

nature

Deep-sea oddities and boatloads of other new species — June's best science images

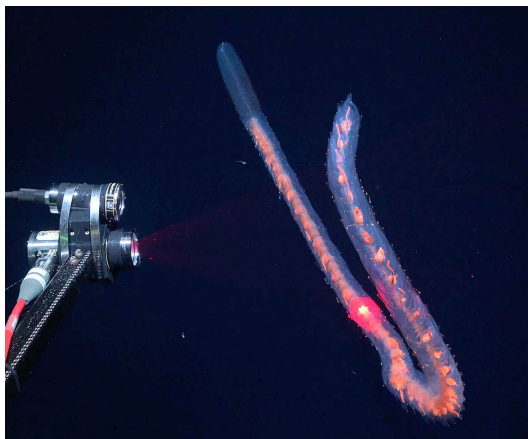
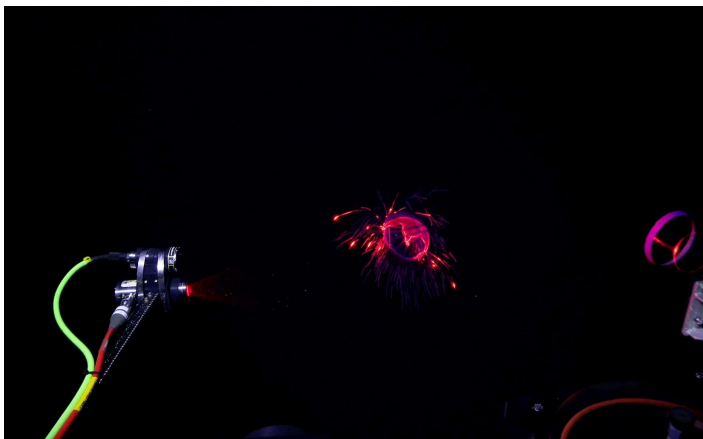
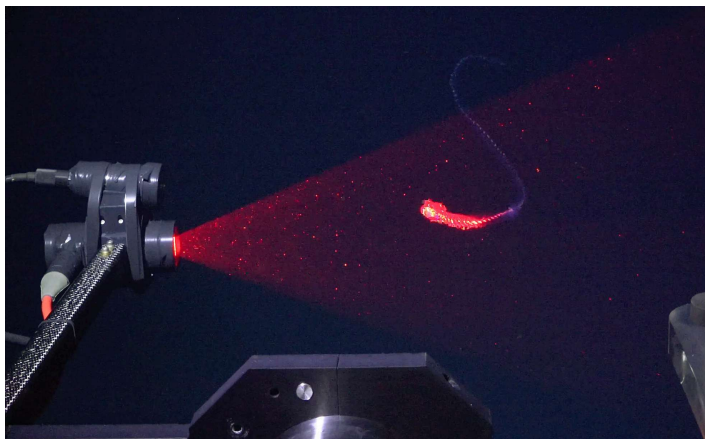
The month's sharpest science shots,
selected by *Nature's* photo team.

