



FINDINGS

The practice of black magic and the popularity of the Harry Potter franchise were both endangering India's wild owls. American herpetologists traveled to a restaurant in Vietnam to examine a previously undescribed race of all-female lizards but arrived to find that a "crazy guy had gotten drunk and served them all to his customers." Japanese ichthyologists concluded that the small size of "parasitic dwarf" male *Lamprologus callipterus* fish, which are only 2.4 percent the size of "bourgeois" males who build snail-shell houses to attract mates, enables the parasitic males to sneak into bourgeois houses and fertilize the females. Two Spanish malacologists unveiled a massive study describing 209 new species of *Turbonilla* snail. "There were so many," said one of the micromollusk experts. "And they were so small." In Burma, a newly discovered noseless monkey was assumed to be critically endangered because—despite its efforts to keep its head tucked between its legs on rainy days—it sneezes whenever rain falls into its nasal cavity and thereby alerts hunters to its presence. Researchers discovered a gene for liberalism and now know how the leopard got its spots.

Scientists noted that strongly religious American consumers have weaker brand loyalties. Anger was found to make people want things; "If the food does not make you angry," explained Utrecht University's Henk Aarts, "you may starve and lose the battle." The sight of cooked meat was found, contrary to researchers' expectations, to make men less aggressive. Fat people have a heightened sense of smell for food, deaf adults see better than people who can hear, and

early-onset blindness accelerates a person's sense of touch. Dogs prefer the eyes when mauling children. The death of a child causes the heart of a bereaved parent to beat faster. Slavemaker ants prefer to enslave the strong rather than the weak.

Australian researchers, after they concluded a study of a father and son who both initiated "rude," "rough," and "mechanical" sex while asleep, suggested that sex-somnia may be a heritable condition. Parthenogenesis was observed in a female boa constrictor who had declined the opportunity to mate with males. "Why waste those expensive eggs," said the study's lead author, "when you have the potential to put out some half clones of yourself?" Discus fish rear their fry by allowing them to feed continually on their own skin mucus for the first few weeks of life, but whenever the fry have bitten one parent for about ten minutes they are sent off to bite the other. Anorexia was correlated with increased risks of eye damage and unplanned pregnancy; scientists warned that "anorexia is not a good contraceptive." Adolescent girls are less likely than adolescent boys to use protection during their first penetrative sex, teens who send more than 120 text messages per day are more likely to have had sex, and overweight women have riskier sex. A computer model found polar bears incapable of eating snow geese into extinction. Modern humans mature more slowly and are less promiscuous than Neanderthals, who felt compassion for the sick and the disabled. Few Egyptian mummies had cancer. A pod of porpoises saved the life of Dick Van Dyke. ■

*Roil, Splooosh, and Rose, oil paintings from the Boom & Bust series, by Joy Garnett.
Courtesy the artist and Winkleman Gallery, New York City*