

Friends of Penzance B.S.A.C Conservation Officer's Report April 2014



There have been instances in Earth history when average temperatures have changed rapidly, as much as 10 degrees Celsius, (18 degrees Fahrenheit) over a few decades, and some have speculated that the same could happen again. New research funded by the Norwegian Research Council and U.S. Science Foundation lends support to evidence from numerous recent studies that suggest abrupt climate change appears to be the result of alterations of ocean circulation uniquely associated with ice ages. There might be other mechanisms by which greenhouse gases may cause an abrupt climate change but no such mechanism is known from geological record. This new research lends support to recent studies that suggest abrupt climate change is the result of alterations in ocean circulation uniquely associated with ice ages, not from atmospheric carbon dioxide.

A new species of carnivore which looks like a cross between a cat and a Teddy Bear, is the first new carnivore species to be discovered in the American Continent in 35 years. This mysterious creature has been the victim of mistaken identity for over 100 years, tucked away in museum collections but has now been observed in the wild in Columbia and Ecuador, South America. It is actually the latest scientifically documented member of the family Procyonidae which it shares with raccoons, coatis, kinkajous and olingos. named, olinguito (*Bassaricyon neblina*), it is native to the cloud forests of the two South American countries. as it's scientific name, "neblina" (Spanish for fog) hints. The discovery of the olinguito shows us that the world is not yet completely explored, if new carnivores can still be found, what other surprises await us?



olinguito

A new species of spider has been found living in the sand dunes of south eastern Morocco. *Cebrennus rechenbergi* creates a tube-like domicile in the sand with it's feelers and specialized, elongated bristles, which offers protection from the sun and predators. It's most outstanding talent however, is its ability to move by means of flic-flac jumps. Unlike it's relative from Namibia, the golden rolling spider, which is restricted to passively rolling down sand dunes, the flic-flac spider uses its legs to create a rolling motion. It propels itself off the ground, followed by a series of rapid flic-flac movements of it's legs This gives the spider great flexibility– uphill, downhill or on the level. *Cebrennus* can move along with ease at almost 2 metres a second. The flic-flac jumps allow the spider to move twice as fast as in simple walking mode.



Cebrennus rechenbergi

Seven reports of Bottlenose Dolphins during April were from Cape Cornwall to Fowey and a single report of Common Dolphins was off The Runnelstone. Harbour Porpoises were seen three times between Pendeen and The Runnelstone. A Minke Whale was seen off Pentreath Cove near The Lizard and a pod of 5 Killer Whales was seen well off Cape Cornwall, thought to be all female. Two reports of Basking Sharks were off Porthkerris and Barn Voose. A Thresher Shark was seen off Pendeen on the 21st and 22nd of April and a couple of *Rhizostoma octopus* jellyfish were seen in Fal Bay on the 28th.