

Penzance B.S.A..C. Conservation Officer's Report June 2010

Utah's Red Rocks has world famous attractions at numerous national parks, monuments and state parks, and until now they were known only for a few scattered bones and dinosaur footprints, but recently they have yielded a rare skeleton of a new species of plant eating dinosaur that lived 185 million years ago and may have been buried alive by a collapsing sand dune. This discovery confirms the widespread success of sauropodomorph dinosaurs during the Early Jurassic Period. The new dinosaur species is named *Seitaad ruessi* (SAY-eet-AWD ROO-ess-EYE) which is derived from the Navajo word "Seitaad", a sand-desert monster, from the Navajo creation legend that swallowed its victims in sand dunes. (The skeleton of *Seitaad* had been "swallowed" in a fossilized sand dune when it was discovered). Ruess, was after the artist, poet, naturalist and explorer Everett Ruess who mysteriously disappeared in the red rock country of southern Utah in 1934 at age 20.



After months of tests and trials, scientists reveal the World's strongest insect to be a species of Dung Beetle called *Onthopagus taurus*. They found that these insects could pull an astonishing 1.141 times their own weight, that's the equivalent of a 70 kg person lifting 80 tonnes (the same as six full double-decker buses). Insects are well known for being able to perform amazing feats of strength, and in this species it is all on account of their curious sex lives. Females dig tunnels under a dung pat, where males mate with them. If a male enters a tunnel already occupied by a rival they fight by locking horns and try to pull each other out. The researchers tested the beetles' ability to resist a rival, by measuring how much weight was needed to pull the beetle out of the hole. However the world's strongest creature for its size is the copepod. It is barely 1 mm long and the world's fastest animal and the most abundant multicellular animal on the planet. Their evolutionary success should be seen in relation to their ability to escape from predators. Their escape jump is incredibly powerful at the rate of half a metre per second, and it shows that copepods—in relation to their size—are 10 times as strong as has been previously documented for any other animal or even (human-made) motors. Researcher, with the aid of high-speed video recordings, have been able to give a detailed picture of the copepods escape jump and it has made an incredible impression on the researchers, for even though the copepod is blind and so tiny that the water feels as thick as syrup, it has managed to solve the engineering feat of fleeing quickly and efficiently.



There were 11 reported sightings of Bottlenose Dolphins during May, largest pod was 10 off St Ives. 5 reports of unidentified dolphins were probably also Bottlenose. Common Dolphins were seen on 7 occasions, largest pod 100 plus, and all other pods from 25 to 80 in number. Two sightings of Risso's Dolphins were off Pendeen and Marazion and Harbour Porpoises were reported 4 times from Padstow on the north coast to The Manacles on the south. The largest number of reports were of Basking Sharks, with 61 reported sightings from all around the coast from Newquay on the north coast to Plymouth Breakwater on the south. The first Ocean Sunfish of the year was seen off Holywell Bay on the 26th