

Golfing bumblebees? Amazing video of insect learning could spark artificial intelligence research

Bumblebees have learned to push a ball into a hole to get a reward, stretching what was thought possible for small-brained creatures.

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So while these tasks might seem complex, they don't really show a deeper level of learning, says [Olli Loukola](#) at Queen Mary University of London, an author of that study.

Loukola and his team decided the next challenge was whether bees could learn to move an object that was not attached to the reward.

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Bees' cognitive abilities are of interest to artificial intelligence researchers, some of whom build computer models of insects' brains to help learn how nature creates complex behaviour. Behavioural studies of insects are increasingly showing that you can do a lot with very limited hardware.

"The old-fashioned view is if an animal has a small brain, it's not intelligent or smart," says Loukola. "Our study shows it's not true that small brains are not capable of this kind of cognitive flexibility."

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[Eirik Søvik](#) at Volda University College in Norway] thinks the main limitation for research on insect cognition is human creativity.

"We just have not been very good at designing experiments that allow us to probe insect cognition very well," he says. "That's probably because it is so incredibly difficult to imagine how bees experience the world, and if you want to give them tasks they can succeed at, that is key. I think the authors here really succeed at taking the bees' view of the world."

[The study can be found [here](#).]

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [Bees learn to play golf and show off how clever they really are](#)