



 NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC
KIDS



weird but true!



2024

wild & wacky
facts & photos!





**weird
but
true!**

2024

Published by Collins
An imprint of HarperCollins Publishers
Westerhill Road
Bishopbriggs
Glasgow G64 2QT
www.harpercollins.co.uk

HarperCollins Publishers
Macken House, 39/40 Mayor Street Upper, Dublin 1, D01 C9W8, Ireland

In association with National Geographic Partners, LLC

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC and the Yellow Border Design are trademarks of the National Geographic Society and used under license.

National Geographic Kids Weird But True & Design are trademarks of National Geographic Society and used under license.

First published 2023

Text copyright © 2023 HarperCollins Publishers. All Rights Reserved.
All other elements, copyright © 2023 National Geographic Partners, LLC.
All Rights Reserved.

ISBN 978-0-00-861920-6

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior permission in writing of the publisher and copyright owners.

The contents of this publication are believed correct at the time of printing. Nevertheless the publisher can accept no responsibility for errors or omissions, changes in the detail given or for any expense or loss thereby caused.

HarperCollins does not warrant that any website mentioned in this title will be provided uninterrupted, that any website will be error free, that defects will be corrected, or that the website or the server that makes it available are free of viruses or bugs. For full terms and conditions please refer to the site terms provided on the website.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Printed in UAE.

If you would like to comment on any aspect of this book, please contact us at the above address or online.
natgeokidsbooks.co.uk
collins.reference@harpercollins.co.uk

Paper from responsible sources.



2024

wild & wacky
facts & photos!

Contents

● CHAPTER 1 AMAZING EARTH 8

Crossing the continents	10
The middle of nowhere	12
The art of erosion	14
Funky fungus facts.	16
Mirror world.	18
Earth from above	20
Making a splash...	22
Cool caves	24
Hit the Ocean Road	26
All about the Andes...	28



● CHAPTER 2 STEP BACK IN TIME 30

From Prince to King	32
A question of sport	34
Who wants to be a Roman?.	36
● Meet the bog people	38
Air aces.	40
Evolution of music	42



● CHAPTER 3 INCREDIBLE CREATURES 44

Penguin pals.	46
Tennis balls turned into tiny homes	48
A sixth sense?.	50
All in the eyes	52
Fat bear week.	54
Are you talking to me?	56
Creatures of the night	58
Elephant miners of Mount Elgon	60
Whose poo?	62
Peculiar pooches.	64
Brilliant body parts	66



● CHAPTER 4
SUPER SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

68

Particle party	70
Cockroach cyborgs	72
Droning on	74
Going for gold	76
Weird water... Why don't icebergs sink?	78
Beam me up!	80
Have fun in your smart home	82



● CHAPTER 5
SPECTACULAR STRUCTURES

84

Dubai – city of awesome architecture	86
Palace of bubbles	88
Time tellers	90
Bridge records	92
Ten on termite mounds	94
Weird wonders of the world.	96



● CHAPTER 6
GET A MOVE ON!

98

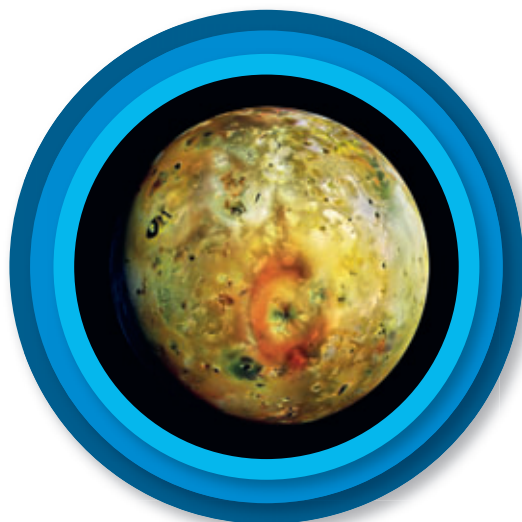
Airlander – the future of flight?	100
Traffic chaos	102
Bizarre buses	104
Random rules of the road	106
The graveyard of the Atlantic	108
Cool canals	110



● CHAPTER 7
OUT OF THIS WORLD

112

Third rock from the Sun	114
The Pillars of Creation	116
Houston, we have a problem...	118
Just like home	120
The day the universe changed	122
Colours of the cosmos	124
Space dwarfs	126
To the Moon and back	128



● **CHAPTER 8**
SPORTING SUPERSTARS 130

Paris Olympics then and now.	132
Fun on four wheels.	134
Sport of wizards	136
Sporting firsts	138
Strange sporting superstitions	140
Dive in the deep end.	142
The future of football?	144



