

# Supersonic Speeds

## Alligator Operation

Seventy US coins have been successfully removed from a rare alligator's stomach at Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium, in Nebraska, USA. Zookeepers report that Thibodaux, the leucistic American alligator, has recovered well from surgery. Foreign metal objects were identified in his stomach during routine examinations by veterinarians at the zoo. Christina Ploog, the vet who led the procedure, said, 'A plastic pipe was placed to protect his mouth and safely pass the tools used to access the coins, such as a camera that helped us guide the retrieval of these objects.' Zookeepers think that 36-year-old Thibodaux ingested coins that had been thrown into the water in his enclosure. The zoo has asked visitors to not throw their spare change into any bodies of water at the zoo, and instead use the coin wishing well or convert them into the zoo's souvenir coins. Leucistic alligators are the rarest genetic variation of the American alligator. They normally have blue eyes and white, translucent, or pale pink skin.

**How do you think staff at the zoo could stop the coins from ending up in the animals' water?**



**Pictured:** Thibodaux, the 36-year-old leucistic American alligator (below) and the coins removed from Thibodaux's stomach (above).  
**Source:** Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium Facebook page.



**Pictured:** A flying plane. **Source:** Canva.

Unusually high winds in the Atlantic jet stream have pushed passenger planes to supersonic speeds! Experts say the near record-breaking wind speeds are due to very cold temperatures in the northeast USA and much warmer air in the south. One commercial flight, travelling from Washington to London, was pushed to nearly 800mph. Another flight from New Jersey's Newark Airport to Lisbon, in Portugal, reached speeds of 835mph. This is much faster than a passenger aeroplane's typical flying speed, which would normally be around 575mph. 'This evening's weather balloon launch detected the 2<sup>nd</sup> strongest upper-level wind recorded in local history going back to the mid-20<sup>th</sup>

century. Around 34,000-35,000ft, winds peaked around 230 knots (265mph!). For those flying eastbound in this jet, there will be quite a tailwind,' the National Weather Service Baltimore/Washington posted. The Atlantic jet stream is a fast and narrow current of air, which flows from west to east and encircles the globe. Aeroplanes travelling east from North America often use the jet stream to help them to travel faster and cut down the amount of fuel that they need to use. Scientists, however, do warn that the downside of the increased speed is the possibility of a much bumpier ride, due to more severe turbulence.

**How do you think it would feel to travel this fast?**

# Long-lost Trophy Returned



**Pictured:** People taking part in the Highland Games held in Cabrach last year. **Source:** The Cabrach Trust X page.

**Pictured:** The Cabrach Rose Bowl Trophy. **Source:** The Cabrach Trust X page.

A Highland Games trophy, missing for 90 years, has been located! An appeal to find the missing Cabrach Rose Bowl trophy has resulted in the award being found in Devon, southwest England and returned home to Cabrach, a hamlet in Moray, Scotland. The Cabrach Trust, an organisation committed to regenerating local communities, brought back the Cabrach Picnic and Games in 2022, after an 87-year gap. The Cabrach Picnic and Games was a staple of the Highland Games calendar and ran annually from 1877 to 1935. The recently-found silverware was traditionally awarded to the top-performing athlete at the Games. Attendees at the event held in 2023 could enjoy 'have a go' Highland Games, tug o' war, Highland dances, music, food and drink. Highland Games events typically include the caber toss (throwing a very large log as far as possible), hammer

throw (throwing a heavy hammer as far as you can over your head backwards, whilst wearing special boots to ensure you stay firmly in one spot), stone put (very similar to shot put but using a large stone), Tug o' war and hill race. Organisers are overjoyed that the trophy has been returned in time for this year's Highland Games. Charlie Murray, chair of the Royal Scottish Highland Games Association, commented during the search for the prized bowl, saying, 'The Cabrach Rose Bowl represents a key component of the history of Scottish Highland Games. Silverware like this is steeped in the heritage of traditional Highland sport, and it is culturally very significant that such prizes remain as the reward for the finest athletes that grace our games.'  
**Have you ever attended a Highland Games? If not, do you think you would like to?**

## Last week's topic: How important is packaging?



I think this is a good idea for the environment not for people with bad eyesight like me.

**Ella**

I think that plastic bottles should be banned and we should use only glass!

**Jamie**

I think that less packaging is really important for the environment and a good idea.

**Patrick**

I think we should keep the plastic labels because it will be easier to recognise what I am drinking and the colours will make more people want to buy the drinks.

**Carmen**

## Let us know what you think about this week's news.

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