

The World Around Us



"Foreign Correspondent"
Michael Ludwig reports on the some strange goings on in the natural world.

FOXES IN LONDON!

Can you believe there are over 10,000 foxes roaming around London! Unlike country foxes that are shy and keep out of sight, the London foxes can be seen, regularly walking along local footpaths near humans and they often make their dens in peoples gardens. Instead of chasing rabbits and chickens they live on a diet of take away dinners from rubbish bins! A fox was even found asleep in a filing cabinet in the Houses of Parliament, and another in the grounds of Buckingham Palace, reportedly killing some of the Queen's pink flamingos. Some people think foxes are pests as they dig up lawns and frighten pets but there are many who love to have the foxes around and even feed them to encourage them to stay!



400 Dolphins Stranded

Over 400 dead bottlenosed dolphins recently washed ashore on a beach on the East African island of Zanzibar. Scientists are unsure as to why the dolphins were stranded as it is very unusual for so many animals to be stranded and die at any one time. It is thought that low tide along with heavy rains and high winds might have disoriented the dolphins. Some scientists believe the dolphins may have surfaced too quickly after something frightened them and suffered from the bends or decompression sickness (similar to what divers suffer from).

Honey I'm Home...!

A four year old panda that has spent his entire life in captivity has been released into the wild in China. Xiang Xiang, whose name means lucky, is the first panda that was born in captivity to be released and is now one of about 1,600 giant pandas in the wild. On the day he was released he gave two barks and ran at the film crew who were there to watch his release. Although he is now well hidden in a forest researchers can keep track of where he is as they fitted him with a collar with a satellite tracking device. If Xiang Xiang settles into life in the wild more pandas will be released. It is hoped that eventually China's wild panda population will be doubled.



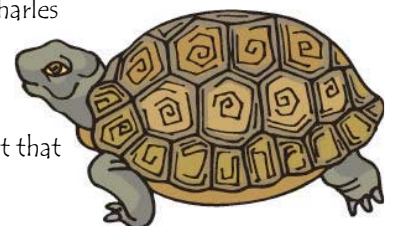
Just Visiting!

For the first time in over 170 years a bear was seen in Germany. The brown bear, which is believed to have migrated from Slovenia, attacked sheep and chickens in farms in Bavaria. Local police wanted to track down the bear and capture it but it escaped into Austria just in time!



Sad News...

In the spring Issue of *Nature's Web* we brought you news of Harriet the tortoise who turned 176 this year. Sadly, it was reported recently that Harriet has died after a short illness. Harriet was a Giant Galapagos Land Tortoise and it is believed that she was taken from the Galapagos islands off South America by the famous scientist Charles Darwin in 1835, transported to Britain and then sent on to Australia. She resided in the Australian Zoo where she was cared for by Steve Irwin 'The Crocodile hunter' - and his team. Harriet had made it into the Guinness Book of World Records as the world's oldest living animal. Originally it was thought that Harriet was a boy and she was named Harry but that was changed to Harriet once they discovered she was actually a girl!



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