

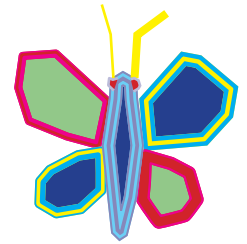
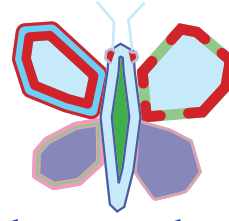
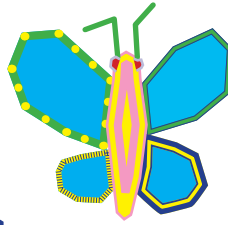
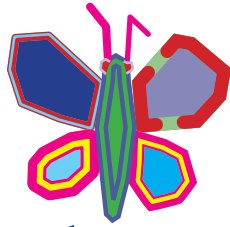
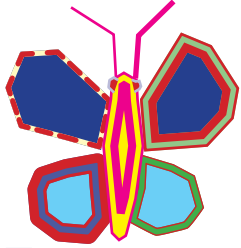
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Have mutant butterflies started to plague the world?

Mutant butterflies a result of Fukushima nuclear disaster, researchers say

In the first sign that the Fukushima nuclear disaster may be changing life around it, scientists say they've found mutant butterflies.

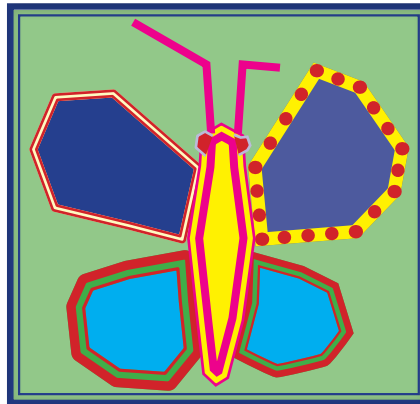
Some of the butterflies had abnormalities in their legs, antennae, and abdomens, and dents in their eyes, according to the study published in Scientific Reports, an online journal from the team behind Nature. Researchers also found that some affected butterflies had broken or wrinkled wings, changes in wing size, color pattern changes, and spots disappearing or increasing on the butterflies.

The study began two months after an earthquake and tsunami devastated swaths of northeastern Japan in March 2011, triggering a nuclear disaster. The Fukushima Daiichi plant spewed radiation and displaced tens of thousands of residents from the surrounding area in the worst nuclear accident since the 1986 Chernobyl disaster in Ukraine.

In May 2011, researchers collected more than 100 pale grass blue butterflies in and around the Fukushima prefecture and found that 12% of them had abnormalities or mutations. When those butterflies mated, the rate of mutations in the offspring rose to 18%, according to the study, which added that some died before reaching adulthood. When the offspring mated with healthy

butterflies that weren't affected by the nuclear crisis, the abnormality rate rose to 34%, indicating that the mutations were being passed on through genes to offspring at high rates even when one of the parent butterflies was healthy.

The scientists wanted to find out how things stood after a longer amount of time and again collected more than 200 butterflies last September. Twenty-eight percent of the butterflies showed abnormalities, but the rate of mutated offspring jumped to 52%, according to researchers. The study indicated that second-generation butterflies,



the ones collected in September, likely saw higher numbers of mutations because they were exposed to the radiation either as larvae or earlier than adult butterflies first collected.

To make sure that the nuclear disaster was in fact the cause of the mutations, researchers collected butterflies that had not been affected by radiation and gave them low-dose exposures of radiation and found similar results.

"We conclude that artificial radionuclides from the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant caused

physiological and genetic damage to this species," the study said.

The results of the study bring up concerns about the larger impact of the Fukushima disaster and the impact it will have on the ecosystem in Japan and nearby areas, as well as what we can learn for future nuclear disasters.

