



YOUR MEMORY IN FOCUS

Taking a picture to help you remember may make you forget. A scientist in the United States studied people touring an art museum. People were less likely to remember details the next day if they took photos of whole objects, compared to those just looking or those zooming in on the object for the photo. So, it might be worth stopping to think before taking your next snap for Instagram or Facebook.

ICE COLD

A new record has been set for the coldest place on Earth. Satellites recorded -93.2 degrees Celsius at a high ridge on the East Antarctic Plateau. This was discovered as part of a NASA and United States Geological Survey project.

FLUORESCENCE SHINES LIGHT ON FAKES

Fluorescent markers used in medical research could be adapted to prevent document forgery. New markers called tau-dots have been engineered from nanocrystals. Each tau-dot signifies a unique code, and they can be mixed with inks and printed. Only the owner will know the code, so they can tell if the printed document is a fake or the real deal.

Jasmine Leong

FREQUENT FLIERS



Tasmanian muttonbirds undertake a massive journey every year, flying thousands of kilometres. Sadly, not all of them make it.

Imagine if you had to travel around Australia twice every year, just to get your dinner.

This is the life of the short-tailed shearwater, a remarkable Australian sea bird. About this time every year, these birds make one of the world's longest migrations, flying 15 000 kilometres from southern Australia across the Pacific Ocean to the west coast of Alaska.

When the northern hemisphere starts to cool down in September, the birds head all the way back home to breed on islands and headlands along our coastline. More than 23 million shearwaters call Australia home during our summer.

The shearwaters, also known as Tasmanian muttonbirds, make their huge trip in as little as eight weeks.

Their one-metre wingspan allows them to fly up to 85 kilometres per hour. The travellers don't have much to eat on the way, and often arrive at our shores completely exhausted.

If they haven't had enough food, or if the weather is unusually bad, some shearwaters sadly do not make it home. Last year, thousands of dead and tired birds were found along the eastern Australian coast, in what is called a bird 'wreck'.

While shearwater wrecks do happen every so often, scientists are now worried that they are happening more regularly, and that these birds might not be getting enough food for their long journey.

Lyndon Ashcroft