

Jim Jourdane and 25 scientists

Fieldwork FAIL

THE MESSY SIDE OF SCIENCE!





WHAT IS A FIELDWORK FAIL?



Fig. 1. Monkey: animal belonging to the order Primates.



Fig. 2. Biologist: scientist who studies living things.



Fig. 3. Fieldwork: When a scientist studies a subject in its environment.



Fig. 4. Fieldwork Fail: When things don't go as planned.



Mesangat Lake, Indonesia



Agata Staniewicz
Accidentally glued myself to a crocodile while attaching
a radio transmitter.





We were trying to find out the range size of crocodiles in Indonesian Borneo.

The transmitter lets us know the habitat range the crocodiles need, and how they might interact with other species in the area (including other crocodile species).



After giving myself to the crocodile, I spent ten minutes trying to detach my finger without also detaching the transmitter. The fishermen watched and laughed!



I finally succeeded, but the croc lost the transmitter within 24 hours :(



HOW TO GLUE A TRANSMITTER TO A CROCODILE

- 1) Catch the crocodile and make sure its mouth is closed and secured (usually with tape or a rubber band).
- 2) Cover its eyes to reduce stress.
- 3) Someone needs to hold the croc down (or sit on it, if it's a big one) to make sure it doesn't thrash around or roll.
- 4) Take all the measurements, mark the croc, and attach the transmitter. Do all this as quickly as possible as the croc isn't sedated or sleeping!



San Antonio,
Texas, USA



Alayne Fronimos

Invested in camouflage blind to observe birds feeding.
Learned suburban birds are far less scared of my red car.



We observed birds in gardens, parks, restaurants, and churches, focusing on white-winged doves because they are hunted in Texas, so their ecology is of interest to the state. Also, they're moving north from Mexico, so we're investigating whether this range expansion affects local bird species.



I tried the blind during my practise observations and it just didn't work. The birds were too scared of it. Sometimes I did end up sitting in my car, other times I simply sat at a distance and the birds ignored me since they were used to humans.



HOW I OBSERVE BIRDS



1 I fill trays of birds seed,



2 then I wait for the birds to adapt to my presence.

3 I film for half an hour with an HD video camera...

4 ...noting anything that happens, and recording temperature and weather.

5 I use the videos at home for further studies:

- Which species spends more time at the feeder?
- If there is competition between two species, who wins?



Even though doves are a symbol of peace, white-winged doves proved to be one of the most dominant and aggressive species at our feeders!

Kilauea National Park,
Hawaii, USA



Jessica Ball

The first time I hiked an active lava flow in Hawaii, I melted the soles of my boots. Then I walked through water and they shrank.





I was in Kilauea National Park in Hawaii, visiting active lava flows as part of a class field trip.

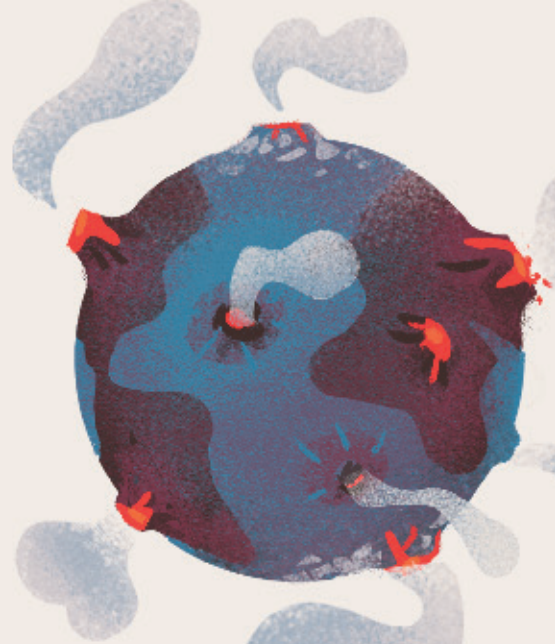
The heat from the lava is incredible. But as it touches air, lava chills immediately and forms a crust that, once it gets cool enough, is relatively safe to walk on...



...as long as you don't stand in one place too long!



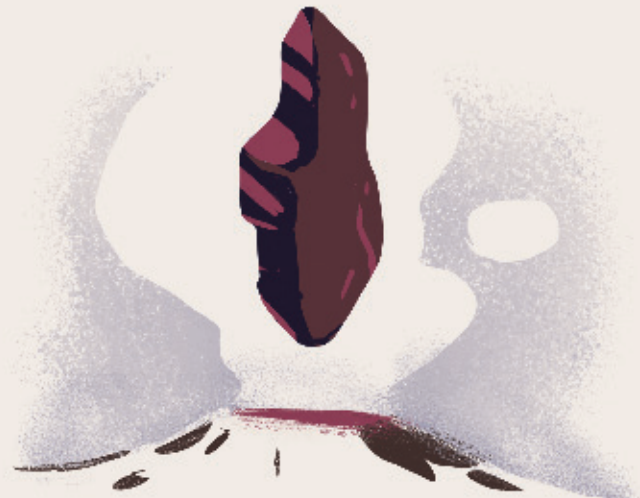
Volcanoes are found throughout the solar system. Enceladus has cryovolcanoes, which erupt ice!



There are volcanoes on all seven continents, and many more on the ocean floor.



The word 'volcano' comes from Vulcan, the god of fire, volcanoes, and metalworking in Roman mythology.



Mount Erebus, a volcano in Antarctica, erupts lava filled with feldspar crystals as big as your palm.

Glued to a crocodile, swallowing fossils, or shoes melted by lava...

Scientists working on all continents share their best stories, from the Colombian jungle to the Antarctic ice !



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