"Our results are consistent with the previous field studies that showed that butterfly populations are highly sensitive to artificial radionuclide contamination in Chernobyl and Fukushima," the study said. "Together, the present study indicates that the pale grass blue butterfly is probably one of the best indicator species for radionuclide contamination in Japan."

One of the researchers, Joji Otaki, an associate professor at the University of the Ryukyus in Okinawa, told reporters that while butterflies may be the best indicator, the study should also lead to more research on what else may be affected by the radiation.

"Sensitivity (to irradiation) varies between species, so research should be conducted on other animals," Otaki told the Japan Times.

Otaki said while there is still plenty of research to be done on radiation, there shouldn't be large-scale concern about this kind of mutation in humans.

"Humans are totally different from butterflies and they should be far more resistant" to radiation, he told the newspaper.

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Are You A Window Flier or an Aisle Seater?

By Thom Patterson, CNN

updated 7:56 AM EDT, Fri August 10, 2012

It's a powerful thing: the airline window seat.

Kids clamor for them. Shutterbugs are drawn to them. And some of us can't not look out the window.

Statistics suggest that window seat passengers may enjoy their flights more. But changes are afoot for this travel touchstone.

Some of the most desirable window seats come at a premium now. And that may shift how we feel about them. And let's face it, if all the photos snapped from airplane windows are any indication, we LOVE them.

Why all the love? Sure, the stunning 30,000-foot views are cool. But for some travelers, it's deeper than that.

Really? Can you analyze a traveler's personality by their favorite airplane seat? Of course not; don't be ridiculous. But let's do it anyway.

First, let's take a look at the aisle seaters, who are passionate in their own right about airline seating. Screw the view; these folks are all business.

"The aisle person is looking to get some work done," said Courtney Scott, Travelocity's travel blogger.

They want quick access to the cabin door -- or the restroom. And to get that access, they're willing to put up with collisions with passing airline attendants and rattling snack carts.

Aisle seaters sacrifice frequently standing up and sitting down -- and returning their "folding trays to their full upright position" -- to make way for the middle and window seaters.

For window seaters, it's not just about the view (or something to lean on). It's about the experience! These fliers often are the true romantics.

Tweeting travelers have a lot of love for Erykah Badu's 2010 hit song "Window Seat." You'll find Tweeters singing it -- virtually -- online.

"Can I get a win-dow seat? Don't want nobody ... next to me," the lyrics read. "I just wanna ticket outta town ... a look around ... and a safe touch down. I just wanna chance to fly ... a chance to cry ... and a long bye-bye."

When it comes to heart-wrenching separations, the aisle seat just doesn't pack the same cinematic punch.

It's been a century since the first U.S. commercial airline took to the sky. In that time, the window seat has become for many the best part of flying in an industry where complaints are all too frequent and the novelty of flight has faded. It attracts certain kinds of travelers, but it also can transform them.

"It's a calmer seat," Scott says.

Stats on airline seats are hard to come by, but anecdotally, front aisle seats are "generally considered most desirable" among Travelocity customers, Scott says.

At Expedia, 21% of customers over the past year picked window seats, 20% chose the aisle, and the rest had no preference. A United Airlines satisfaction survey for Airbus A320 passengers showed slightly higher preference for windows over aisles.

The consumer data collection site Hunch.com reports nearly seven out of 10 respondents prefer windows.

"Window choosers are more likely to be younger, female, shorter and more casual than their aisle compatriots," Hunch wrote. "They're also more likely to be into nature."

Here's what's changing: Airlines are charging premium prices for some window and aisle seats. And that's forcing passengers to choose the dreaded middle seat. It also makes it more difficult for families to sit in the same row if they're not willing to pay extra.

Airlines with preferred seating fees include American, Spirit, Frontier, US Airways, Allegiant, Ryan Air and Delta. Charging more for preferred seating offers passengers more seating choices and flexibility, Delta said in June.

This is shifting "the way that people view the window seat," Scott said. "It has become even more of a premium."