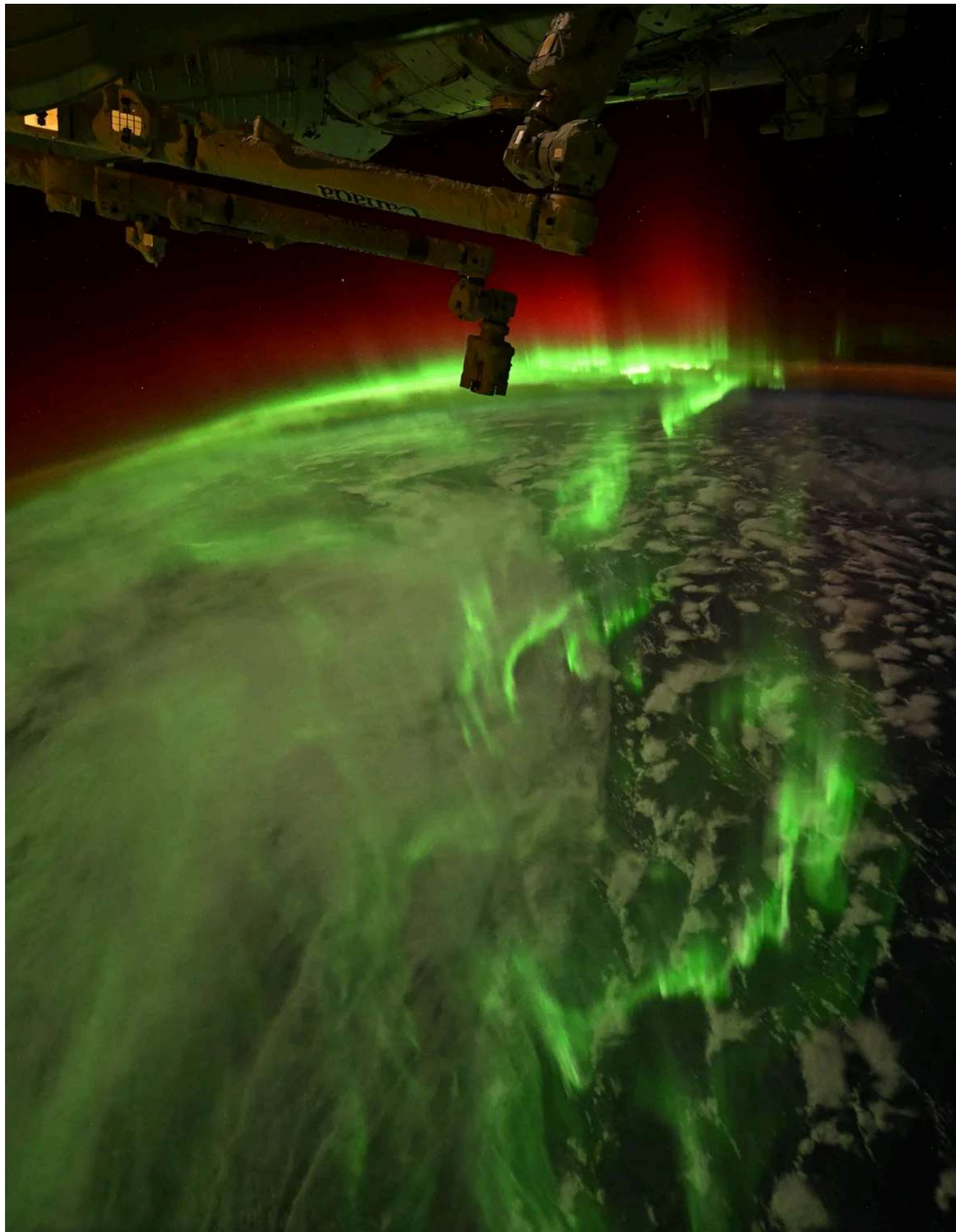
By Miryam Naddaf & Dhruv Shenai

06 July 2026

Deep-sea oddities. An invertebrate known as siphonophore swims 552 metres deep in the tropical South Atlantic Ocean – and is one of 31 species discovered during a deep-sea expedition off the coast of Brazil. The researchers explored the ocean’s midwater, an area that stretches from just below the sunlit surface to the sea floor, and forms the largest habitable ecosystem on Earth. With laser-imaging tools, the team captured 3D, millimetre-scale footage of animals in their natural habitat. The new species include a gossamer worm, nine jellyfish, seven siphonophores and seven comb jellies. Researchers say that the siphonophore in this image might belong to an undescribed genus.

