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Carb-Loving Dogs, DNA Storage and a Pool Full of Jelly

By JENNIFER A. KINGSON

Thursday in Science, we're reading about carb-loving canines, men who hide birth control pills, frogs at risk, a mumps comeback and a deformed dolphin adopted by whales. Check out these and other science headlines from around the Web.

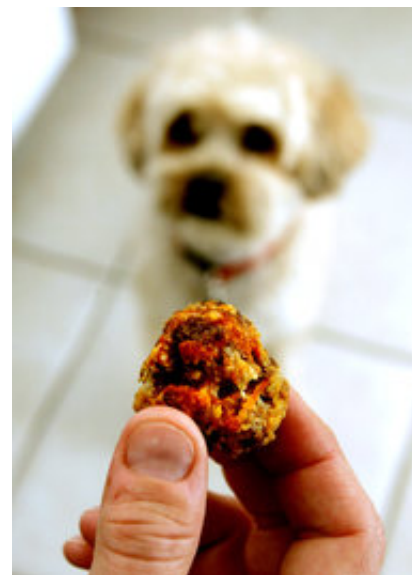
Deformed Dolphin Swims With Whales: A bottlenose dolphin with a spinal deformity has been taken under the fins of a group of sperm whales, [reports National Geographic](#). For eight days scientists observed the dolphin traveling and playing with a group of adult whales and their calves about 1,000 miles off the coast of Lisbon. Interaction between the species is uncommon.

Bowl Full of Jelly: A tiny amount of a new polymer can turn an Olympic-sized swimming pool into a pool of jelly, [reports Popular Science](#). Scientists [revealed the properties of the polyisocyanide polymer in the journal Nature](#). Most gels form upon cooling – like Jell-O – but this one forms globs when it is heated. Apparently that opens the door to some interesting new applications.

Dogs Like Carbs: A dog's willingness to eat carbs (like a dog biscuit), instead of your hand, helps explain how its ancestors evolved from wolves to house pets, [reports The Washington Post](#). A team of Swedish researchers compared the genomes of wolves and dogs and their findings support the hypothesis that dogs evolved from wolves who could subsist on human food.

Harvard Not Planning to Clone Neanderthals: A theoretical conversation about cloning prompted widespread and inaccurate speculation that a Harvard scientist was planning to clone a Neanderthal baby, [reports Reuters](#). Scientists say the episode highlights the lack of scientific literacy, at least among bloggers and tabloid newspaper writers.

New Cases of Gulf War Syndrome: Veterans of recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan appear to be suffering a similar set of symptoms to Gulf War illness, first diagnosed in veterans of the 1991 Gulf War, [reports USA Today](#). The finding comes from a new Institute of Medicine report.



Sandy Huffaker for The New York Times

Arden Moore, author of "Real Food for Dogs" holding up a meatball in front of her dog, Cleo, in 2007.

Sun in the Spotlight: Using a relatively small telescope, NASA scientists were able to capture images of an active region of the sun, reports [The Christian Science Monitor](#).

Contraception Sabotage: Women’s health specialists are warning about a form of abuse called “reproductive coercion,” which occurs when men sabotage a woman’s contraception by hiding pills or removing condoms during sex, reports [USA Today](#).

Download It to My DNA: Scientists have found a way to store data on fragments of DNA, a technique that eventually may provide a way to handle the overwhelming data of the digital age, reports [The Wall Street Journal](#). In an [experiment published in the journal Nature](#), scientists used DNA to store an audio clip of Martin Luther King Jr.'s “I Have a Dream” speech, Shakespeare’s 154 sonnets and other data. They later were able to retrieve them with 99.99 percent accuracy. While current data storage methods can degrade or require a constant supply of electricity, DNA is stable and durable and could be used as a storage device for thousands of years. A cup of DNA theoretically could store about 100 million hours of high-definition video.

Measles and Mumps Make a Comeback: Cases of measles and mumps are on the rise even though the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention officially declared measles eliminated in 2000, reports [Discover Magazine](#). The viruses have apparently mutated slightly in recent years, rendering the standard vaccine less effective.

Pesticides (Really) Deadly to Frogs: New research suggests that pesticides are playing a significant role in the global decline of amphibians, reports [The Guardian](#). Scientists said it was both “astonishing” and “alarming” that pesticides used at approved doses could kill a frog within one hour, raising questions about whether pesticides have been adequately tested for safety.



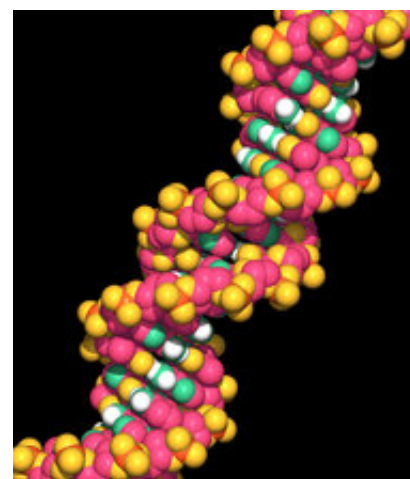
Associated Press/'Frontline'

A screen capture from the PBS show 'Frontline' on Gulf War syndrome, which aired in 1997.



Eric Gaillard/Reuters

Birth control pills.



Dr. Tim Evans/Photo Researchers

A computer model of part of a molecule of DNA.



Ben Stansall/Agence France-
Presse — Getty Images

A bull frog at a zoo in London.



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