

Record-setting scientific discoveries in 2023

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The species that sleeps the least among mammals



Northern elephant seals sleep the least of any mammal, averaging only two hours of sleep per day. During their month-long hunting trips at sea, these seals sleep less than 20 minutes at a time.

Male northern elephant seals can be over 4 m long and weigh about 2,300 kg, some can even weigh up to 3,700 kg. Meanwhile, females can be up to 3 m long and weigh 640 kg.

Earliest horse rider



Probably from around 3000 BC, the Yamnaya people rode steeds, the earliest horse riders in the world. Yamnaya skeletons unearthed in Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary have marks on the femur and pelvis, and damage to the vertebrae may have come from sitting on horseback. These are clear signs of the Yamnaya's horsemanship.

The sunniest place on Earth



The Altiplano Plateau in Chile's Atacama Desert receives an average of 308 watts of sunlight per square meter - more intense sunlight anywhere on Earth.

Even solar radiation here will sometimes exceed 2,000 watts per square meter. This level is comparable to the amount of sunlight expected to fall on Venus.

Oldest black hole



A supermassive black hole with an estimated age of about 13.2 billion years, only slightly less than the age of the universe of 13.7 billion years, about 13.2 billion light years from Earth, is considered The largest, most distant supermassive black hole ever observed.

The magnitude of this black hole also surprised scientists. It is 10 times larger than the black hole in the Milky Way, 10 - 100% larger than the total mass of all the stars in its galaxy.

Heaviest mammal ever



An analysis of fossils found in Peru shows that the ancient whale *Perucetus colossus*, which lived 39 million years ago, could have weighed up to 340 tons, twice as much as the heaviest blue whales. This is considered the heaviest animal known. But what this animal can eat to maintain its size remains a mystery.

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