MYSTERY NEWS

Eastern Forest Nursery

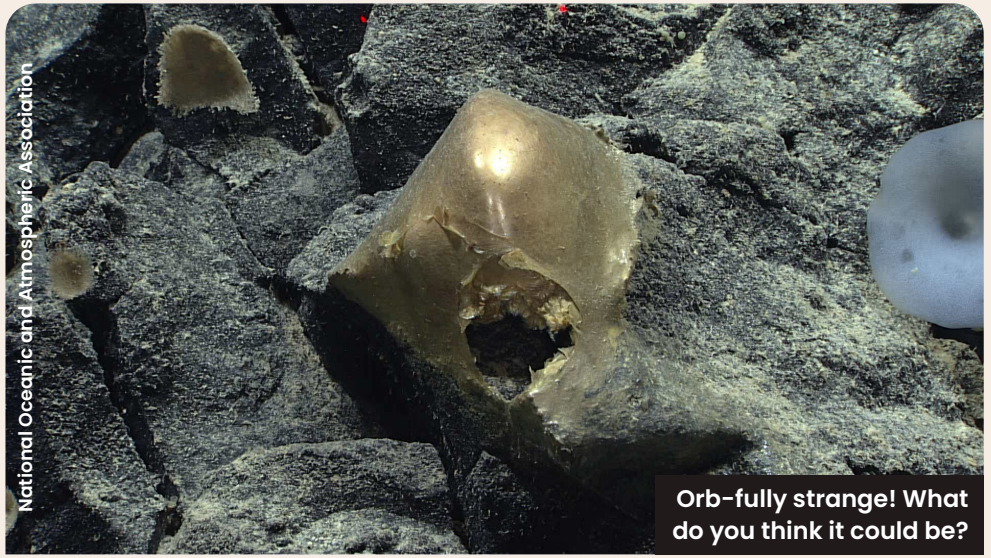
Claude looking shifty and eyeing up his dinner

Koala revealed as plant thief

A CHEEKY koala in Australia has been caught stealing seedlings from a local plant nursery... and eating the evidence!

A farmer couldn't work out why his seedlings kept disappearing, until one day he found a greedy koala in a daze. It turned out that the criminal had helped himself to so many eucalypt plants he was too full to climb a tree and escape! Over two months, the koala, who was nicknamed Claude because he has long claws, had eaten £3,000 worth of seedlings.

Now the mystery of the missing plants has been solved, a koala-proof fence is being built to protect new seedlings. Thankfully, the farmer, Humphrey Herington, wasn't too cross at the cheeky koala, saying: "I was shocked, but I was also a little bit impressed."



National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association

Orb-fully strange! What do you think it could be?

STRANGE ORB FOUND IN OCEAN

SCIENTISTS are stumped by a mysterious golden orb found in the Pacific Ocean, off the coast of Alaska.

The shiny orb, which is 10cm in diameter, was found on the seabed, 3.3km down, by a robot submarine with a remote-controlled arm. It was gently sucked up a tube to the surface, and scientists are now studying it closely in a lab as nothing like this has ever been found before.

Although the orb shines like metal, it has a 'skin-like' texture. Ideas on what the orb could be include a type of coral, an egg casing or a sea sponge. One big clue is that the orb has a hole in it, as this could have been made by a creature hatching or a predator breaking in.

Sam Candio, from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, said: "Isn't the deep sea so delightfully strange? This is a reminder of how little we know about our own planet and how much is left to learn and appreciate about our ocean."

Questions on: Mystery News

Look at both stories.

1) Find **two** adjectives that are used to describe the koala and **two** adjectives that are used to describe the orb.

2) Which of these stories remains a mystery?

Look at the story 'Koala revealed as plant thief'.

3a) Fill in the police report on the crime:

Crime: .....

Cost of the crime: .....

Criminal: .....

How the criminal was caught: .....

3b) What's being done to stop this crime happening again?

4a) Why was the koala nicknamed 'Claude'?
4b) Can you think of any other good nicknames for him?

5a) Why do you think Humphrey Herington was 'shocked but a little bit impressed'?
5b) Are you shocked or impressed by the koala (or both!)?

Look at the story 'Strange orb found in ocean'.

6) What's so special about the discovery of the golden orb?

- ☐ It's worth a lot of money
- ☐ It contains a rare sea creature
- ☐ Nothing like this has been found before

7a) What do researchers **know** about the orb?
7b) Why is the hole in the orb a clue?

