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Scientists find a “Law of Urination”

Friday, October 18, 2013

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Here's something to go with your morning Cheerios...

During a trip to Zoo Atlanta, a group of Georgia Tech scientists measured the duration of urination from a number of animals whose bladders ranged in size from less than 4 ounces to more than 25 gallons.

Despite the large difference in size, the duration of urination for the animals of different species remained nearly constant, at 21 seconds.

Why is this? In **their research article**, the scientists explain:



When ya gotta go...

This feat is made possible by the increasing urethra length of large animals which amplifies gravitational force and flow rate. We also demonstrate the challenges faced by the urinary system for rodents and other small mammals for which urine flow is limited to single drops. Our findings reveal the urethra evolved as a flow-enhancing device, enabling the urinary system to be scaled up without compromising its function. This study may help in the diagnosis of urinary problems in animals and in inspiring the design of scalable hydrodynamic systems based on those in nature.

If nothing else this gives me something else to look for the next time I visit the Houston Zoo. And, dare I ask whether readers conform to the law of urination?

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