

by Scott_LaFee

HOME DECONSTRUCTION

WHAT IS IT? - This is a red-lipped batfish that is found in tropical seas. CNS Photo.

CARTOON LAWS OF PHYSICS - Any biological organism passing through solid matter will leave a perforation conforming to its perimeter, this is also known as the law of 'the silhouette of passage.' CNS Photo.

HOME DECONSTRUCTION - Being fairly nomadic and almost constantly on the move for new forage, African elephants (*Loxodonta africana*) don't really keep house. CNS Photo.

OUR IGNOBEL HISTORY - Dan Quayle is fondly remembered as a distinguished mangler of logic and grammar. CNS Photo.

ANTHROPOLOGY 101 - In Victorian England, proper library etiquette demanded that books written by women not be shelved next to books written by men, unless the authors were married to each other. CNS Photo. Being fairly nomadic and almost constantly on the move for new forage, African elephants (*Loxodonta africana*) don't really keep house. But don't tell that to the Kenya dwarf gecko (*Lygodactylus keniensis*), which probably thinks the big, gray, lumbering pachyderms are wonderful homemakers.

At least for Kenya dwarf geckos. In a new study published in the journal *Ecology*, Robert Pringle of Stanford University reports that dwarf geckos show a strong preference for trees visited by elephants. The reason, it seems, is that browsing elephants are none too gentle with trees, damaging them as they strip off leaves and bark.

These trees, with their cracked and broken branches, provide numerous hiding places for geckos to live and breed. In contrast, Pringle said he could find almost no geckos in nearby trees not visited by elephants.

"The ripped-up trees are like labyrinths compared to the pristine trees, which helps boost lizard densities," Pringle said.

VERBATIM

In ancient times, they had no statistics, so they had to fall back on lies.

- Canadian writer Stephen Leacock (1869-1944)

BRAIN SWEAT

Think fast. After you fill your car's gas tank, which happens first:

A. The tank becomes three-fourths empty

B. The tank becomes two-thirds full

BRAIN SWEAT ANSWER

B.

"TRUE FACTS"

In the late 1920s, the Galvin Manufacturing Corp. in Chicago set out to develop a commercial radio that could be installed in automobiles. At the time, the best-known music players were called Victrolas, so the company decided to play off that name and the idea of sound in motion, dubbing their new product, the "Motorola."

The radio became so popular that the Galvin company eventually adopted the name for itself.

ANECDOTAL EVIDENCE

In 1971, Japanese researchers designed an experiment to study landslides. They set up fire hoses at the bottom of a hill, then drenched it to mimic a massive rainstorm.

Not surprisingly, the hill collapsed on the watching researchers. Four scientists and 11 observers were killed.

JUST ASKING

If quitters never win and winners never quit, why should you "quit while you're ahead?"

CARTOON LAWS OF PHYSICS

Any biological organism passing through solid matter will leave a perforation conforming to its perimeter. Also known as the law of "the silhouette of passage." The phenomenon is most often observed in victims of directed-pressure explosions and in reckless cowards so eager to escape that they exit directly through a wall

or closed door, leaving behind a perfect cookie-cutout hole. The threat of skunks or matrimony often catalyzes this reaction.

WHAT IS IT ANSWER

A red-lipped batfish. Found in tropical seas, batfish have broad heads and slight bodies. They are poor swimmers, preferring to use their pectoral fins to "walk" on the ocean floor, collecting shrimp, small fish, crabs, worms and mollusks along the way.

OUR IGNOBEL HISTORY

The 1991 Ig Nobel Prize for education was awarded to J. Danforth Quayle, who served as vice president of the United States under President George H.W. Bush (1989-1993). While the son and current president, George W. Bush is quite (in)famous for his various and sundry convolutions of human speech, Quayle is fondly remembered as a distinguished mangler of logic and grammar in his own right.

Three enduring, science-related examples:

"It isn't pollution that's harming the environment. It's the impurities in our air and water that are doing it."

"It's time for the human race to enter the solar system."

"Space is almost infinite. As a matter of fact, we think it is infinite."

ANTHROPOLOGY 101

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Eureka! Daily discoveries for the scientifically bent by Scott_LaFee