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Letters

Concern about chlorine nitrate

Your report "Another cause found for ozone depletion" (SN: 9/11/93, p.167) gives the impression that ozone-destroying chlorine nitrate is a "natural" compound that has nothing to do with chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), halons, and other industrial chemicals that attack the ozone layer.

In fact, chlorine nitrate is formed by a reaction involving chlorine monoxide, a by-product of the breakup of CFCs in the stratosphere. The discovery that chlorine nitrate may contribute directly to ozone depletion should thus serve to heighten concern about the impact of industrial chemicals, not lessen it.

Brad Hurley
Bellows Falls, Vt.

Ecocontroversy rages wildly

I was both amused and disheartened to read that biologist Deborah Jensen of the Nature Conservancy in Arlington, Va., considers the

This Week

- 324 Lucy's New Kin Take a Powerful Stand
- 324 A close, cheap shave for heavy atoms
- 325 Mutant gene offers cholesterol resistance
- 325 Jupiter and Io: Infrared spots mark link
- 326 Health effects of smog: Worse than thought
- 326 Good vibes: Seeing a single molecule move
- 327 Earth's heart beats with a magnetic rhythm
- 327 Electric pulses pour drugs through skin

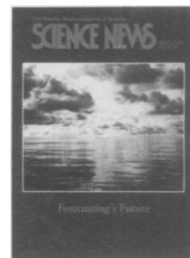
Research Notes

- 332 Biology
- 332 Biomedicine
- 333 Earth Science
- 333 Environment

Articles

- 328 The Long View of Weather

Cover: Warm, glassy water and rain clouds typify conditions in the equatorial western Pacific. When the warmth and precipitation spread eastward, they create an El Niño that disrupts normal weather patterns around the globe. Forecasters are now developing schemes to predict months ahead of time how such Pacific patterns will alter the climate in the United States and other countries.
(Photo: Eric J. Lindstrom/U.S. World Ocean Circulation Experiment)



- 331 Dubner's Primes

Departments

- 322 Books
- 323 Letters

Science Service, which publishes SCIENCE NEWS, is a nonprofit corporation founded in 1921. It gratefully accepts tax-deductible contributions and bequests to assist its efforts to increase the public understanding of science, with special emphasis on young people. More recently, it has included in its mission increasing scientific literacy among members of underrepresented groups. Through its Youth Programs it administers the International Science and Engineering Fair, the Science Talent Search for the Westinghouse Science Scholarships, and publishes and distributes the *Directory of Student Science Training Programs for Precollege Students*.

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big and threatening as a "male definition of wildness" ("Conservation's Ecocentrism," SN: 9/11/93, p.168).

This certainly doesn't match the visions of wildness made famous by John Muir, Henry David Thoreau, Edwin Way Teale, Barry Lopez, Aldo Leopold, or Peter Mathiesen. However, it does come close to describing the feeling I got in reading Annie Dillard's *A Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*. (I can also recall more than a few female students who have avoided the wilderness for fear of bears, rattlesnakes, and other such "unpleasant creatures.") Is she perhaps referring to executive-club sportsmen and the cult of Hemingway?

In any case, loyal membership in the Nature Conservancy notwithstanding, I think this is one of the wackiest statements I've ever read.

Richard W. Hazlett
Assistant Professor of Geology
Pomona College
Claremont, Calif.

I struggle to understand how Jensen's sexist characterization found its way into SCIENCE

News. What would be the reaction to someone characterizing a proposal as, say, "seductive, but weak and unambitious, a very female sort of idea?"

I would hope that such matters could be discussed on their merits and that detractors who attempt to abort the discussion by trafficking in negative stereotypes ("male" = "big and threatening") would receive the reaction their shallow analyses deserve.

Gordon McLean Jr.
Brookline, Mass.

Conservationists of all stripes need to recognize that no set-aside and preservation efforts can withstand the pressure of indefinitely (and rapidly) increasing human population numbers. No long-term plan can be taken seriously unless it speaks loudly to the need to halt the spread of nature's most dangerous predator and competitor.

Robin Ault
Newtonville, Mass.

Letters continued on p.334

NOVEMBER 20, 1993

323