Credit: ROV SuBastian/Schmidt Ocean Institute

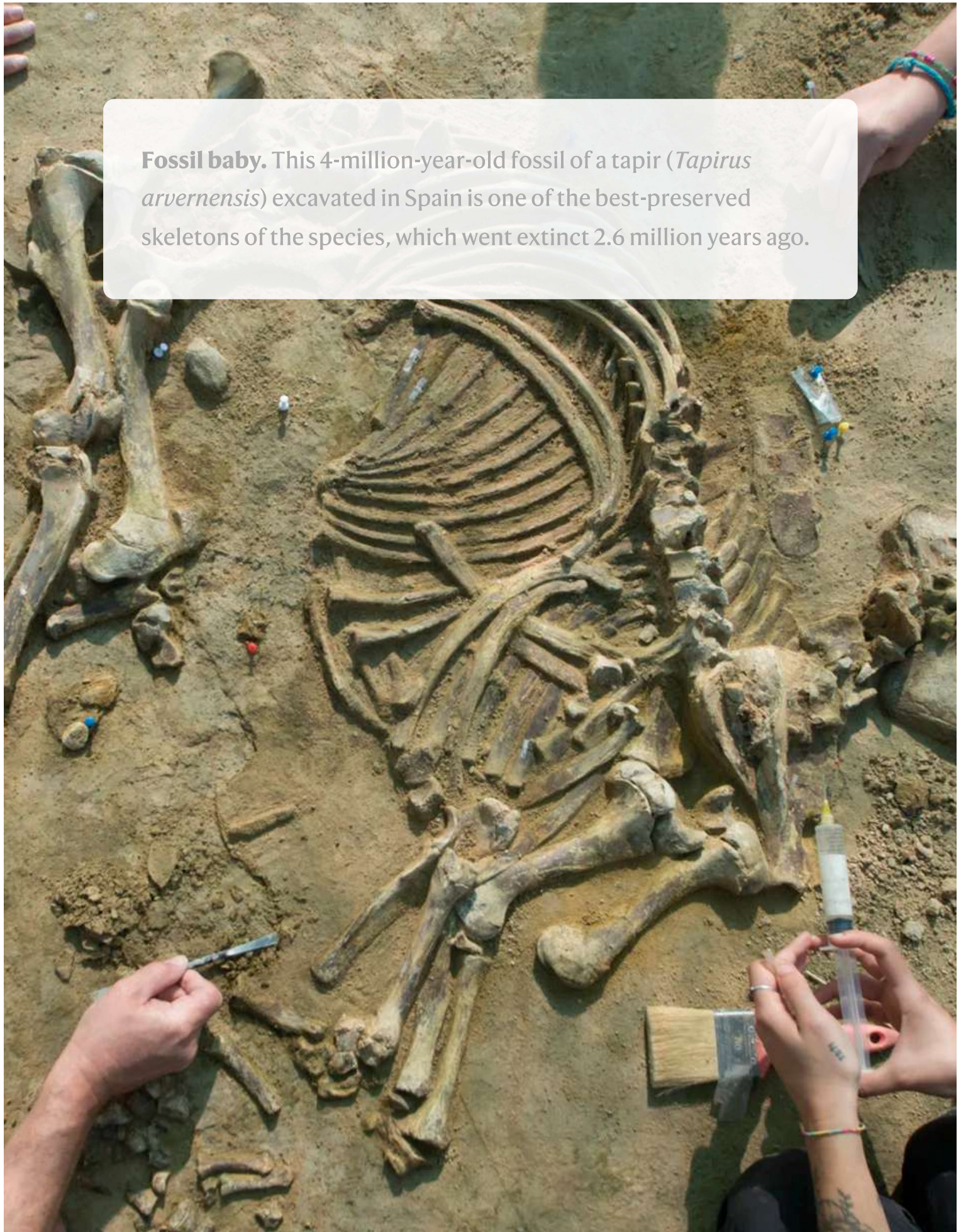




Aurora down under. From aboard the International Space Station, astronaut Jessica Meir captured these stunning images of the southern lights (aurora australis) above the Indian Ocean and southwest of Perth, Australia. The arc of light is caused by the interaction between charged particles from the Sun, known as the solar wind, and Earth's magnetic field. Green is produced at lower heights and red at higher altitudes, as seen in the image.

Credit: Jessica Meir/NASA

Fossil baby. This 4-million-year-old fossil of a tapir (*Tapirus arvernensis*) excavated in Spain is one of the best-preserved skeletons of the species, which went extinct 2.6 million years ago.





The fossil was preserved under sediment at Camp del Ninots, a volcano that formed during the Pliocene epoch and subsequently became a lake.

