

ON THE RECORD

“Perhaps what we should do is give each person a gun, and when we see a migrating bird, we can just shoot it down.”

Hong Kong lawmaker Tommy Cheung offers an unusual proposal for controlling the spread of avian flu.

“We issued a general recommendation for poultry producers to prevent the spread of the virus with the sauna.”

Sirpa Kiviruusu from Finland’s agricultural ministry backs steam rooms as a disinfection method for controlling the bird flu virus.

Sources: AP, Agence France-Presse

SCORECARD

Deer
In Missouri, the tables have turned and this year deer are doing the shooting. Researchers have so far collected 200 hours of film from cameras mounted on the animals to give a deer’s-eye view of the world.

Wasps
Researchers in Georgia are creating a buzz with a prototype detector for explosives. The device uses wasps trained to react to certain chemicals in the air.

Pluto
As the debate about Pluto’s planetary status rages on, two extra moons spotted orbiting the body may help boost its image.

DATAPoint

Some countries benefit from a ‘brain drain’ of qualified doctors from elsewhere. In Britain, for instance, a recent study finds that 28% of physicians come from abroad. The top four suppliers are:

India	10.9%
Ireland	2.1%
Pakistan	1.9%
South Africa	1.4%

Source: *New England Journal of Medicine*

Protists push animals aside in rule revamp

Organisms whose cells have a nucleus — eukaryotes — have traditionally been separated into four ‘kingdoms’; now they have been reorganized into six. The authors of the revision hope that it will bring peace to a long-divided discipline, and raise awareness of the diversity of single-celled organisms.

Textbooks generally divide eukaryotes into plants, animals, fungi and protists. The protist kingdom mostly consists of single-celled organisms such as amoebae. Bacteria make up a fifth kingdom.

Since the late 1970s, data from electron microscopy and DNA sequences have indicated that the traditional groupings do not make sense. Protist classification was particularly troubled. But the evidence was not clear enough for a consensus on a new regime, and fierce disagreements became common.

“I’ve seen people throw things at each other,” says Sina Adl, a soil-organism specialist at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Canada, who coordinated the group of 28 protist experts that produced the new classification. It was commissioned by the International Society of

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REASONS

Trypanosomes (purple), which cause sleeping sickness, were one of the hardest protists to classify.

Protistologists and is published in *The Journal of Eukaryotic Microbiology* (S. M. Adl *et al.* *J. Eukaryot. Microbiol.* 52, 399–451; 2005).

The experts have given protists a mighty four kingdoms out of six. Animals do not even get their own group — fungi and animals have

Turkish rectors rally in support of university head thrown in jail

The struggle between Turkey’s Islamic and academic powerhouses for control of the country’s universities is becoming increasingly acrimonious.

Late last month, nearly all of the country’s 77 university rectors travelled to Van, close to Turkey’s eastern border with Iran, to support Yücel Askin, a university rector who is held in jail there. They say that the charges brought against him are trumped up, and are demanding his release.

Askin, who has been rector of the 100th Year University in Van since 1999, has been charged with corruption relating to the purchase of medical equipment for the university hospital.

According to Turkish law, all problems arising in the country’s universities should

be handled first by the Council of Higher Education. But the public prosecutor in Van ordered Askin’s arrest on 14 October without asking the council, and insisted that he is jailed until a date for the court hearing is decided.

This is the fifth case that the public prosecutor has tried to bring against Askin. The others involved accusations of illegal handling of historical documents or objects snatched from his home during police raids in the past year. All items were found to be legally registered and the charges dropped.

Askin is unpopular with religious groups, say the rectors, who argue that he has been targeted because he resisted pressure to appoint underqualified candidates,