Best of Last Week—Kibble or meat for dogs, collecting lithium from wastewater, health benefits of olive oil

May 13 2024, by Bob Yirka

It was a good week for the biological sciences, as a team of researchers in the U.S., led by groups from Oklahoma State University and the University of Florida, explored which is better for your dog, kibble or
raw meat, and found surprising health results. Also, a team of pathobiologists at the Royal Veterinary College in the U.K., working with a colleague from National Chung Hsing University, in Taiwan, created a life expectancy chart for approximately 8,000 domestic cat breeds, showing the longest and shortest-lived cats and those in between. And a team of anthropologists, paleontologists and Earth scientists from Kent State University, the City University of New York and the University of Michigan's Museum of Paleontology identified the likely common ancestor of all modern hoofed animals—named Militocodon lydae, the creature was from the Paleocene epoch and was dated to 65 million years ago.

In technology news, a team of analysts at the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection found evidence that almost half of the lithium needed for batteries could come from Pennsylvania wastewater. And a team of AI researchers at the University of Illinois Urbana developed a framework to detect hallucinations in the text generated by LLMs. Also, a team of roboticists at the Chinese University of Hong Kong demonstrated a robot snail with a helmet-like shell that could move around by rolling on bulldozer-like tracks—they could also connect to form trains and work together to climb over objects. And a team of micro-roboticists at Brno University of Technology, in the Czech Republic, demonstrated via video how swarms of miniature robots could work together to clean up microplastics and microbes in liquid samples.

In other news, a team of medical researchers at the University of California San Diego School of Medicine discovered some of the changes that occur in metabolism between birth and the presentation of autism spectrum disorder later in childhood. Also, astrophysicists at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland made public a new black hole visualization they had created that allowed viewers to visualize what it might be like to cross the event horizon. And finally, a team of nutritionists and medical researchers at the Harvard
T.H. Chan School of Public Health found evidence that daily consumption of olive oil may reduce the chances of developing dementia.

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