● **CHAPTER 9**
COOLLY CREATIVE 146

Sing it loud!	148
Outdoor art	150
Bryan Berg card architect!.	152
Potty for pottery	154
Don't judge a book by its cover	156
Who are you?	158
Singing in the rain	160



● **CHAPTER 10**
GRUB'S UP! 162

Brilliant biscuits	164
Unique food festivals	166
Blooming chocolate	168
Bring on the bread	170
Do you believe these superstitions?	172
Food confusion	174
Sweet talk	176
Eat in or takeaway?	178
Chopsticks that trick your tastebuds	180



● **CHAPTER 11**
HUMAN BODY 182

You can't! 184

Remember this! 186

Your magnificent muscles 188

Get glowing 190

Hair-raising facts 192

Look into the eyes 194

The power of a smile 196



● **CHAPTER 12**
GRUESOMELY GROSS 198

Super snot & sneeze snippets! 200

Bad animal habits 202

Sewer monster 204

Tudor toilet attendants 206

They kept what? 208

Uninvited guests 210

Words we hate to hear! 212



● **CHAPTER 13**
EVERYTHING ON THE ENVIRONMENT 214

The rise and fall of climate change 216

Cleaning up the garbage patch 218

Back to the wild 220

Waste not, want not 222

Eco-living 224

A shot at saving Earth 226



● **CHAPTER 14**
BY THE NUMBERS 228

Ten on 24 230

A world of numbers 232

What's on your mind? 234

Moon maths 236

Leg count 238

It all adds up to Ancient Egypt! 240

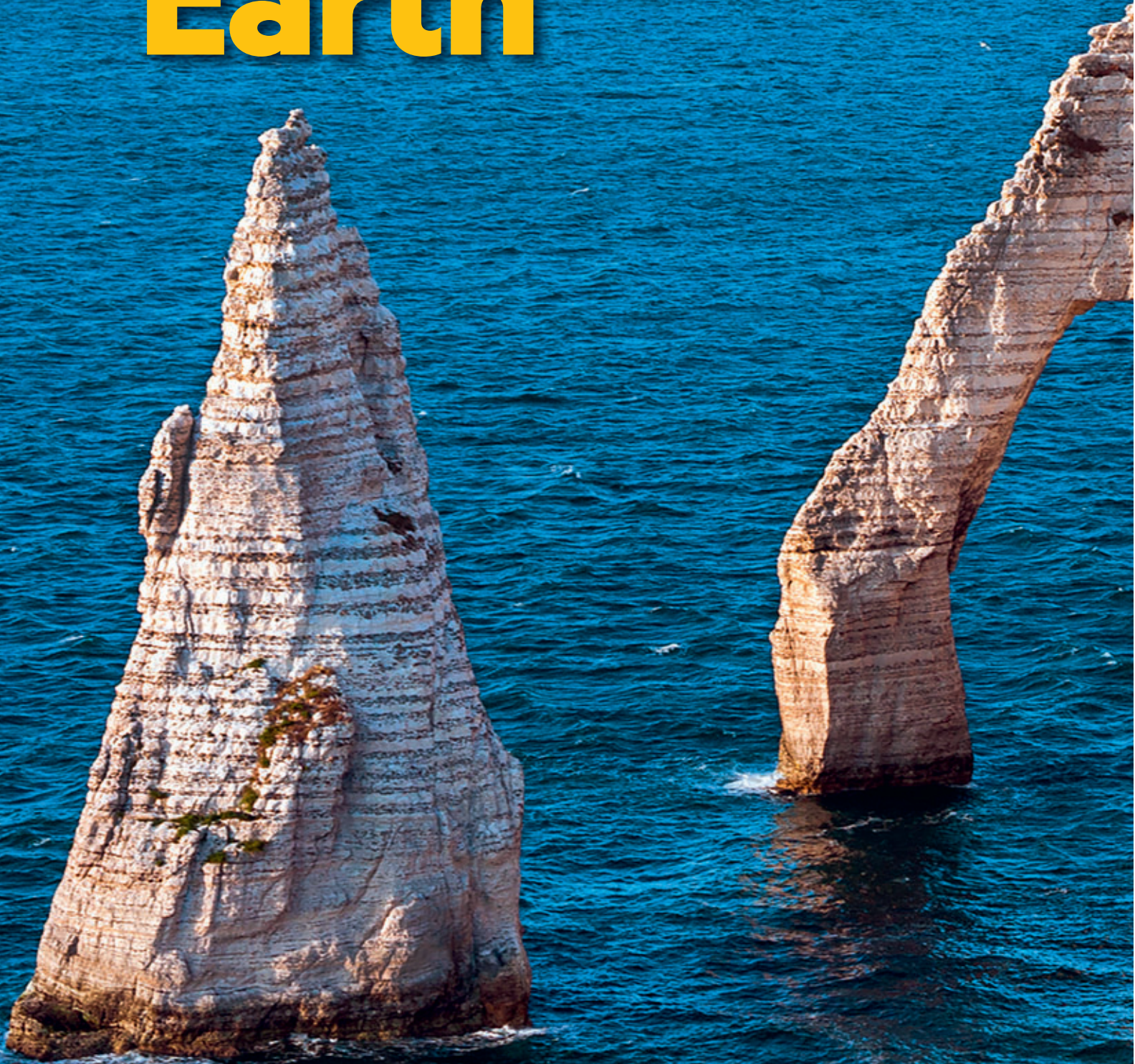
Get in the game 242



INDEX 244

IMAGE CREDITS 254

Amazing Earth





CHAPTER

1

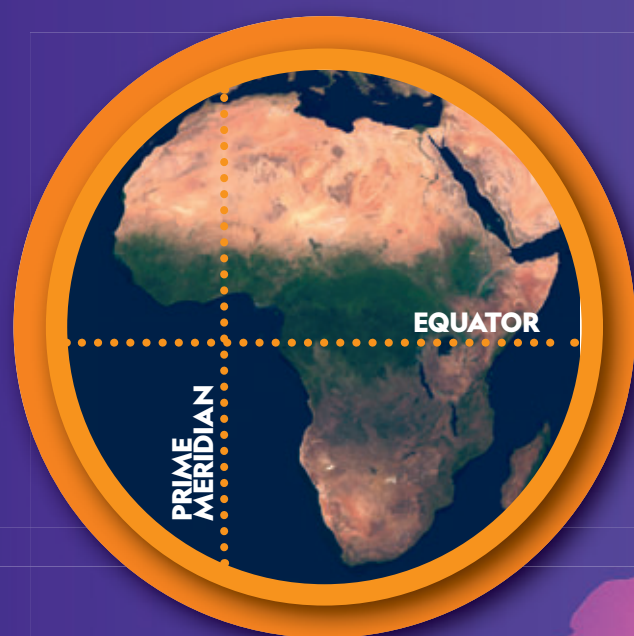
The **ARCHES OF ÉTRETAT**, in France, are so famous that they've been **PAINTED** by artists including **MONET** and have featured in **FILMS** and **BOOKS!**

Travel over to page 14 to see more effects of erosion.

Crossing the CONTINENTS

ALL EARTH

Once upon a time, all the land on Earth was joined together in a supercontinent called Pangaea. It began to split apart about 200 million years ago, during the age of the dinosaurs.