A large, fossilized tapir skull is the central focus of the image, partially embedded in a sandy and rocky ground surface. The skull is light brown and tan in color, showing signs of weathering and fragmentation. It is positioned horizontally, with the snout pointing towards the right. The surrounding ground is composed of loose soil and small, dark rocks. A semi-transparent white text box is overlaid on the upper portion of the skull, containing text about the research. Below the text box, a thin white horizontal line is visible. The overall scene suggests an archaeological or paleontological excavation site.

Researchers aim to study this one-year-old tapir and compare it with previously discovered skeletons to study how the anatomy of these animals changes as they age.

Credit: Gerard Campeny/IPHES-CERCA

Underground fungi. This interactive globe highlights the density of arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi networks in the soil. If laid end to end, the strands forming the network would stretch to about one billion times the distance between Earth and the Sun. The fungi have a symbiotic relationship with the roots of plants, to which they are linked by interconnected networks of tubular cells called hyphae that pass carbon and nutrients between plants and soil. With these data, published in *Science*, scientists hope to study how these ecosystems react to climate change and human activity.

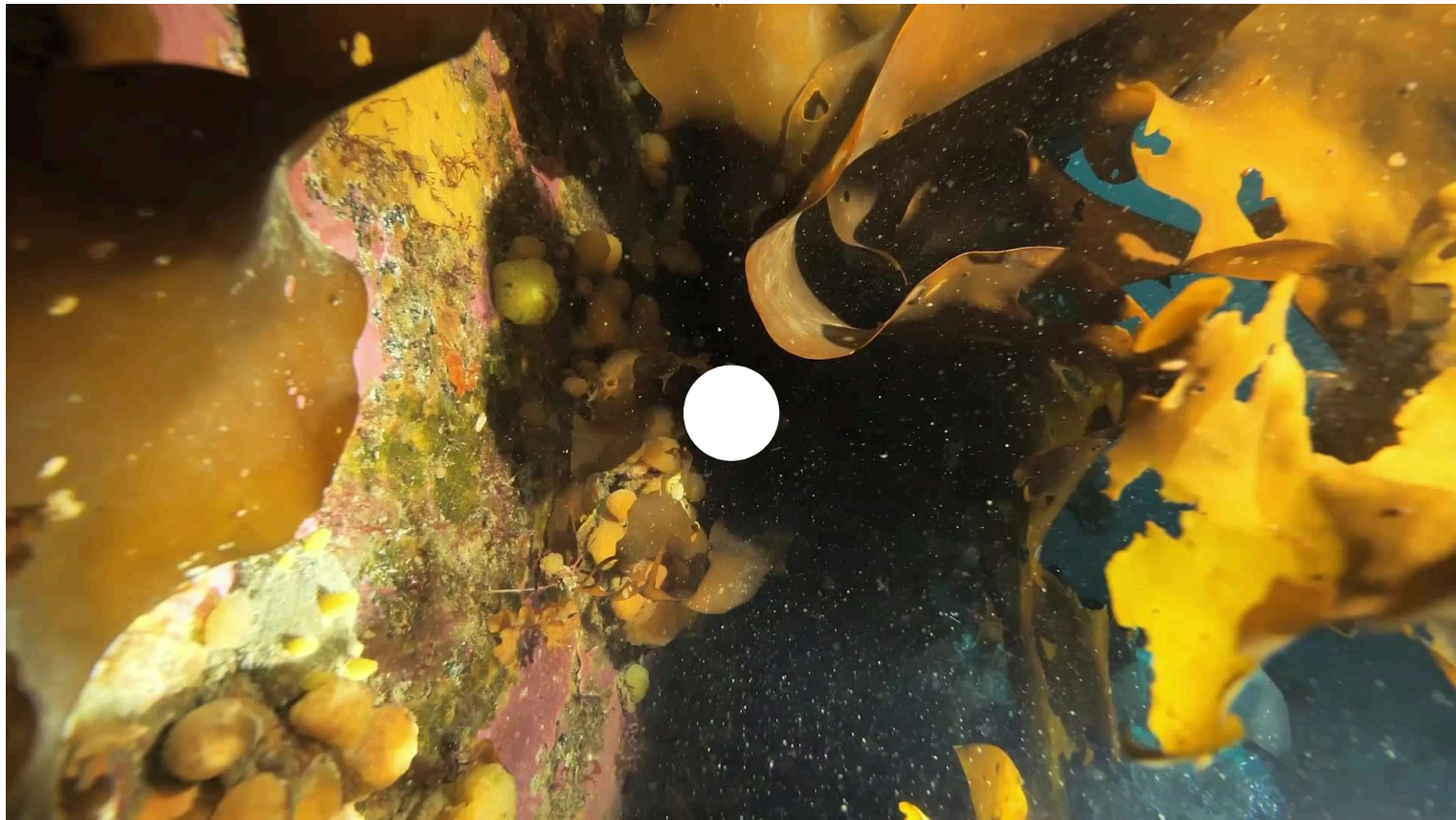
Credit: Society for the Protection of Underground Networks (SPUN), Moritz Stefaner – Truth & Beauty



