



FINDINGS

It was found that Russians are more brooding than Americans, that air pollution may be causing Koreans to kill themselves, and that residual aquatic Prozac was encouraging shrimp to risk their lives by seeking light instead of darkness. People who fail at hanging themselves are six times more likely to succeed in future suicide attempts than are people who fail at poisoning themselves. Israeli researchers developed software that evaluates the depression of bloggers. Canadian psychologists found that adolescent sex offenders are typified less by poor social skills than by sexual attraction to prepubescent children. Venetian blinds continued to strangle toddlers. Archaeologists rediscovered a trove of dead babies from a Roman brothel in Buckinghamshire. Psychologists warned against drawing universal conclusions on the basis of research conducted in Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic, or “WEIRD,” countries. Accents make foreigners sound less truthful.

Gorillas were observed to play tag. Biologists said that gorilla taggers acquire some form of “advantage” by hitting competitors, and then preserve that advantage by running away, but it was not clear whether gorillas could be deemed conscious of the rules. Chimpanzees conducting border patrols kill the infants and seize the territory of other chimpanzee groups. Zoologists described two new species of pancake batfish living in the Gulf of Mexico. Cetologists

found that female humpback whales seek out their girlfriends summer after summer. The death of as many as 500 million trees in the Amazon in 2005 was blamed on a single storm, and the recent death of as many as 500 penguins who washed ashore in Brazil remained unexplained. “What worries us,” said one Brazilian scientist, “is the absurdly high number of penguins.”

The world’s snake population and the empathy of college students were found to have dropped precipitously in the past decade. A scientist named a newly discovered species of dinosaur with an elaborately frilled, heart-shaped cranial crest *Mojoceratops*. Female Adélie penguins choose as their mates the fattest males, who make the fittest fathers and whose fatness can be assessed by the timbre of their mating calls. Brighter plumage destroys the muscles of male American goldfinches, even as it makes them more attractive. The mustaches of male Mexican molly fish were found to attract females. “Males will touch the females’ genital region with their mouth prior to mating,” explained Ingo Schlupp, a mustachioed ichthyologist. Canadian researchers announced that the poor immune response in the eyes of freshwater fish makes the eyes attractive to parasites. “Canada,” said a researcher, “probably has the best-studied freshwater fish parasites in the world.” Stickleback fish readily accept robotic impostors as their new leaders. Dick Cheney’s heart had ceased to produce a pulse. ■

“R.F. 1972-8-0804010922 (*De La Tour*),” “SK-C-597-0801251412 (*Rembrandt*),” and “INV. 3197-0803040946 (*Chardin*),”
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