Fliers stung by window, aisle fees

It's not all blue skies with the window seats. The American College of Chest Physicians issued new health guidelines this year warning that sitting in window seats on long-distance flights can increase some people's risk of developing life-threatening blood clots called deep vein thrombosis.

Combine that with a higher risk of wetting yourself and stepping on strangers' toes, and you can see how far passengers are willing to go for those killer views.

Guidelines dispute "economy class syndrome"

And of course, who better to ask about the best air views than airline pilots?

They tell us that -- generally -- window seaters love flying in and out of New York LaGuardia; Vancouver, British Columbia; Sydney; Hong Kong and San Francisco.

Washington's Reagan National Airport has an eye-popping approach known to pilots as "river visual," says pilot Justin Schlechter. The plane flies low over the Potomac, giving passengers on the left side amazing views of the Kennedy Center, the Lincoln Memorial and the National Mall.

The descent into Anchorage, Alaska, Schlechter says, "is spectacular, with unbelievable mountaintops just skimming below the aircraft." Best seats: right side.

If sunlight is burning through your window when many



passengers are trying to sleep, please shut your shade.

In a famous 1963 episode of “The Twilight Zone,” William Shatner plays a mentally disturbed flier who watches helplessly through the window while a gremlin tears the plane apart.

“It taps into that universal thought of ‘if God intended us to fly, we would have wings,’ “ the “Star Trek” star told Business Jet Traveler. “A lot of people getting on an airplane to this day still can’t figure out why it flies.”

Watch a two-minute version of “The Twilight Zone” episode

Window psychology factored into Boeing’s new 787 Dreamliner, says John Barratt, CEO of the Teague design firm. Barratt told Fortune magazine that designers wanted to “bring some romance back” to air travel by reconnecting passengers “to actually flying.” Result: bigger windows.

Dreamliner windows measure 19 inches tall, 65% larger than the industry standard, according to Boeing. The cool factor on these portals is high: a gel inside the glass allows passengers to brighten or darken the outside sunlight with the touch of a button.

Finally, a word of advice from award-winning travel blogger Geraldine DeRuiter of Everywhereist.com: Don’t be the “inconsiderate window seat guy.”

Otherwise, DeRuiter writes, you’ll be called out as “heinous and rotten and selfish.”

And you don’t want that -- no matter how amazing your view is.

And then there’s the constant reminder that you’re in a metal tube at 30,000 feet.

5 Babies in 5 Minutes: Texas Quintuplets

By Georgiann Caruso and Ashley Hayes, CNN
updated 6:58 AM EDT, Tue August 14, 2012

Their mother calls them “five tiny bundles of perfection.”

The quintuplets -- among the first set delivered nationally so far this year -- were in stable condition after being born Thursday to missionaries Carrie and Gavin Jones at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas.

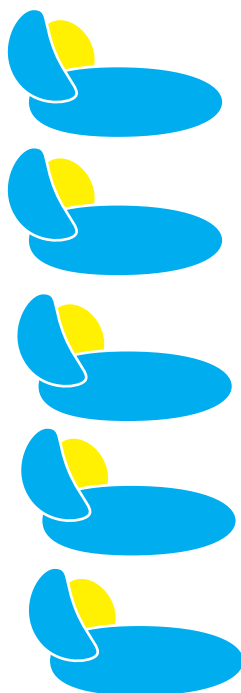
Three boys and two girls -- Will Edward, David Stephen, Marcie Jane, Seth Jared and Grace Elise -- remained in the neonatal intensive care unit at St. Paul University Hospital, part of the medical center.

While in stable condition, the siblings likely will remain hospitalized for several months until they reach weight, post-birth age and health markers.

“The five babies are doing quite well right now,” Dr. Gary Burgess, medical director of the hospital’s neonatal intensive care unit, said Monday. “They’re doing as expected. We always have little issues in the first week of life with these infants. ... They’re very stable right now.”

