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CONTENTS

AMAZING ANIMALS 8

Animal achievements	10
Fuzzy feelings	12
Fuzzy friendships	14
... and fuzzy fun	16
Bird-brained?	18
Going wild	20
Mischief makers	22
Mutts on the move	24
Cat quests	28
Daring dashes	30

CREATURE FEATURES 32

Marvellous mammals	34
Remarkable reptiles	38
Amazing amphibians	42
Brilliant birds	46
Fantastic fish	50
Incredible insects	56

EARTH'S ENVIRONMENT 62

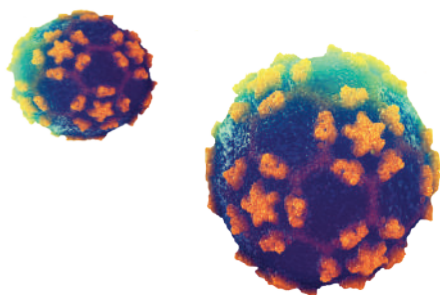
Good news stories	64
Humans harming the world	68
Beating the heat	72
Restoring balance	74
Making something from nothing .	76
Going green	78

PEOPLE POWER 86

Daredevils	88
Remarkable rescues	92
Fantastic finds	96

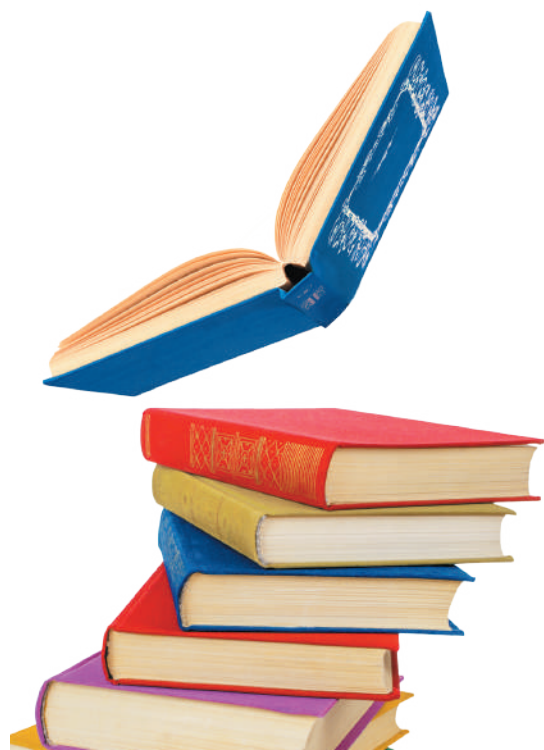
SENSATIONAL SCIENCE 100

Incredible AI	102
Switched on or silent?	106
Making ends meet	108
The proof's in the poo	110
Space: stranger than science fiction	112



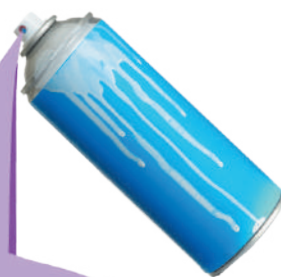
BRILLIANT BOOKS 116

Love your libraries	118
Ready to read?	122
Ready to write?	126



ASTONISHING ART 130

Arty food	132
... and foodie art	134
Cool canvases	136
Fake cake	140
Mystery models	142
Is it art?	144
Appreciating astonishing art	146



FABULOUS FOOD 150

Super-sized	152
Nacho nibbles	154
Undercover vegetables	156
Fantastical flavours	158
A sweet and savoury salad	160





OUT AND ABOUT 162

Vacation creations	164
Terrible tourism	166
Odd jobs	168
What a way to live!	172
Funny festivals	174
High in the sky	176
Rare restaurants	178



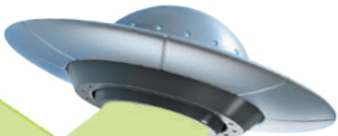
WONDERFUL WELLBEING 198

Getting a great start	200
Succeeding at school	202
The foundations of friendship	204
Family time	206
Taking me time	208
Choose to snooze	210
Creating a self-care kit	212



SPECTACULAR SPORTS 180

Down and dirty	182
Fast and slow	184
Doubling up	186
Caught in the act	188
Spirited support	190
Finding your passion	192



STRANGE BUT TRUE 214

Days out for dust busters	216
Curious costumes	218
Mistaken for aliens	220
Colossal collections	222
How much?	226
Wooden wonders	228
Ridiculous wrongdoing	230

GLOSSARY 232

INDEX 236

IMAGE CREDITS 239

AMAZING ANIMALS

DON'T FORGET YOUR TRUNKS

Elephants are really good at swimming and can swim for up to six hours at a time.



ANIMAL ACHIEVEMENTS



Animals can be surprisingly artistic and amazingly athletic – just look at this talented trio.

Dogs perform with orchestra

Three new members of the Danish Chamber Orchestra unleashed their talents at a performance in 2023.

Before playing Leopold Mozart's *Hunting Symphony*, the orchestra introduced three paw-some soloists: dogs named Cookie, Sophus and Sica. Each talented pup had learned to bark or howl when the conductor gave special cues.

Cookie's owner said the pup "had a blast".



Athletic bird scoots to success

A cockatoo in Bulgaria has learned to impress audiences by riding a bird-sized scooter.

Chico rides by holding the handlebars in his beak while pushing off with his foot. The sporty bird can complete a five-metre course in under 15 seconds.

Chico can also pedal a tiny bicycle and dunk mini basketballs.

"He is a natural talent," his owner said.



Painting pig amazes with artwork

Would you pay for a painting by a pig? One swine in South Africa creates works of art that have been sold for over £21,300.

The pig, who goes by the name "Pigcasso", was rescued by an animal shelter in 2016. The shelter's founder, Joanne Lefson, noticed that Pigcasso ate or destroyed just about everything in her path – except for some paintbrushes.



Lefson put a canvas in the pig's stall and encouraged her to paint. The 680-kilogram hog has now created more than 400 works of art.

Lefson believes that the painting pig's popularity is a sign of how amazing Pigcasso and other farm animals are. "You can't look at it and not place greater value on their intelligence ... and creativity," she said.



FUZZY FEELINGS

Animals can also be amazingly affectionate. The way some creatures act around humans has made researchers curious to learn more about them.

Can meerkats read moods?

Scientists are trying to find out if meerkats can detect emotions in humans, such as happiness or anger.

The experts look at how the meerkats act around zookeepers and visitors, and check to see if the meerkats show **empathy**. The findings will be used to make meerkats more comfortable around humans, and could affect how meerkats' zoo homes are designed.



Horses hear human emotions

From *Black Beauty* to *The Chronicles of Narnia*, films and books have often shown the friendships that can develop between humans and horses. Lots of real-life stories confirm that horses seem to have a special understanding of humans.

However, until a study in 2023, nobody knew if horses really recognised different human emotions.

Researchers used a test that usually measures how much babies understand. One by one, 28 horses were shown a happy or sad human face. At the same time, a recording of a happy or sad voice was played.

The test showed that horses can match the two up. When the face and voice didn't match, the horses seemed to be puzzled. They looked at the picture for longer, as if they knew that something wasn't right.

The researchers still don't know if the horses understand what being sad or happy means. However, horses seem to prefer spending time around happy people because they spent longer looking at those pictures.

The researchers now want to see if horses can recognise other human emotions.