QUARTERS OF A CONTINENT

Africa is the only continent to cover all four hemispheres – northern, southern, eastern and western. The Equator splits Africa between north and south. Another invisible line known as the prime meridian divides east and west.

GIANT JIGSAW

The shape of the continents still shows how they once fit together like a huge jigsaw puzzle. For example, the ins and outs of the east coast of South America would fit pretty neatly with the outs and ins of the west coast of Africa if you pushed them together!





▲ A DIVIDED CITY

In Istanbul, Turkey, you can go shopping on two continents in a matter of minutes! A road bridge spans the Bosphorus Strait that separates the Asian and European sides of the city.

THE LOST CONTINENT

Lying mostly underwater in the South Pacific Ocean is a huge area of continental crust called Zealandia. At over half the size of Australia, some scientists think that it should officially be the eighth continent.



SMALLEST OR BIGGEST ? ▶

An island is defined as a piece of land that's completely surrounded by water, but is smaller than a continent. Australia would be the largest island in the world - if it wasn't already the smallest continent.

Did you KNOW?

The continents move at a speed of about 1.5 cm a year - that's about as fast as your toenails grow!



The middle of NOWHERE

In the **PACIFIC OCEAN**, far away from anywhere, is a place that **SCIENTISTS** call the **'OCEANIC POLE OF INACCESSIBILITY'**. It's better known as **POINT NEMO** – a word that means **'NO ONE'** in Latin, which gives you a clue to its **CLAIM TO FAME**.

Did you **KNOW?**

Point Nemo is named after Captain Nemo from the book *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, by Jules Verne.