8a) Do you agree with any of the suggestions for what the orb could be? Or do you have any other ideas?
8b) Sam Candio describes the deep sea as "delightfully strange". Use your imagination to make up a delightfully strange story about the golden orb.

ENVIRONMENT NEWS

Protesters say ‘Pie there!’ to Ryanair boss

BELGIAN climate protesters welcomed the boss of budget airline Ryanair, Michael O’Leary, to Brussels with two cream pies... plopped straight in his face. The two women called for O’Leary, as the boss of Europe’s biggest airline, to stop pollution from planes. The pie protest came at the same time as Ryanair pilots in Belgium announced that they would be going on strike over pay and working conditions for the fourth time in just two months.

Tree-mendous! Deforestation falls in Amazon

Getty

Deforestation is when trees are cut down for human use

DEFORESTATION in Brazil’s Amazon rainforest has fallen for the second month in a row.

Data from space research agency INPE shows that there was a big drop in how much of the Amazon rainforest was cut down or destroyed in both July and August this year. Although 563 square kilometres of rainforest was cut down in August, this is down from 1,661 square kilometres in the same month last year. This is seen as positive news as deforestation usually at its highest in August.

Brazil’s current president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva celebrated the news on social media, saying the decline was the “result of the great work of the Environment Ministry and the government.” His government has been praised for tackling the climate crisis, after making a commitment to end deforestation completely by 2030.

Humans have been responsible for deforestation of the Amazon rainforest since the 1960s, as it provides logs and clears the land for things like farms, buildings and roads. This has a huge impact on wildlife as it means that many species are killed or lose their home and food sources. It also affects the communities of people who live in the forest and rely on the land to survive, and increases the risk of fire and flooding.

Questions on: Environment News

Look at both stories.

1) Match up the two halves of the sentences.

Michael O'Leary is...	...a space research agency.
Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva is...	...the president of Brazil.
Ryanair is...	...a budget airline.
INPE is...	...the boss of Ryanair.

2a) Both headlines use a play on words. Which words or phrases are replaced by the ones below?

Tree-mendous: .....

Pie there!: .....

2b) Why do you think the sub-editor (who writes the headlines) has chosen to use word play for these stories?

Look the story 'Tree-mendous! Deforestation falls in Amazon'.

3a) How much of the rainforest was cut down in August this year?
3b) In what way is this positive news?

4) What has the president of Brazil promised to do?

- ☐ Cut down as many trees as possible by 2030
- ☐ Stop celebrating on social media by 2030
- ☐ Put an end to deforestation by 2030

5a) Why is the Amazon rainforest being cut down or destroyed?
5b) Find **three** ways deforestation is having an impact.

Look the story 'BAD WEEK... Protesters say 'Pie there!' to Ryanair boss'.

6) Find **two** reasons why it was a bad week for the boss of Ryanair.

7a) Why did protesters hit Michael O'Leary with cream pies?
7b) Do you think their cream pie protest was justified?

8) If you were planning a protest about pollution, what would you do? What would be the best way to get your voice heard and make a difference?

ANIMAL NEWS

LONELY LION LOVES NEW HOME

Animal Defenders International

Ruben snacks on a pumpkin

A 15-YEAR-OLD LION has finally been moved to a sanctuary after spending the last five years living in a tiny concrete cell.

Ruben was born a private zoo in Armenia, but when the zoo closed, all the other animals were re-homed and he was the only one left. He became so lonely that he stopped roaring and he suffered health issues because the concrete cell was too small for him to get enough exercise.

Ruben was rescued by the charity Animal Defenders International (ADI) and moved more than 8,300km to the ADI Wildlife Sanctuary in South Africa.

As Ruben is unsteady on his feet, the team at the sanctuary have designed him a special home with ramps and low platforms to help him move around. Ruben will need medical care for the rest of his life, but he can receive the treatment he needs in his new home. As Ruben is settling in, his roars are beginning to get louder.

ADI President Jan Creamer said: " Seeing him walk on grass for the first time, hearing the voices of his own kind, with the African sun on his back, brought us all to tears. If he stumbles or falls he just picks himself up and keeps going. He is nothing short of heroic."

Birdland baby boom

Birdland Park & Gardens

Flamingos and their chicks

BIRDLAND Park and Gardens in Bourton-on-the-Water has welcomed a flock of new feathered friends after a successful breeding season.

Among the new arrivals are flamingo chicks, lovebirds, speckled pigeons and weaver birds. The park's team is also excited that their cassowaries have laid giant green eggs, as cassowary chicks are very rare in the UK. Head keeper Alistair Keen said: "Breeding is a great indication that the birds are happy and healthy."

