



## Ambassador to Ukraine is named

On May 18, Bridget Brink was confirmed as the next US ambassador to Ukraine. An ambassador is one country's representative to another country, and Brink's role will be to strengthen and maintain relations between the US and Ukraine. The news comes as Russia's invasion of Ukraine continues into its 13th week.

President Joe Biden nominated Brink for the role in April, and the US Senate (one half of Congress) confirmed her with a unanimous (all in favor) vote. Brink previously served as ambassador to Slovakia. Originally from Michigan, she can speak the Russian language fluently and has held many diplomatic (ensuring good relations between governments) positions within Eastern Europe.

The US has not had an ambassador to Ukraine since Marie Yovanovitch left the position in 2019. During Brink's confirmation hearing, she said she would work toward the reopening of the US embassy in Kyiv, Ukraine's capital. It has been closed due to the war.



Bridget Brink



**DID YOU KNOW?**  
Giant sinkholes are most often found in China, Mexico, and Papua New Guinea.

Looking down at the trees in the sinkhole

## Secret forest found in deep sinkhole

Scientists have discovered a lush forest in a previously unexplored sinkhole in the Guangxi region of southern China. The sinkhole is about 630 feet deep and covers an area of more than 176 million cubic feet, while the trees growing in it are up to 130 feet tall.

A team led by Lixin Chen reached the sinkhole on May 6. They rappelled (climbed down using ropes) about 330 feet into it and hiked on foot for several hours to reach the lowest ground. The researchers were surprised to find trees in a sinkhole as large and deep as this one.

In addition to the trees, the scientists found vegetation in the forest that grew up to their shoulders, as well as three cave entrances. They said research into the sinkhole's wildlife is just beginning. "I wouldn't be surprised to know

that there are species found in these caves that have never been reported or described by science until now," Chen said.

In the Chinese language, large sinkholes are called *tiankeng*, which means "heavenly pits." This is the 30th sinkhole discovered in China's Leye County. The region is home to karst landscapes, which are formed when water dissolves the bedrock under the ground. This process creates underground tunnels and caves, and sometimes the cave ceilings can collapse, creating sinkholes.

The exact formations found in karst landscapes vary based on region, and most are not as noticeable as those in China. About 25% of the US is made up of karst or karst-like terrain. The research team plans to compare this sinkhole to others to learn more about karst landscapes.



## IT'S AN AMAZING WEEK FOR...

### A MASSIVE DISCOVERY

A young boy has made a huge find. Sammy Shelton, age 6, went looking for shark teeth at a UK beach and found one from a megalodon, the largest shark that has ever existed. The fossil is four inches long and up to 20 million years old. Experts called it a "once in a lifetime" discovery.



Holding the tooth



The march

### PENGUINS ON PARADE

More than 5,200 little penguins set a record for the largest "penguin parade" on Australia's Phillip Island. Every day, the birds waddle out of the sea and onto the beach. Local experts say more birds have been participating lately, which could be due to weather. "It's been a penguin party," said one.

### A HAPPY REUNION

After nearly a year, Jake Free was sure he'd never see his lost pit bull, Vanessa, again—until she was found 10 miles from his home. Last summer, Vanessa got out of his family's Michigan yard. Jake, age 18, spent months searching for her and putting up flyers. After a photo of Vanessa was posted online, she was reunited with Jake—and ran right to him. "It was a lot of joy," he said.



A pit bull

ON THE COVER: COURTESY JUNIOR COUNCIL; GETTY IMAGES; (2) NIKOMAS; ON THIS PAGE: COURTESY OF GUANGXI SPELEOLOGY RESEARCH TEAM; (3) U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE; PETER SHELTON; PHILLIP ISLAND NATURE PARKS; GETTY IMAGES; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (3)