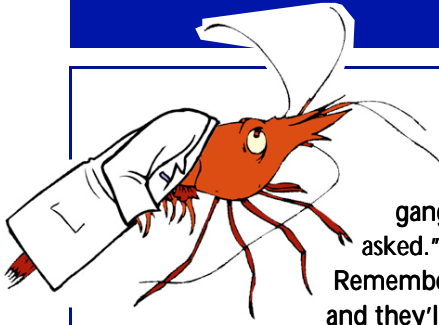


Tommy Time



Hi Kids, I'm Dr. Tommy Prawn, I'm a mad scientist that lives in the river Shannon in Ireland. My good friends at Nature's Web rang me on the watermobile and told me ye had a few questions about science and asked if I could answer them. I told the gang at Nature's Web "no probs, of course I would try to answer the questions you asked." So here I go..... Enjoy!
Remember, if you have any other science questions, just send them into editor@naturesweb.ie and they'll pass 'em on to me!

Dr. Tommy

How Much Stone Was Used in a Pyramid?

Very interesting question, and of course depends on the size of the pyramid. On my holidays to Egypt I met a guy called Mustafa Camel. He told me that camels were ships of the desert. I said you don't look like a ship to me, you look like a camel. He said, "I am a ship of the desert". I said he was the ugliest looking ship I ever saw. He spat at me, all the camels spit in Egypt. Dirty little things!

I'll talk about the great pyramid in Giza when answering this. It took 20 years and 100,000 people to build it. The stones used were stones

brought from Aswan and Tura. This pyramid is thought to

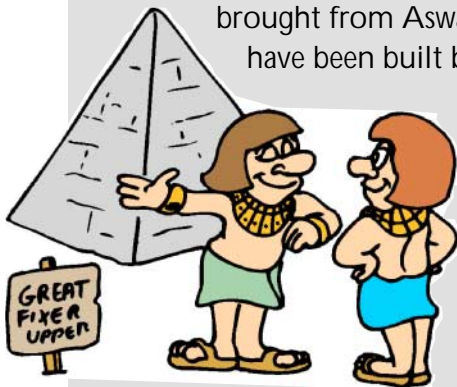
have been built between 2589 - 2566 BC. It took over 2,300,000 blocks of stone with an

average weight of 2.5 tons each (with some as heavy as 15 tons). The

total weight was 6,500,000 tons and measured 481 feet (147m) in

height. It is the largest and the oldest of the Pyramids of Giza. An interesting fact is that this is the only one of the Seven Wonders of the World that still survives.

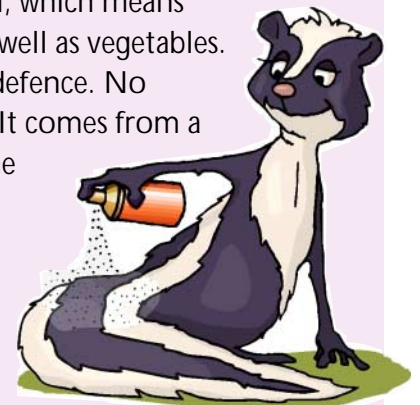
Imagine that, 6,500,000 tons in weight. That's the weight of roughly 444,445 African elephants. Not even superman would lift that I think!



What Makes Skunks Smell?

Skunks are small black and white mammals and are members of the weasel family. Skunks are very common in some parts of the world like California. The skunk is nocturnal, which means they come out at night. They eat mice and rats and other small rodents as well as vegetables. No wonder they smell so bad if they eat rats! The smell is the skunks best defence. No creature, human or animal, can stand being near a skunk with that odour. It comes from a fluid called musk, which is produced and stored in a pair of glands under the animal's tail. A skunk can propel the spray about 10 feet (3 metres).

Bottom line kids, if you see a skunk, run. It's as simple as that. Don't try to rub it or pick it up. My friend Mikey Bull tried once and the skunk sprayed him, then he had to go on a date. Let's just say he most certainly did not have the Lynx effect!



Dr. Tommy Prawn would like to acknowledge the help of his good friend James Ring. Text: © James Ring

© 2008 Sherkin Island Marine Station & its licensors. All rights reserved.