参考译文

How COVID-19 Decreases Weather Forecast Accuracy

COVID-19如何降低天气预报的准确性

Here are two things that you probably didn’t think were connected: the COVID-19 pandemic and weather forecasts. But there is a link: commercial air travel. As jetliners carry passengers around the world, they also collect vital weather measurements, like air temperature and wind speed. During the pandemic, however, air travel has come almost to a halt.

这里有两件你可能认为没有联系的事情：COVID-19大流行和天气预报。但是中间的联系:商业航空旅行。在飞机载客环游世界的同时，也会收集重要的天气数据，比如空气温度和风速。然而，在疫情流行期间，航空旅行几乎停止。

“In February, let’s say, we have 100 percent. And then in March we go down by half. And April go down by another half. So currently, possibly, we just have one quarter of aircraft running. So you can imagine the gap of observations.”

“假设，在2月份，我们有100%的航空收集。到了三月份，下降了一半。四月又下降了一半。所以目前，可能只有四分之一的飞机在运行。所以你可以想象与之前的差距。”

Ying Chen, a meteorologist at the University of Lancaster in England.

英国兰开斯特大学的气象学家陈颖说。

To create weather forecasts, meteorologists need to feed accurate information about current weather conditions into their models. And planes are one of the best ways to get such info, since they sample the atmosphere at different altitudes and locations. But with the coronavirus grounding flights around the world, meteorologists are feeling the loss.

为了制作天气预报，气象学家需要将当前天气状况的准确信息输入到模型中。飞机是获得这些信息的最佳途径，因为它们能对不同高度和位置的大气进行了采样。但随着世界各地的航班因冠状病毒而停飞，气象学家感到了损失。

“I analyzed three months of spring, which is March, April and May. And I see temperature, wind speed—forecast accuracy all goes down.”

我分析了春天，即三月、四月和五月。温度，风速预报的准确性都下降了。”

Forecast quality declined the most for long-range projections and over remote areas where planes are one of the few sources of data. In Greenland, for example, the accuracy of temperature forecasts has decreased by as much as 3.5 degrees Fahrenheit.

远程预测和偏远地区的预测质量下降幅度最大，而飞机是这些地区为数不多的数据来源之一。例如，在格陵兰，气温预报的准确性下降了3.5华氏度。

Areas with heavy air traffic, like the U.S. and China, were also affected because fewer flights means less data. Europe made out better, thanks to its dense network of ground-based weather stations. The results are in the journal Geophysical Research Letters.

美国和中国等空中交通繁忙地区也受到影响，因为航班减少意味着数据减少。欧洲的情况要好一些，这要归功于其密集的地面气象站网络。研究结果发表在《地球物理研究快报》杂志上。

Subpar forecasts may sound like little more than a headache. After all, weather is notoriously unpredictable. But Chen says it could be a big problem for many industries—like utilities, which have to estimate household heating and cooling needs in order to meet electricity demand. Farmers also rely heavily on forecasts to decide when to plant and harvest crops.

预测低于平均水平听起来可能只是一件令人头疼的事情。毕竟，天气变幻莫测是出了名的。但陈说，这对许多行业来说可能是个大问题，比如公用事业公司，它们必须估计家庭的取暖和制冷需求，以满足电力需求。农民还严重依赖预测来决定何时种植和收获作物。

And Chen says that lower-quality forecasts could make it harder to provide early warning for extreme weather events.

陈说，低质量的预报会使提供极端天气事件的早期预警变得更加困难。

“Now we are going into summer, so we have hurricane season or monsoon season.”

“现在进入夏季，所以有飓风季节或季风季节。”

If so, we can only hope that while the COVID keeps the skies quiet, the weather stays quiet, too.

如果是这样，我们只能希望COVID能让天空安静下来，天气也能安静下来。

听力原文

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