

gas leases, which are poised to grow in the coming years. See page 281 for more.

EU budget battle

The level of funding for the European Union's Horizon 2020 research programme is uncertain again after the European Parliament voted against the proposed seven-year general budget on 13 March. Heads of state agreed at a meeting on 8 February on an austerity budget of €960 billion (US\$1.2 trillion) for 2014–20, which includes about €70 billion for Horizon 2020. The parliament, which last November suggested a research budget in excess of €100 billion, approved the spending ceiling but wanted unspent funds from one area to be spent on projects in another rather than returned to member states, as well as a review of the budget in 2014.

Species protection

Multiple species of sharks and rays, including the oceanic whitetip shark (pictured), were granted enhanced protection at a meeting of parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in Bangkok last week. Various species of tropical hardwood trees were also added to appendix II of CITES, which places restrictions on their



trade. Delegates accepted proposals to increase the forensic analysis of seized ivory to fight poaching of African elephants, but rejected enhanced protections for polar bears. See go.nature.com/r076uc and page 281 for more.

Drinks ban busted

A judge struck down a ban on the sale of large servings of sugary drinks in New York city on 11 March. Enacted by city mayor Michael Bloomberg's Board of Health, the ban would have gone into effect on 12 March. But after beverage makers, grocers' groups and restaurateurs sued, Justice Milton Tingling of the State Supreme Court ruled against it, calling the ban "arbitrary and capricious". Bloomberg said his administration would appeal against the ruling. The ban would have limited restaurants, cinemas and

kiosks to selling sugary drinks in portions of 16 US fluid ounces (473 millilitres) or less.

Mars mission boost

Russia is partnering with the European Space Agency (ESA) on its ExoMars missions to the red planet. Roscosmos, Russia's space agency, will provide the launch vehicles and scientific instruments for both a planned orbiter in 2016 and a rover in 2018, as well as the rover's descent module and surface platform. The two agencies formalized the arrangement on 14 March. NASA, which in February 2012 backed out of its original plan to partner with ESA on ExoMars, will contribute telecommunications and other support.

PEOPLE

Generics limbo

The head of generic drugs at the US Food and Drug Administration, Gregory Geba, resigned on 15 March after just eight months in the post. He leaves the Office of Generic Drugs just as it is being reorganized and takes on extra responsibilities. Legislation last year allowed the office to start collecting fees on applications for the approval of generic drugs, in the hope that the added resources would allow it to shorten the time from application to approval.

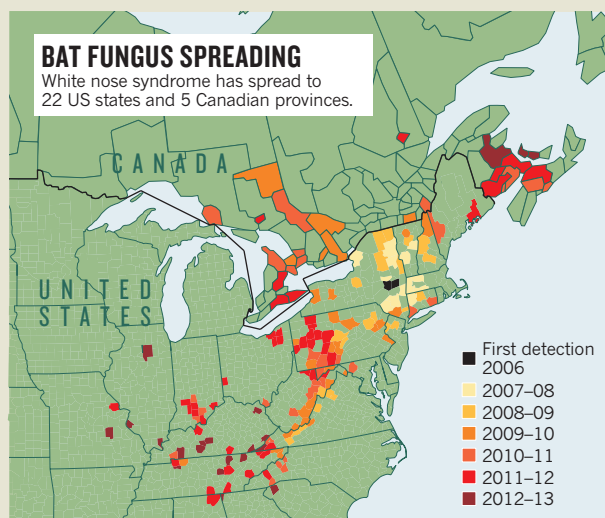
FUNDING

Spain fund freeze

The European Science Foundation (ESF) has temporarily frozen most funding for networking events planned beyond June to researchers from Spain's National Research Council (CSIC) and Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness until the agencies pay late dues. Spain has also cut payments to CERN, Europe's particle-physics laboratory near Geneva in Switzerland, and to the European Space Agency among others. The CSIC and ESF say that a resolution is forthcoming.

TREND WATCH

White nose syndrome, a fungal disease of bats that is sweeping through North America, was this month documented in two new states: Georgia and South Carolina. The deadly infection, named for the powdery fungal growth on bats' muzzles, probably came from Europe, where the fungus (*Geomyces destructans*) is endemic. Since it first appeared in New York in 2006, the fungus has spread to 22 states and 5 Canadian provinces, and has killed an estimated 7 million bats.



CORRECTION

The story 'Carbon spike' (*Nature* **495**, 146; 2013) wrongly stated that the atmospheric concentration of CO₂ has risen by 70% from pre-industrial levels. The global average of 395 p.p.m. represents a 41% increase.

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