This video has no sound.

New creepy crawlies. A crowned crab spider (*Smodicinus* sp. nov.) that fluoresces blue under ultraviolet light is one of dozens of creatures that have just been discovered in Angola. In February, the Cassai Life Atlas expedition conducted by The Wilderness Project, surveyed the bustling ecosystem of the remote Lisima plateau. The plateau feeds into the streams that feed four rivers and has remained mostly unexplored by scientists. Last month, the expedition team announced its findings, which included eight undescribed dragonfly and damselfly species and around 60 moths and butterflies that could be new to science. Many other species had also not previously been recorded in Lisima.

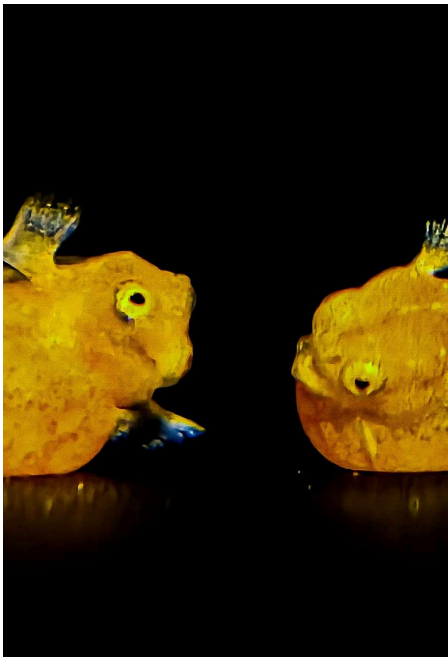
Credit: Nicky Bay/Courtesy of The Wilderness Project



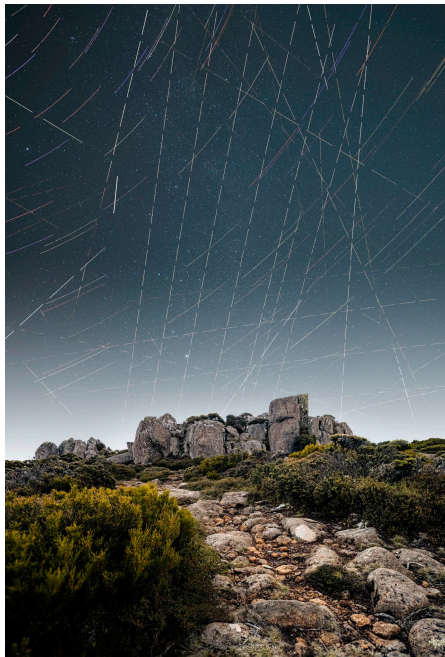
This video includes ambient audio of SCUBA divers exhaling air bubbles underwater.

Deep-sea medicine. These yellow balls belong to a species of sea squirt (*Synoicum adareanum*) that contains bacteria known as '*Candidatus Synoicohabitans palmerolidicus*', which has known melanoma-killing capabilities. Divers must descend 20 metres into the Antarctic Ocean to collect samples of the sea squirt for scientists to study the compound that gives the bacterium its anticancer properties. "This research is important both environmentally and medically," says Bill Baker, a chemical ecologist at the University of South Florida in Tampa, who discovered the bacterium 20 years ago "We are learning how organisms use symbiosis to survive in extreme conditions, which is still largely unknown in cold-water ecosystems like Antarctica. Understanding the source and function of this compound is critical if we hope to develop it into a drug."

