

Science Snippets 2:

Welcome to the second collection of science news and trivia. We hope you enjoyed the first one and were inspired to read more about the bits that made you laugh or wonder.

Dragons in space!

For the first time ever, astronauts have travelled into space in a commercial rocket, the SpaceX Dragon module, which carried two astronauts up to the International Space Station this week. You can learn more about the launch and the docking with the ISS on the BBC news site:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/live/science-environment-52848185>

NASA astronauts have a tradition of taking a 'zero-gravity indicator (ZGI)' with them into space – when it starts to float around, they know they're in space! The Dragon crew took along a sparkly toy dinosaur as their ZGI – see if you can spot it in NASA videos of the capsule!

Happy Birthday ESA:

Continuing the space theme, this month sees the 45th anniversary of the European Space Agency, which has 22 member countries, including the UK. The ESA is responsible for many projects, from satellites that help provide communications and observations of Earth, through to exciting 'frontier science' projects like the Solar Orbiter (built in Stevenage!) that was launched earlier this year to go closer to the Sun than ever before, so that we can better understand how our Sun works, and affects conditions on our planet.

Rutland Raptors:

Ospreys are magnificent birds of prey that eat fish. They are making a comeback in the UK, after having nearly gone extinct, thanks to conservation efforts across the country. You can watch a pair of osprey raising four beautiful chicks on a live nestcam at Rutland Water, which is up near Peterborough. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-leicestershire-52847850>

Cuckoo Covers Kilometers – 12,000 of them:

Scientists studying the migration patterns of cuckoos by fitting them with tracking devices have found a record-breaker in a bird they named Onon. This remarkable feathered athlete flew 12,000km, from Zambia in East Africa to Mongolia in a fortnight! You can learn more about Onon here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-52815286>

Deepest Dumbo ever found:

Possibly the world's most adorable octopus, the Dumbo octopus, has been photographed at a depth of seven THOUSAND meters below sea level, where the water pressure is 695 times greater than at the ocean's surface. Very few places in the ocean are as deep as this! You can read more here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-52839678> What else can you find out about these amazing creatures?

Pterosaurs on the Isle of Wight:

Scientists announced this week that the fossil jaw of a pterosaur not previously known in the UK has been found on the Isle of Wight by amateur fossil hunter while walking his dog, and recognised by friend and palaeontology student Megan Jacobs. This new species of flying reptile was flying around in the early Cretaceous period, when dinosaurs roamed the Earth. It had an impressive crest on it's head and may have been toothless. You can read more here: https://blog.everythingdinosaur.co.uk/blog/_archives/2020/05/29/wightia-declivirostris-a-terrific-tapejarid-pterosaur.html