

Animal Revolt

Items compiled by Aesop from press sources, April 1-July 10

Aesop

2003

In late March, Takoma, a 22 year-old Atlantic bottle-nosed dolphin trained by the US Navy to detect underwater mines for Marine Corps reconnaissance divers, went absent without leave while on patrol in the Persian Gulf outside of Umm Qasr. In an effort to cover their embarrassment, a public relations official for the Marines claimed that Takoma was recaptured on May 5, but these reports have not been confirmed by independent investigators. Given all the other lies about the Iraqi invasion issued at Pentagon press conferences, we at Fifth Estate consider Takoma to be on the run somewhere in the Indian ocean.

The US Navy reported that in late April one of their "Seawolf"-class submarines was attacked by a hostile polar bear. While on maneuvers north of the 80th Parallel near Alaska, the USS Connecticut had partly surfaced in an icepack when the bear attacked, biting and swatting the sub's rudder.

A recent spate of deadly alligator attacks in Florida prompted government officials to compile statistics on which animals are most likely to pose a threat to humans. Worldwide, more than 50 people have been attacked by sharks in the last decade; 40 people in the US were attacked by mountain lions, resulting in 7 deaths. An average of 18 people a year are killed by dogs in the US; 15 die from venomous snakebites. In the last century in North America, 45 humans were killed by bears and there were 500 alligator attacks, a dozen of which were fatal. In the last twenty years, 15 Texans died from spider bites. On average, auto accidents involving deer kill 130 people every year.

Residents in Kilmarnock, Scotland are begging the Parliament to protect them from increasing aerial attacks from herring gulls and black-beaked gulls. A mail carrier, who has resorted to wearing a helmet and carrying a stick on his daily rounds, said that the seagulls were "vicious" and were "attacking dogs and cats." Another resident claims to have been assaulted five times, twice while in his motorcycle.

Scientists in the US say that the voracious swarms of katydid crickets that have invaded Utah, Nevada, and Idaho are "the worst in decades." The crickets have already destroyed vast stretches of cropland have affected visibility on roads, prompting government officials in some counties to declare states of emergency.

Police in Bloomingdale, New Jersey say that a recent wave of vandalism that shattered a dozen automobile side-view mirrors in the town is the work of a large male pileated woodpecker.

On May 31, the opening meeting of the newly-elected legislature of Yemen was disrupted when a raging wild bull charged into the building. Three people were injured and the legislative session was postponed to later in the week.

A royal ceremonial review of the Grenadier Guards at Windsor Castle was interrupted by an angry swarm of bees.

Unfortunately, the Queen of England was not harmed, but a sergeant-major was hospitalized after being stung on the forehead. A driver delivering Danish bacon was trapped in his truck for ten hours in Devon, England by hundreds of European honey bees. That same week, a Texas man was stung more than 200 times, and in Fort Bend County, Texas, a bee swarm stung three dogs to death and attacked a woman.

In late April, angry baboons in eastern Uganda disrupted traffic on a highway 15 kilometers from the Kenyan border. The baboons blocked the middle of the road and hurled sticks and stones at cars in protest against the killing of a female baboon by a motorist the day before.

Four monkeys escaped from a zoo in Liaoning province, China in June and attacked a woman and her child. One monkey eluded recapture and remains at large.

A bull terrier named Conan escaped from a home in Norway late one Saturday night in April and robbed a local 24-hour gas station/convenience store. The dog entered the store to steal chocolate-covered rice crisp from a bulk candy bin. Surveillance cameras taped Conan devouring the contents of the entire bin while a security guard and the night-shift worker stood by nervously. According to the dog's "owner," Conan is a repeat offender.

A 300-pound black bear broke into a home in Willard, Wisconsin by wriggling through an open bathroom window. Once inside, the bear knocked over plates and glasses, tore up curtains and window screens, and defecated in several places. The bear fell asleep on the living room floor and left by the front door when the homeowner returned.

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