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EARTH: Hurricane Hunters Fly Towards Improved Forecasts

Alexandria, VA- Each year, as hurricanes hit U.S. coastlines, scientists study them to improve forecasts critical for saving lives and property. Last year, unmanned aircraft from NASA flew into the biggest storms as part of a project to improve hurricane forecasts by 50 percent over the next 10 years.

As EARTH Magazine reports in the August issue, three projects in particular — the Hurricane Forecast Improvement Program, NASA's 2010 Genesis and Rapid Intensification Project Field Experiment and its replacement, the Hurricane and Severe Storm Sentinel Project — may be responsible for a 20 percent error reduction in the hurricane track and intensity forecasts.

The addition of the unmanned aircraft, called Global Hawks, allows scientists to better observe hurricane evolution using a variety of sensors. For the 2013 hurricane season, already underway, scientists hope to corroborate Global Hawk data with Doppler data obtained in NOAA's manned "Hurricane Hunter" aircraft.

Learn more about advances in hurricane forecasting at <http://bit.ly/13Ae0DJ>, as well as the fate of hind wings in prehistoric birds and how Columbian scientists are researching the effects of soil and weather on body decomposition to locate clandestine graves, all in the August issue of EARTH Magazine. Purchase a copy at the EARTH Magazine digital newsstand: www.earthmagazine.org/digital.

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Keep up to date with the latest happenings in Earth, energy and the environment news with EARTH magazine online at www.earthmagazine.org/. Published by the American Geosciences Institute, EARTH is your source for the science behind the headlines.

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