spotted in the region over the last 2 decades, usually after hunters or traffic killed them. But there have been no known permanent residents in Germany since the mid-1800s. Last year, however, Saxony foresters noticed a pair living in a wooded military training ground. And this summer those two were accompanied by four yearlings

Wolves have returned to Germany's eastern frontier after a 150-year absence.

and two pups—apparently the first wolves born in Germany in over a century.

The secured zone is a "perfect habitat, with lots of prey" and few bothersome humans, says Frank Rolf Roder.

All's well so far, but Mörschel warns wildlife officials to be ready in case the wolves start preying on local farm animals. With the tale of Little Red Riding Hood still fresh in the people's minds, he says, "public opinion can change quickly."

Internet Asteroid Clash

A new study concluding that astronomers have overstated the risk of an Earth-asteroid wreck is taking a pounding of its own in an Internet parody.

In the November *Astronomical Journal*, Princeton astronomer Zeljko Ivezic used the latest images of the asteroid belt to calculate that the chance of an asteroid hitting Earth is 1 in 5000 every century. That is one-third lower than previous guesses, prompting Ivezic to issue a widely covered press release saying that earthlings should feel a lot safer.

But other doomsday prognosticators say Ivezic's study is headed for a crash landing. In an anonymous parody press release entitled "Chance of Being Eaten by Wild Animals Greatly Downgraded," an acidic critic ridicules Ivezic's methods. The spoof, posted on 12 November on a scholarly e-mail list called the Cambridge Conference Network, argues that using the number of chunks in the asteroid belt to calculate the likelihood of Armageddon is akin to using the number of hippos in Africa to estimate the chance of being chewed by a wild animal in North America. The parody is thinly veiled partisanship for a second approach to collision prediction used by previous studies: directly counting only asteroids that have left the belt and become potential threats.

Ivezic says the posting is "amusing." His colleagues' scrutiny, he adds, improves the science.

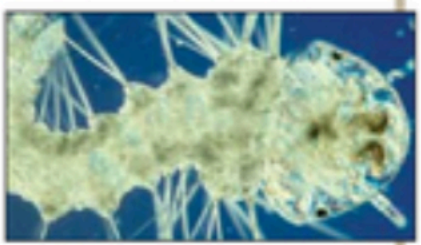
Global Warming in the Genes

For the first time, scientists have found evidence that global warming may be influencing an organism's genes. New research shows that over 30 years, one mosquito species' winter dormancy period—a genetically controlled trait—has shrunk as Earth has warmed.

The mosquito *Wyeomyia smithii* spends its early life in the water-filled leaves of the pitcher plant. Larvae become dormant before dangerous cold weather hits and wake in the spring after the threat of frost has passed. In order to anticipate future temperature, the larvae monitor day length. In the early 1970s, biologist William Bradshaw of the University of Oregon, Eugene, demonstrated that the insects are genetically programmed to wake up after specific periods of exposure to light.

In the 6 November early edition of the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, Bradshaw reports that global warming has shifted the mosquito's schedule. Comparing larvae collected in the field in 1972 and 1996, he found that more recent mosquitoes require 14 fewer minutes. That suggests that the mosquitoes have adapted to spring weather that is arriving earlier than in the past.

Bradshaw's study is "very impressive" because it ties a clear genetic trait to warming trends, says biologist D. Liane Cochran-Stafira of Saint Xavier University in Chicago.



Mosquito larvae feel the heat.

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