Birdland is home to more than 500 birds, including England's only colony of breeding king penguins. It also recently welcomed new additions from other bird parks around the world, including scarlet ibises, azure-winged magpies, masked plovers and a female seriema.

Questions on: Animal News

Look at both stories.

1a) Find the **alliteration** (when words begin with the same letter or sound) in both headlines.
1b) Why do you think the sub-editor (who writes the headlines) chose to use alliteration? Do you think it is effective?

Look at the story 'Lonely lion finds happiness'.

2) Which country was Ruben moved **from** and **to**?

3a) How has Ruben's **environment** changed since he moved?
3b) How has Ruben's **behaviour** changed since he moved?

4a) How does Ruben's story make you feel?
4b) Do you agree with Jan Creamer that Ruben is 'heroic'?

Look at the story 'Birdland baby boom'.
5) Fill in the missing letters in the names of birds that have hatched at Birdland.

B
FL_MING_S
R
S_EC_LED PI_EO_S
L
WEA VER B_RDS
N
LO_EB_RDS

6) Match up the two halves of the sentences.

Cassowary eggs are...	...happy and healthy.
Cassowary chicks are...	...giant and green.
Breeding is an indication that birds are...	...the only one in the UK.
The colony of breeding king penguins is...	...very rare in the UK.

7a) Looking at names of the birds and their pictures, can you guess which is which? (Hint: scarlet is a bright red colour and azure is a bright blue colour)

scarlet ibis | azure-winged magpie | masked plover

7b) Which of the birds mentioned in the story have you heard of before?

Look at both stories.

8) Do you think zoos and wildlife parks are important, or is it better for animals to stay in the wild? Explain your reasons.

WEATHER NEWS

HOTTEST SUMMER IN HUMAN HISTORY

All images: Getty

The UK recorded seven days in a row above 30°C in September for the first time

A girl cools off in Italy

Wildfires in Greece

THIS summer was the hottest EVER recorded, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) has announced.

The average global temperature for this June, July and August was 16.77°C, topping the previous record of 16.48°C which was set in the summer of 2019. Overall, 2023 is expected to overtake 2016 as the hottest year on record.

The extreme heat led to an increase in wildfires around the world. Canada had its worst wildfire season on record and tourists were evacuated from the Greek islands of Rhodes and Corfu when wildfires became out of control.

Secretary-General of the WMO, Petteri Taalas, said: "The northern hemisphere just had a summer of extremes — with repeated heatwaves fuelling devastating wildfires, harming health and taking a lasting toll on the environment."

The WMO's Air Quality and Climate Bulletin reports that heatwaves are linked to pollution and that smoke from wildfires carries chemicals that can damage crops and cause health issues such as coughing and breathing difficulties. The United Nations (UN) estimates that 99% of the world's population is breathing unsafe air. It wants the world to work together to combat air pollution.

Even though June, July and August are winter in the southern hemisphere, there has been extreme weather, linked to climate change, there too. For example, there was record rainfall in Hong Kong and a cyclone in Brazil.

Secretary-General for the UN, António Guterres, said: "Our planet has just suffered a season of simmering. Climate breakdown has begun." However, he added: "We can still avoid the worst of climate chaos. We don't have a moment to lose."

The northern hemisphere is the half of the Earth that's north of the equator. The southern hemisphere is the half of the Earth that's south of the equator.

Questions on: 'Hottest summer in human history'

1) What subject does the word 'meteorological' relate to?

- ☐ World records
- ☐ Weather
- ☐ Space travel

2) Fill in the year.

The hottest summer on record is now: .....

The second hottest summer on record is now: .....

The hottest year on record is currently: .....

The hottest year on record is expected to be: .....

3) What job title do Petteri Taalas, and António Guterres both have?

4a) Name **two** places where there have been wildfires this summer.
4b) Find **two** harmful effects of wildfire smoke.

5) Looking at the estimate from the UN, what percentage of the world's population is breathing **safe** air.

6a) What extreme weather has there been in the southern hemisphere recently?
6b) How are the seasons different in the southern hemisphere?

7) Which sentence sums up the quote from António Guterres?

- ☐ The climate is breaking down and we can't do anything about it.
- ☐ The climate is breaking down but we can do something about it if we act quickly.
- ☐ The climate is getting warmer so we should all try to enjoy it.

8) What's the hottest day you can remember? Share your ideas for the best ways to keep cool in a heatwave. Have you ever experienced any other kinds of extreme weather?