

An icy break up, Higgs history and a very messy eater

July's sharpest science shots, selected by *Nature's* photo team.

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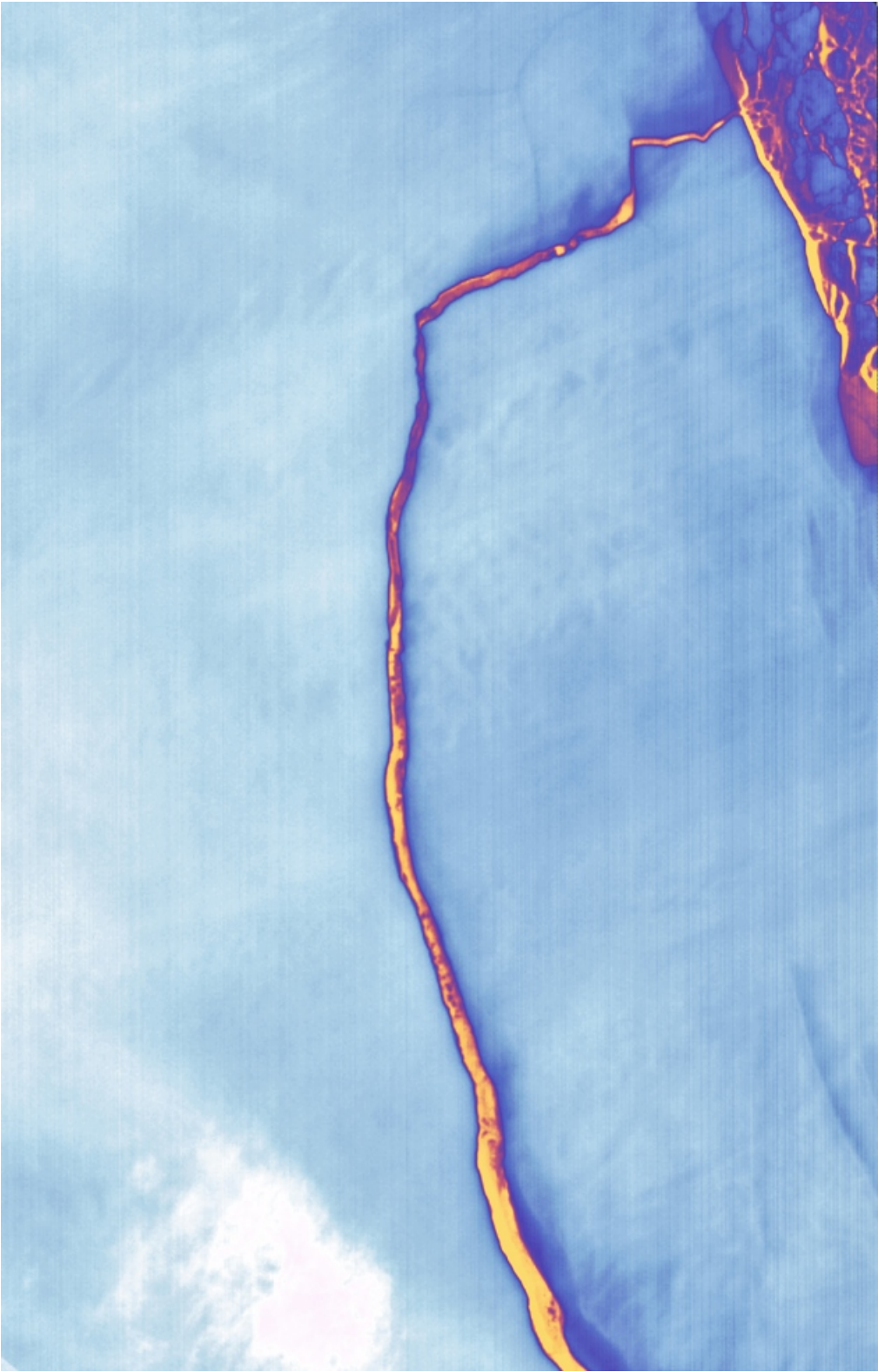
Jupiter ascending



NASA/JPL-Caltech/SwRI/MSSS/Jason Major

It's been another good month for fans of Jupiter. NASA's Juno mission has been swinging ever closer to the planet, and on 10 July, it made a close fly-by of the planet's Great Red Spot, capturing this image.

An icy separation



This month, a huge iceberg cracked off Antarctica's Larsen C ice shelf. Although the calving had been expected for a while, the sheer size of the trillion-tonne 'berg made it a media event around the world. Because Antarctica is currently shrouded in winter darkness, NASA has been monitoring the traumatic separation using thermal imaging.

A crime in animal print



Tristan Spinski/NYT/Redux/eyevine

The National Wildlife Property Repository near Denver, Colorado, contains more than one million seized, donated and abandoned animal products. The strange taxidermic menagerie was the subject of a photo essay in July by *The New York Times*.

Higgs-hunter history



Maximilien Brice/CERN

Ten years ago, the huge detectors at the Large Hadron Collider that would go on to detect the Higgs boson were still under construction. But this picture of the 14,000-tonne Compact Muon Solenoid hadn't seen the light of day until this month, when it was released by the team responsible for the detector at CERN, Europe's particle-physics laboratory near Geneva, Switzerland.

Flat out for lithium



Copernicus Sentinel (2017), ESA

Local residents near the vast Salar de Uyuni flat in Bolivia have collected salt from the plain for years, but attention has turned to the huge amounts of lithium that can also be extracted from it. The squares in the top of this newly released satellite image are part of the country's national lithium plant, built as part of global race to extract more of the metal, which is crucial for many batteries.

Messy eater

The Pacific Banana Slug eating bits of plant in Vancouver Island.

Some might say that the Pacific banana slug (*Ariolimax columbianus*) isn't the most photogenic of animals. But this remarkable video of one on Canada's Vancouver Island eating plant pieces was strangely compelling to the *Nature* team. Credit: Sean McCann

Robot gold



Alex Wong/Getty Images

An all-female team from Afghanistan was initially denied visas to enter the United States for this month's FIRST Global International Robot Olympics. Although the team members didn't win the competition, the obstacles that they overcame to merely compete at the event, held in Washington DC, earned them widespread acclaim.

Mammal out-competes dinosaur — again

Timelapse: blue whale moves into Natural History Museum

For years, a huge, replica diplodocus skeleton has welcomed visitors to London's Natural History Museum. But this month, in an echo of events following the Cretaceous–Paleogene extinction, 'Dippy' was replaced by a full-size, real skeleton of a blue whale (*Balaenoptera musculus*).

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