

Hello, and welcome again to As It Is!

I'm Steve Ember.

Today we tell we tell about cases of the disease polio in Somalia and the danger that it might spread beyond Somali borders.

Next, we hear about how video can show Alaskan salmon in action, as they make their yearly summer trip upstream to reproduce.

And finally, we mark the birthday anniversary of comedienne Lucille Ball. The lovable redhead had a huge influence on the development of American television in the 1950s.

But first, the head of immunization at Somalia's Ministry of Health says there are almost 100 confirmed cases of polio in south-central parts of the country. And, the disease is showing no signs of slowing down. Polio also has been found in Somali refugee camps in Kenya. And there are fears that the virus could cross into Ethiopia.

The Ministry of Health official, Dr. Yassin Nur, says polio is now widespread in Somalia. It was first identified in May. Of 94 known cases in the nation, the health official said at least one is in the self-governing area of Somaliland.

He noted that Ethiopia's long and porous border with Somalia could easily lead to a spread of polio. The doctor spoke from Mogadishu.

In addition, 10 more cases of polio have been confirmed at the Dadaab refugee camps in Kenya.

The disease had almost been removed from the world, or eradicated, before the new outbreak. Active cases have been reported in only three countries – Afghanistan, Pakistan and Nigeria.

A two-year-old Somali girl was confirmed to have been infected with polio in May. She was the first known case in Somalia since 2007. Dr. Nur said internally displaced people – IDPs -- are most at risk of getting the virus that causes polio. He says the continual movement of people between countries raises the risk of spreading the disease.

Dr. Nur said he hopes a vaccination campaign will be able to "limit and control" the spread of the disease. The campaign was launched in cooperation with United Nations agencies as well as local and international organizations.

The U.N. says almost four million people have received a polio vaccination in Somalia since May. Prevention is especially important because antibiotic drugs cannot help after someone is infected. That's because antibiotics are effective against bacteria, not viruses.

Polio is mainly a disease that affects children. But adults also get it. Many people are infected without knowing it. They may just have a higher than normal body temperature and pain in the throat. But when polio attacks the central nervous system, patients can be paralyzed. They may not be able to stand or walk. When the disease affects breathing, some patients can die.

You're listening to As It Is from VOA Learning English. I'm Steve Ember.

Video Camera Shows Alaskan Sockeye Salmon Doing What Comes Naturally...

Every year, biologists in Alaska launch an underwater video camera they call the Salmon Cam. The device can provide video of salmon in action as they make their summer trip upstream. Avi Arditti has more about this "must-see" video.

The salmon are swimming in waters that pass through Tongass National Forest -- the largest national forest in the United States.

The salmon make this trip every year. The adult fish struggle upstream, sometimes traveling hundreds of kilometers from where they start, in the ocean. They are going back to the freshwater areas where they hatched years earlier. After returning, they will mate, produce eggs and die.

Every year, the United States Forest Service puts a camera in the water to document the salmon's trip. Pete Schneider is a biologist with the Tongass National Forest.

"The fish come right up to the camera sometimes or you get to see how they chase other fish away. Or you can see them digging their nests in the rocks and gravel. You can be in at their level and look at them almost eye to eye."

Pete Schneider has been operating the Salmon Cam every year since 1997. This year, he put it in the waters of Steep Creek, where sockeye salmon mate and lay their their eggs.

Mr. Schneider says sockeye salmon are very tasty fish.

"Their meat is highly prized. It keeps very well, so a lot of the native tribes would seek out sockeye in particular because it cans and smokes very well."

After the salmon have reproduced, they die in Steep Creek. Their bodies make a tasty meal for meat-eating creatures. Other animals visit the stream for the food. Bears, eagles and even wolves enjoy a fish dinner. Pete Schneider says the fish are an important food for the whole coastal ecosystem – not just people.

“It goes beyond just the eagle and the bear and the humans. It really feeds the insects and the plants and the soils benefit from it.”

And he says all very small organisms and creatures without backbones profit indirectly from the salmon. Their bodies fertilize the stream banks and feed the forest.

Later, when the eggs hatch, small fish and animals will feed on the fry, or baby salmon. The young fish travel downstream to the ocean. There some become a meal for larger fish, birds, seals, whales and fishermen.

In a few years, the surviving fish battle again to swim upstream. Scientists and fishermen are studying this series of events.

As Pete Schneider says, there is still a lot to learn about salmon.

I’m Avi Arditti.

And if you’d like to see a video of those sockeye salmon, just go to

LearningEnglish@voanews.com

And a birthday anniversary note:

A red-haired Icon of Television Comedy...

Finally, television and film actress Lucille Ball was born on August 6, 1911. She was especially important to the development of television as popular entertainment in the 1950's.



Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz from an episode of "I Love Lucy"

Lucille Ball probably will always be remembered for her role as the silly but lovable red-haired Lucy Ricardo in the hit show, "I Love Lucy." Her real-life husband at the time, Desi Arnaz, also played her husband in the CBS comedy series.

Desi played the role of Ricky Ricardo, a Cuban-American singer and band leader who dealt patiently with Lucy's happily crazy behavior. Aided by her friend Ethel (that was Vivian Vance) Lucy was always plotting some wild scheme to perform with her husband's band or get a part in the movies.

Lucy: "Uh, what'll I have to do?"

Ricky: "You gonna get me back on the television show."

Lucy: "How?"

Ricky: "I don' know how..."

Sometimes Desi would get angry and shout at her. And sometimes she would make fun of the way he spoke English.

Ricky: "...but if you don't, I'll, I'll..."

Lucy: "I will, Ricky. I'll get you back on the show. Don't even think of what you'll do if I don't" [she imitates his Cuban accent]

But the programs always ended happily.

Many of the "I Love Lucy" shows have become classics and scenes from them are still seen on television around the world.

In addition to "I Love Lucy", Lucille Ball starred in other television comedies and had a long career as a television executive. She died in 1989.

And that's As It Is for today. From VOA Learning English, I'm Steve Ember. See you next time.