Totally **WEIRD!**

In 1997, a really loud noise was recorded in this remote region of the Pacific. This mysterious sound was nicknamed the 'Bloop', and for years scientists wondered what it could be. Eventually, they realised it was the sound of icebergs cracking!



Surrounded by more than 1,600 kilometres of ocean in every direction, this is the most remote place on the planet. In fact, the nearest humans to Point Nemo are the astronauts on the International Space Station when it passes by, 400 kilometres above Earth!

There's not even much marine life at Point Nemo. It lies in the middle of a huge, swirling current called the South Pacific Gyre. This moves nutrients away from the area so that it is almost impossible for ocean plants and animals to survive there. Some hardy bacteria are among the few types of life known to exist there.

This empty part of the Pacific does have its uses though. Because it's so far away from human habitation, space agencies like NASA can safely dump their debris there. Lots of space junk has already crashed down near Point Nemo, including the Russian space station Mir. The International Space Station will also end up there one day. Welcome to Point Nemo – spacecraft graveyard!

THE ART OF erosion

Over millions of years, wind and water have carved out some unusual sculptures in the natural landscape.

CHALK STATUES

The White Desert in Egypt looks like a snowy landscape, but it gets its colour from chalk! Large chalk rock formations dot the desert like a huge sculpture park. The rocks have been shaped over centuries by wind and grinding sand.



A TREE OF STONE

High in the Síloli Desert in Bolivia stands a tree made of stone—the Árbol de Piedra. It was formed by strong, cold winds blowing grains of sand. The grains have worn away the softer rock lower down more quickly than the harder rock at the top to leave the shape of a tree.



A BASALT ELEPHANT

On the island of Heimaey in Iceland, the basalt rock left over from cooling lava has formed an unusual shape—an elephant dipping its trunk in the water. The texture of the grey rock looks just like wrinkly elephant skin, and it has even worn away in the right place to form an eye!

SANDSTONE GLOVES

The Mittens, in Monument Valley, USA, are both a type of landform called a butte. The two pillars of sandstone have been worn away in similar shapes, like a pair of mittens with their sticking-up thumbs facing each other!



A GRANITE WAVE

Wave Rock in Australia is a 14-metre-high granite cliff. The cliff face has been weathered away to form a curve that makes it look like a huge wave about to come crashing down. Rain leaves stripes down the rock, making it look even more like water.

Funky

FUNGUS FACTS



Some mushrooms
GLOW IN THE DARK.

Some scientists think mushrooms use this 'foxfire' to attract insects, which then spread the mushroom spores around to help them reproduce.

Did you **KNOW?**

You're covered in fungus! Around 200 different types of fungi live on your feet alone.

Scientists think there may be as many as **3.8 MILLION TYPES OF FUNGI** on Earth, but they estimate that more than 90 per cent of them haven't been discovered yet!



Fungi are what make **CHEESES** such as Camembert and Stilton ripen. They cause the white mould skin and the blue mould veins in these cheeses.

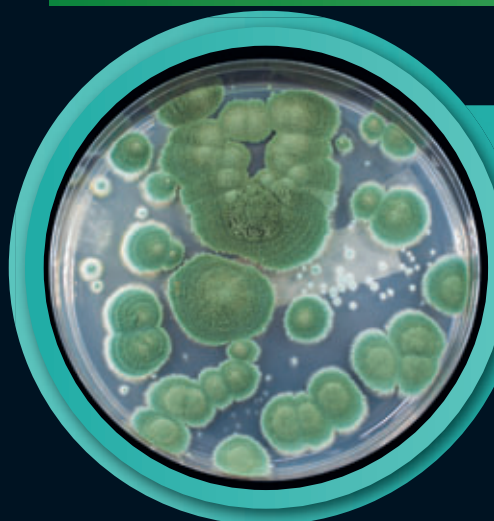


The **MOST POISONOUS MUSHROOM** is the death cap mushroom, *Amanita phalloides*. It causes liver failure and even death if eaten.

The prince, yellow stainer, destroying angel, jelly ear, slippery Jack, stinkhorn, grey knight and penny bun are all **TYPES OF MUSHROOMS** found in the UK.



YOU'RE MORE LIKE A FUNGUS THAN YOU THINK!
Like animals - and unlike plants - fungi take in oxygen and release carbon dioxide.



Fungi can **CAUSE INFECTIONS** such as ringworm and athlete's foot. But they can also **CURE INFECTIONS**, as some fungi produce antibiotics such as penicillin.