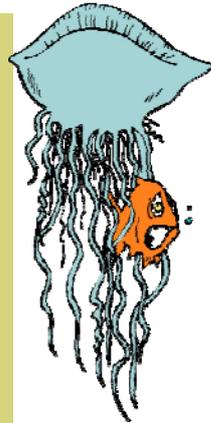




The World Around Us



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



OOPS! REVISED Advice for Treating Portuguese Man o'War Jellyfish Stings

For years, the advice for treating a Portuguese Man O'War sting was to rinse it in seawater and then apply ice or other materials. In a new study, scientists from NUI Galway have found this to be actually the worst thing you can do! Working with jellyfish sting experts from the University of Hawaii at Mānoa, they found that the best treatment is to rinse the sting site with vinegar, washing away the tentacles and then immersing the sting site in 45°C hot water (or apply a hot pack) for 45 minutes. So, pack a bottle of vinegar if going to tropical beaches!

Last year there were numerous sightings of Portuguese Man o'War jellyfish on Irish beaches. If you hear of sightings at a beach near you, be vigilant.

Counting Albatross from Space

The Northern Royal albatross is an endangered species and nests almost entirely on some rocky sea-stacks close to New Zealand's Chatham Islands. As these stacks are so inaccessible, counting these birds and is very difficult and expensive. However scientists, led by experts at the British Antarctic Survey, have found a new way of counting them—from space! With help from the DigitalGlobe WorldView-3 satellite, scientists can capture images of objects as small as 30cm across. Though the birds only appear as white dots, their white plumages shows up against the surrounding vegetation, allowing the scientists to count the birds by recording the dots.



A Northern Royal Albatross.

Image courtesy of JJ Harrison. (CC BY-SA 3.0) https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Diomedea_sanfordi_-_SE_Tasmania.jpg

The Return of a Beach on Achill Island

In the winter of 1984, a beach on Achill Island, off the coast of Co. Mayo, was washed away by a number of storms that hit the island and the west coast of Ireland. When the sand disappeared, it left behind only bare rock and rockpools. Now, 33 years later the beach is back! Over a few days at the end of April 2017, the ocean dumped thousands of tonnes of sand back onto the rocks near Dooagh village. It is expected that the new sandy beach will remain in place for summer 2017.



A First Retirement Home for Pandas?

In the wild, the lifespan of a panda is about 20 years; in captivity, pandas are living a lot longer—for example, in southeast China, one has reached 37 years of age. Many of these elderly pandas need specialised care. They can have stiff joints, failing eyesight, poor digestion and bad teeth. To give these pandas the care that they need, China is planning on opening a retirement home designed especially for them, where they can avail of a special diet and light exercise.

No Selfies with Seals

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in the USA, have given out some good advice—don't take selfies with seals! They warn us that it might be tempting to get the perfect shot of yourself or your child with an adorable sea pup, but they say to please do the right thing and leave them alone. Getting too close to a wild animal puts you—and the animal—at risk. Seals have powerful jaws and a mouthful of sharp teeth, and can leave a nasty bite. NOAA has received human injury reports from people getting too close or "cornering" an animal for a quick photo. When you get close to a wild animal, you risk stressing or threatening it, and stressed animals are much more likely to act unpredictably. Seals bite!



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