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EARTH: Foretelling Next Month’s Tornadoes

Alexandria, VA – Tornadoes are notoriously difficult to forecast, with often deadly results: In 2011, tornadoes in the U.S. killed more than 550 people, a higher death toll than in the past 10 years combined. Now a new study on short-term climate trends offers a fresh approach to tornado forecasting that may give people in tornado-prone regions more warning that twisters may soon be descending.

By sorting through average atmospheric conditions in tornado-prone regions, Michael Tippett, a climate scientist at Columbia University, may have found a way to predict tornado trends. This new method could potentially help emergency relief agencies as well as communities and individuals better prepare for the volatile storms, but just how close are we to perfecting this revolutionary model? Find out at http://www.earthmagazine.org/article/foretelling-next-months-tornadoes.

Read this story and more in the April issue of EARTH Magazine, available online now at http://www.earth-magazine.org/. Discover how ice-dwelling bacteria survive; learn about the hidden dangers of volcano geotourism; and join Voyager 1 as it probes the limits of the solar system.

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