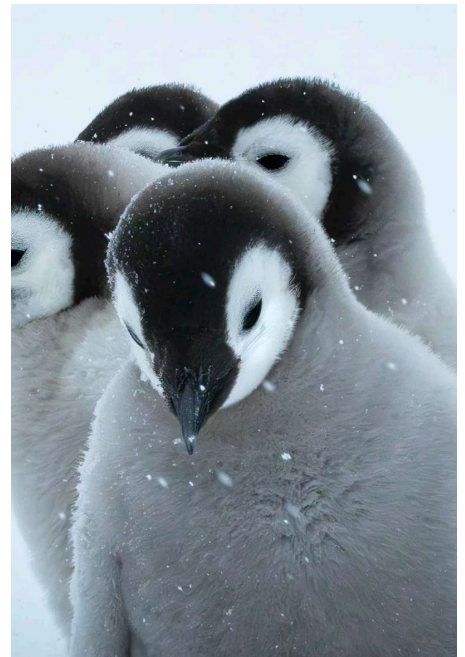
Credit: Sam Affoullouss and the Desert Research Institute/Cover Images



Credit: Armando Ochoa Aguilar



Credit: David Nolan



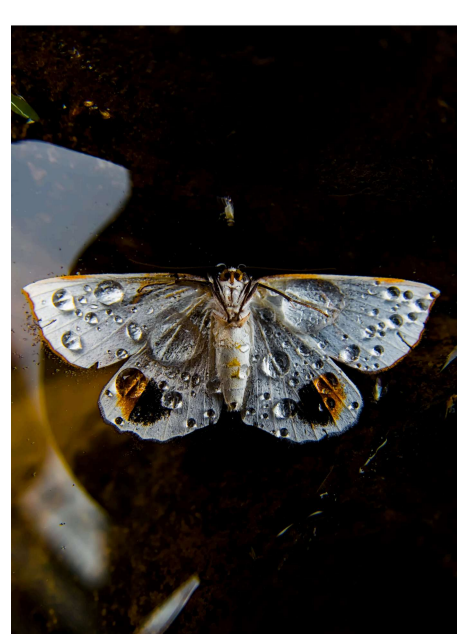
Credit: Madi McLatchie



Credit: Deni Cupit



Credit: Nathan Waterhouse



Credit: Lucy Marwood



Fish with hands. Two red handfish (*Thymichthys politus*) hatchlings are photographed on their first day of life. The newborns still carry their yolk sacs, which provide them with food as they develop in the egg and during the first days after hatching. The species is critically endangered, and fewer than 250 individuals are thought to remain living in wild waters. The baby fish were bred as part of a conservation project at the University of Tasmania's Institute of Marine and Antarctic Science in Hobart, Australia, and will be either kept at the university for research or released into Tasmania's waters. The picture earned photographer Armando Ochoa Aguilar a spot as a finalist in the Beaker Street Science Photography Prize 2026. Above are other images from the competition.



Artemis III crew. On 9 June, the crew for the Artemis III mission was announced at Johnson Space Centre in Houston, Texas, following [the success of Artemis II](#). The members (left to right) are commander Randy Bresnik; pilot Luca Parmitano, who is the first European to join an Artemis mission; and mission specialists Frank Rubio and Andre Douglas. The team is scheduled to go into low orbit around Earth in 2027. The main goal of mission is to conduct a crewed test of commercial equipment from SpaceX and Blue Origin, ahead of a crewed Moon landing in 2028 as part of the Artemis IV mission.

Credit: Ronaldo Schemidt/AFP via Getty

SPRINGER NATURE

[Privacy Policy](#) [Use of cookies](#) [Legal notice](#)

[Terms & Conditions](#) [Accessibility statement](#)

[Manage cookie preferences](#)

© 2026 Springer Nature Limited. All rights reserved.

