

World's fastest ant like 580kph human

20th October, 2019



Image Credit: Harald Wolf, Ulm University

Scientists have discovered the world's fastest ant. It is the Saharan silver ant. It runs at a speed of just over 3kph, but that is the same ant speed as a human running 580kph. The ant runs 108 times the length of its own body every

second. This is quicker than an Olympic 100-meter runner. The world's fastest man, Usain Bolt, ran the 100 meters using 4 strides a second. The Saharan silver ant uses up to 50 strides a second. The scientists say this much movement almost breaks the limits of what is physically possible for a living thing. Each of the ants' feet makes contact with the ground for a very short time. The ants' feet touch the ground for just seven milliseconds before they take the next stride.

The scientists said the Saharan silver ant runs so fast because it lives in the hot desert. The sand can reach temperatures of up to 60 degrees Celsius, so the ant wants to spend as little time as possible with its feet on the scorching ground. Another reason is that if the ants' feet spend a longer time on the sand, they will sink a little and slow the ant down. Professor Harald Wolf wrote about why the ants' feet move so fast. He said: "These features may be related to the sand dune habitat. They could prevent the ants' feet from sinking too deeply into the soft sand." Professor Wolf told CNN: "We knew these ants would be fast, but nobody knew how fast exactly, and how they would achieve that speed."

Sources: dailymail.co.uk / cnn.com / foxnews.com

Writing

Ants are among the most important creatures on Earth. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

scientists / ants / running / human / length / Sahara / limits / physically / stride / desert / temperature / 60 degrees / sand / features / soft / sinking / nobody / speed

True / False

- The world's fastest ant is the Saharan golden ant. T / F
- The Saharan ant can run at speeds of up to 580 kilometers per hour. T / F
- The ant makes up to 50 strides a second. T / F
- Each of the ant's feet touches the ground for just 7 nanoseconds. T / F
- The ants run so fast because the sand it runs on is very hot. T / F
- The ants run so fast to stop their feet from sinking in sand. T / F
- A professor said the sand the ants run on is soft. T / F
- The professor said no one knew how the ants ran so fast. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. discovered | a. get to |
| 2. over | b. boundaries |
| 3. quicker | c. characteristics |
| 4. limits | d. found |
| 5. just | e. precisely |
| 6. reach | f. only |
| 7. scorching | g. stop |
| 8. features | h. above |
| 9. prevent | i. hot |
| 10. exactly | j. faster |

Discussion – Student A

- What do you think about what you read?
- What would the world be like without ants?
- What do you think of ants?
- How difficult is it to live in the desert?
- What experiences have you had with hot sand?
- What do ants do in the desert?
- Why do you think the ants are silver?
- What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. It runs at a | a. down |
| 2. 108 times the length | b. with the ground |
| 3. up to 50 strides | c. fast exactly |
| 4. the ants' feet makes contact | d. stride |
| 5. before they take the next | e. dune habitat |
| 6. sand can reach temperatures of | f. speed of just over 3kph |
| 7. slow the ant | g. the soft sand |
| 8. related to the sand | h. of its own body |
| 9. sinking too deeply into | i. a second |
| 10. nobody knew how | j. up to 60 degrees |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you know about ants?
- What do you think of the ants' speed?
- How great would it be to run at 580kph?
- What do you know about the Sahara desert?
- When was the last time you saw an ant?
- Would you like to do research on ants?
- What is your stride like?
- How important is it for you to run fast?

Spelling

- secvioerdd the world's fastest ant
- 108 times the hgletn of its own body
- the stntsiesci say this
- this much entmmevo
- makes cntaact with the ground
- touch the ground for just seven iienslcsmdol
- it lives in the hot tedesr
- atrsurtpeeem of up to 60 degrees
- with its feet on the orshgcicn ground
- These frueesta may be related
- the sand dune abtiath
- how they would aeivceh that speed

Answers – Synonym Match

1. d	2. h	3. j	4. b	5. f
6. a	7. i	8. c	9. g	10. e

Role Play

Role A – Ants

You think ants are the most useful and interesting insects. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their insects. Also, tell the others which are the least useful and interesting of these (and why): bees, worms or spiders.

Role B – Bees

You think bees the most useful and interesting insects. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their insects. Also, tell the others which are the least useful and interesting of these (and why): ants, worms or spiders.

Role C – Worms

You think worms are the most useful and interesting insects. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their insects. Also, tell the others which are the least useful and interesting of these (and why): bees, ants or spiders.

Role D – Spiders

You think spiders are the most useful and interesting insects. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their insects. Also, tell the others which are the least useful and interesting of these (and why): bees, worms or ants.

Speaking – Animal Abilities

Rank these with your partner. Put the best insect abilities at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| • Producing venom | • Running fast |
| • Flying | • Spinning webs |
| • Making silk | • Making honey |
| • Camouflage | • Glow in the dark |

Answers – True False

a F	b F	c T	d F	e T	f T	g T	h T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.