Agency (IEA) in Paris, China's expansion is attributed to "ambitious policy targets, fast-growing electricity demand and ample financing". Worldwide, hydropower accounted for 80% of renewable generation in 2011 and will still dominate at 70% by 2017, the IEA says. The agency predicts a 17% contribution from wind power and 5% from solar energy in 2017.

CHINA TO LEAD RENEWABLE ELECTRICITY SURGE

Developing countries outside the OECD* account for two-thirds of the forecast 40% rise in renewable power to 2017.



*Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.