

Our 10 favorite science news stories of 2016

By **David Grimm** | Dec. 23, 2016, 5:00 AM

Plants that gamble. Floating creatures in the clouds of alien worlds. An ice-encased military base uncovered by climate change. Our favorite stories of 2016 didn't necessarily employ the most cutting-edge science—for that, see our **breakthroughs of the year**—but they were fun, compelling reads that resonated widely with our audience here and on social media. Some of these were our personal favorites; some were our most popular stories of the year. Either way, we hope you'll enjoy reading them again.



WaterFrame/Alamy Stock Photo

8. Greenland shark may live 400 years, smashing longevity record

"Astonishing." That's what scientists are saying about the life span of the Greenland shark, which new research reveals can live more than 400 years. The downside? Females aren't ready to reproduce until they hit the ripe age of 156.



Carol and Mike Werner/Visuals Unlimited, Inc.

1. Why do our cell's power plants have their own DNA?

Our most popular story of the year addresses one of the biggest mysteries of cell biology: Why do mitochondria—the oval-shaped structures that power our cells—have their own DNA, especially when the rest of the cell contains plenty of its own? A new study may hold the answers—and the clues to several rare and crippling diseases.

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