

Environmental News of the Weird

Earth First! Journal

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Fairies Sabotage Building Efforts

Villagers in St. Fillans, Perthshire, UK, have forced a development company to change locations for a housing scheme because the original site is home to fairies. Genesis Properties had planned to build on the outskirts of the village, on a site that included a large rock in the center of a field. As ground was about to be broken, a neighbor ran over to workers, shouting, “Don’t move that rock. You’ll kill the fairies!”

The St. Fillans community council was considering lodging a complaint with the planning authority—which usually ends any plans to build in a national park—when Genesis Properties switched locations. “I do believe in fairies,” said Jeannie Fox, council chairperson.

Biodiesel is Made of Kittens!

A German inventor has retracted claims that he uses dead cats as part of a recipe for biodiesel. Christian Koch had been quoted in several news sources as saying that dead cats, along with old tires and weeds, were an integral part of his mixture. Koch said that a 13-pound cat will yield 0.67 gallons of fuel—which means that about 20 animals are necessary to fill an average tank—and claimed to have driven his car 105,000 miles on his own mixture with no problems. The German Society for the Protection of Animals told Reuters that such use of animals was illegal and pledged to monitor the story.

Biofuels are projected to supply three percent of total Swedish fuel consumption by December, a move that is also powered by dead animals. Swedish Meat processors collect cow entrails, which are then shipped to biogas factories to be stewed to release methane. The gas is used to power public transportation such as the passenger train between Linköping and Västervik. The train will cost 20 percent more to fuel with biogas than with diesel, but Carl Lilliehook of Svensk Biogas claims that the cost will be justified by the environmental gains. Linköping is also home to taxis, garbage trucks, privately-owned cars and 65 public buses that run on biogas.

Nature Bites Back: Chinese Bears Eat Man

In October, a man in northeastern China, Han Shigen, was killed and eaten by six bears who he was holding in captivity. The bears were being “farmed” for their bile, which is harvested for use in a variety of products, including traditional medicines, wine and shampoo, and can fetch up to \$450 a pound in Asian markets, rivaling the prices of some narcotics. The bile is usually harvested by surgically implanting gall bladder catheters or by forcing a hollow steel rod through the bear’s abdomen. Han was cleaning the bears’ cage when he was attacked; the bears were so enraged that it took two hours to safely remove what was left of his body from the cage.

Nature Bites Back: Lions Go Car-Free

Lions in a Merseyside, UK, safari park have been stalking small cars, such as the Smart and Mini Cooper, the size of which may resemble that of typical prey animals such as wildebeest, gazelle and antelope. One group of lionesses in particular has been interested in the compact autos, but reports indicate that the cats show little to no interest in larger vehicles. One Smart was chased by a pack of three or four lions, frightening the occupants—although the park officials insisted that they were in no danger.

“Let’s just say they got more of the African experience than they bargained for,” said park manager David Ross.

Nature Bites Back: Sea Lions Reclaim the Coast

Along the California coast recently, belligerent packs of sea lions have been causing problems for locals. The Newport Harbor Sheriff’s office has been receiving at least two noise complaints a day, as the lions’ barking is preventing residents from sleeping. “It’s like 40 barking dogs—in surround sound,” says resident Darci Schriber.

On September 18, sea lions piled onto a 37-foot sailboat, capsizing it. And in Monterey, sea lions have trapped people aboard boats, attacked city workers, and defecated and vomited on docks. In other areas, the lions have attacked swimmers, eaten boogie boards and pulled people off of boats.

California sea lion populations have been estimated at 300,000 to 400,000 since the 1972 Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA)—which made it illegal to kill, injure or harass the creatures—let their numbers rebound from near extinction. The MMPA has frustrated local officials, who are unsure of how to deal with the lions. Failed methods include a fiberglass killer whale, rubber bullets, underwater noises and firecrackers.

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