The five ranged in weight at birth from 1 pound, 12 ounces to 2 pounds, 11 ounces and in length from 12.5 inches to 15.5 inches.

“For all the anxiety that a quintuplet pregnancy generates, Carrie and Gavin are the perfect couple of have held it together,” said Dr. Patricia Santiago-Munoz, who delivered the babies in less than five minutes, according to the hospital. “A birth like this takes a village.”



That it did -- a team of more than 50 specialists, nurses, therapists and technicians assisted Santiago-Munoz, an assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology.

Medical teams planned for the births for months, even designating a special “Code 5” designation, handing out pagers to staff and developing a color-coded system to match each baby with his or her needed supplies. Weekly drills were held to prepare for the births, the hospital said.

“Even though I was the one responsible initiating that code, I just thought it was so exciting, and I think everybody felt it last Thursday morning,” Santiago-Munoz said Monday.

On average, about 12 sets of quintuplets are born each year, according to the hospital. In 2009, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recorded 16 sets.

Gavin Jones, 35, is a helicopter pilot. He, his wife and the couple’s 8-year-old son Isaac are missionaries in the South Pacific nation of Papua New Guinea.

Carrie Jones said Monday she had been using injections to help her conceive, but the couple did not undergo in vitro fertilization, which sometimes results in multiple births.

“Isaac’s been praying for five years for a sibling, and so I fully blame him,” she said. “... These five were a huge surprise.”

Her husband said, “The intent was to have one.”

Carrie Jones said she isn’t sure when they will return to Papua New Guinea.

“We’d like to ideally go back in July so we can get Isaac started in third grade, but we’ll just see how the babies are. ... Right now that’s our biggest priority,” she said.

The couple chronicled the pregnancy and documented the

babies' births on their blog, and continue to offer updates on the babies' medical conditions and progress.

Seth, for instance, has battled breathing difficulties, his parents said. "Seth's left lung is better," according to a Sunday blog post. "Now they are trying to inflate his right lung."

Seth is on a special ventilator but is doing well, Burgess said Monday.

Three of the babies -- Will, David and Marcie -- are on nasal prongs, which provide them with continuous positive airway pressure, Burgess said. Doctors hope to remove those within the next two days.

Grace is on a mechanical ventilator but is "very stable," he said. The other four were receiving intravenous and oral nutrition.

Each baby is assigned his or her own medical team, the hospital said, including a neonatologist, neonatal nurse practitioners, nurses, respiratory therapists, pharmacists and radiology technicians.

The Joneses said on their blog that it's "an emotional time" and "with five babies at different stages of wellness, it's quite a roller coaster around here."

"I am so in love with these five tiny bundles of perfection," Carrie Jones posted. "Obviously, my favorite times of the day are those I spend in the NICU."

Gavin Jones said in a statement, "We have been blown away by the outpouring of prayers and support for us through this unexpected journey. We are especially grateful to the team of professionals at UTSW who have gone beyond the call of duty in preparing for the babies and caring for Carrie. They have been amazing."

Older Olympians Bring Experience to the Games

At 13, swimmer Adzo Kpossi of Togo is the youngest Olympian competing in the London Summer Games. At the other end of the spectrum is Hiroshi Hoketsu. Dressed elegantly in top hat and tails, the 71-year-old represents Japan in the dressage equestrian competition.

There are plenty of athletes competing in the 2012 Games who span the age range between Kpossi and Hoketsu, some of them well past their 30th year.

Jordan Jovtchev, who turns 40 in February, made it to the finals of the men's gymnastic rings competition on Monday. Though he didn't earn a medal, Jovtchev gained notice for competing in an astounding sixth Olympic games. His silvery hair stands out as much as his powerful work on the rings in a sport known for its youthful competitors.

As the world focuses on the competition and pageantry in London this summer, athletes over 30 are putting on one spectacular show. Learn more about the Games' well-seasoned athletes in the gallery above.

