

by Scott_LaFee

ELECTRON INK

Project Puffin

TRUE FACTS - Peanuts are an ingredient in dynamite. CNS Photo. WHERE IN THE WORLD - When it's completed in 2009, the Three Gorges Dam on China's Yangtze River will be the world's largest hydroelectric power generator and one of the few man-made structures visible to the naked eye from space. CNS Photo. THUNDERING HERDS - Recent aerial surveys conducted by Wildlife Conservation Society researchers indicate that at least some species have not only survived turmoil in the Sudan, but thrived. CNS Photo. ELECTRON INK - Each spring, Atlantic puffins return to Maine's coastal islands. Check them out on the Audubon Society's Puffin Cam at www.projectpuffin.org. CNS Photo. www.projectpuffin.org

Each spring, Atlantic puffins return to Maine's coastal islands. Check them out on the Audubon Society's Puffin Cam, located in the Seal Island National Wildlife Refuge, 20 miles south of Rockland, Maine.

VERBATIM

In cryogenics, they freeze you until science discovers a cure for what killed you, and then they revive you. But what if you froze to death?

BRAIN SWEAT

What is the numerical significance of the year 1666? (Hint: Think Roman.)

'TRUE FACTS'

When the walkie-talkie was introduced commercially in 1934, it was described as a "portable super-regenerative receiver and transmitter."

Peanuts are an ingredient in dynamite.

If you stand with your eyes roughly 6 feet above the surface of the ocean, the horizon will be approximately three miles away.

BRAIN SWEAT ANSWER

It is the only time in history when the Roman numerals in a year were written using all of the numerals in order from highest value to lowest value: MDCLXVI (1,000 plus 500 plus 100 plus 50 plus 10 plus 5 plus 1).

THUNDERING HERDS

Years of civil war in southern Sudan had convinced conservationists that the region's wildlife was among the likely victims, but nobody knew for sure, since the last animal surveys were done 25 years ago.

But recent aerial surveys conducted by Wildlife Conservation Society researchers indicate that at least some species have not only survived, but thrived. For example, the researchers estimate more than 1.2 million white-eared kob (a kind of deer), Tiang antelope and Mongalla gazelle live in the region, along with perhaps 8,900 buffalo, 8,000 elephants, 1,200 ostriches and abundant populations of lions, leopards, giraffes, hippos, crocodiles and kudu.

"I have never seen wildlife like that, in such numbers, not even when flying over the mass migrations of the Serengeti," said J. Michael Fay, who headed the survey.

The discovery has a dark twist, however. As violence diminishes, people and industry are moving into the region. Deforestation is occurring. Poaching and unsustainable hunting are becoming common.

Conservationists fear that if nothing is done to protect it, this unexpected abundance of wildlife in southern Sudan will be short-lived.

DATEBOOK

The Reuben H. Fleet Science Center in San Diego, Calif., has just opened a new exhibit. "Listen Here! Making Sense of Sound" explores the nature of sound, how humans hear and the act of listening. Interactive displays allow visitors to manipulate sounds, eavesdrop on fake conversations and play an audio version of the classic game "Pong."

Presented in both English and Spanish, the exhibit will run through May 2008.

AS WE WERE SAYING

Researchers at University College London have developed a psychometric test to quantify a person's tendency to distraction. The test, according to the journal Nature, "could help employers such as airlines that need staff to ... oh look, a chicken!"

PRIME NUMBERS

5.4 million - Number of people worldwide who became homeless last year due to natural disasters.

700,000 - Estimated number of leaves, on average, shed by a fully mature oak tree in one year.

0 - Number of Baiji dolphins believed still to exist in China's Yangtze River.

Sources: Worldwatch Institute; "The Ultimate Book of Useless Information" by Noel Botham (2007); The New Atlantis

WHERE IN THE WORLD? ANSWER

When it's completed in 2009, the Three Gorges Dam on China's Yangtze River will be the world's largest hydroelectric power generator and one of the few man-made structures visible to the naked eye from space.

Some numbers: The dam is roughly 1.4 miles long and 607 feet tall, five times larger than Hoover Dam. When the reservoir behind it is fully filled, it will submerge 244 square miles of land, including the fabled three gorges for which the dam is named. More than 1 million people have been or will be relocated. Total construction cost: At least \$625 billion.

Copley News Service

Eureka! Daily discoveries for the scientifically bent by Scott_LaFee