



# Dondrite news

No 9 May 2021

NIJMEGEN

## DEAR DONDRITES,

Last Saturday, the Eurovision Song Contest took place in our own beautiful country! Unfortunately, the Netherlands did not do very well and ended up with just 11 points. Italy received a huge amount of 524 points from the jury and televoting and that is why they won the Eurovision Song Contest with their song "Zitti E Buoni". We could all use some relaxation after this nerve-racking Saturday, so that is what this month's newsletter is for!

In this month's newsletter, you'll get to know our famous neurophilosophy teacher Pim Haselager during an extensive interview. Also, you'll read everything about the previous and upcoming events and don't forget to check the study board to see if you can help out a fellow student by participating in their study. And if you like running, walking or roller-skating, read this month's Dondrite picks quickly as they tell you the most beautiful trails to do so in and around Nijmegen! Have fun and happy reading!

Cheers,  
Scribe

Oh and don't forget our 'hidden hyperlinks'. Try clicking on things! This icon might help you:



# May



# This month Scribe got pensive with Pim!



## Could you introduce yourself?

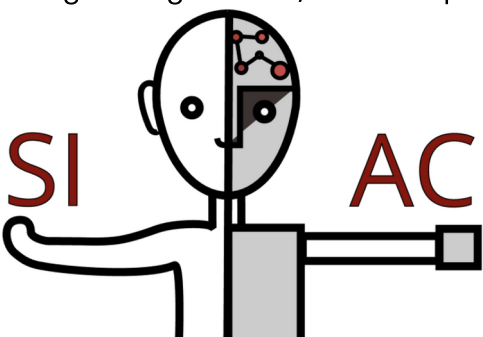
I'm Pim Haselager, philosopher and psychologist by training. I became interested in the combination because when I was studying psychology there was a lot of data but not a lot of important questions, and vice versa for philosophy. Early on in my career I became interested in AI, specifically in combining AI, neuroscience and psychology with philosophy. I'm currently a lecturer and PI of the soon to be named Societal implications of AI and Cognitive Neuroscience group (SIAC, see our new logo, displaying our aim to keep SI & AC in balance).

In around 2009 I got into brain-computer interfacing. People from Peter Desain's BrainGain consortium started asking me questions about the ethics and societal implications of such technology so I started writing about it and from there things went on and on. Femke Nijboer got me into talks with stakeholders like patient groups for BCI, people with lesion studies etc. I also got interested in brain stimulation which brings up the ethics of agency and responsibility for action. If a computer linked to your brain triggered your muscles to do something, who is responsible? So I have increasingly been involved in that kind of stuff. I also work with human-robot interactions, studying human trust in robots and how robot behaviour can influence it. So these activities are how I got to this point in my life.

**If your parents are on twitter then you want to go to TikTok.**

## Since you work with AI do you have much programming knowledge?

\*Laughs\* No, no. I did a little bit in the 80s but I was always more of a theoretician. There's an interesting thing you can see in programming languages, as in social platforms and other things, they change every 5-10 years. And I think that it's an identity thing. It's not necessarily becoming better, it's just becoming different. Every generation wants to programme in their own language, so that they can say to the old geezers that they don't know where it's at. I really believe this, like if your parents are on twitter then you want to go to TikTok. This could be a very interesting study actually, about how the fashions of these things change. But no, I don't do programming anymore.



## So how are you really doing (which is a bit of a loaded question in the past year)?

I'm doing really fine. But I have to say immediately that I had a girlfriend once who called me "unjustifiably happy" and I don't think that it was a compliment. But it is true, I tend to be a very optimistic, very content kind of person. And I have no reason to complain anyway. I am healthy, reasonably successful, financially fine, definitely not rich but I'm comfortable. I'm allowed to do the kind of work that I always wanted to. I wanted to basically remain a student for all of my life and I still am, which is really great. I get to travel a lot, maybe almost too much. When I say things, people normally seem interested in listening, which is always nice, and hopefully not always just because they have a course that they need to do an exam in eh? I'm healthy and happily married, my wife is here beside me actually. So no, I cannot complain. Covid has been a little bit of a problem of course, but I think for me, being home a little bit, not travelling for a while, was actually a bit of a blessing in disguise. You run around, work at the university can be very chaotic. Sometimes I went home to work, because at the uni there would be too many interruptions. And not travelling every once in a while is not so bad, staying home to relax can be nice. So I'm really not complaining whatsoever.

## What is your favourite class that you teach?

I don't have one, I enjoy them all. I also enjoy the differences. I have one bachelor degree course that is obligatory for second year AI students, and there the students are slightly more chaotic in their thinking. They are like young kids playing football, their thoughts are very bouncy, very enthusiastic. They go everywhere with the topics. And I have the masters course Ethics for AI, and of course Neurophilosophy. I find the neurophilosophy students to sometimes be a bit more serious, a bit more dedicated than the AI students, there are small differences. So they each have their own dynamics, and the courses are quite different. Sometimes there is a little bit of overlap in the topic, but mainly it's a different kind of focus & different types of activities. So I'm happy to move from one to the other.

Also interesting is the difference over generations. I see two changes for instance in the last 4 or 5 years compared to 10 years before. And of course this is a huge generalisation, it's not everyone, but the 2 differences are I think, on one hand the increased focus on the exam. "What do we need to know?", "Can you give examples?", "What's the answer?". No sorry, there is no required answer in philosophy. Very much focused on the exam, increasingly so. And the second one which you might not expect to be in parallel, is the growing societal interest, the commitment. 15 years ago this was a lot less, this generation is a lot more concerned about, you know, equality, ecology, human rights. In that sense there is also more interest intrinsically for societal implications than what we had 15 years ago. How exactly this matches with exam emphasis, I'm not entirely sure. But I think this also shows how much the educational system, and I don't just mean the university but already before, at highschool or even earlier, puts people into a state of mind where the exam is sort of the thing where it's at. And that is a pity, especially given the debate about education and lifelong learning, and how it's more about skills than what you know and stuff. We should try to reduce the exam as a stumbling block as much as possible. Rather it should be something that helps you in your training, and informs you about the effectivity of your learning skills. I try in my own small way but it's currently an uphill battle.

**I had a girlfriend once who called me "unjustifiably happy" and I don't think that it was a compliment.**

### **Is there something you would do to change this?**

It's complicated because things get more regulated all the time, no? Everything has to be explained, approved, formulated, explicated, documented. It's also because of the scale, the more students you have and the larger the program is, the more exceptions there are and then there have to be regulations. It's a dynamic that is not dependent on any individual. We like the essay for Neurophilosophy because it is not just a memorisation task but they are time expensive to grade. We just did the proposals, I think there were about 90? And that's your basic one page proposal, and then you get the essays. That's a lot to score. And then how do you evaluate 90 essays consistently? You need some criteria, then you need to fill in a form to show that you applied the criteria. Then you start regimenting, and then it becomes "Ok what are the criteria for the essay so I can write a good essay", and "Can you give me an example essay" and before you know it it's all about the exams again.

I remember when I was a student I went in and did my work, and if it worked great, if it didn't then I went in the next time and did it again. But that was a different time for studying, I think the time pressure was much less in those days. It is much more competitive now too.

I am a bit concerned about students these days. I can see and feel that the amount of stress and pressure is still increasing. Maybe at the moment the Covid situation too has given us a moment to reflect on how we can better balance scientific skills and knowledge with more general social, societal, relevant skills. That we should be aware of not putting you too much on the "nerdy" path, so to speak. Maybe it's easy for me to say, I get to talk a lot about the societal implications of science. But it's funny in a way to have that course, because the program thinks it's really important to have this, while at the same time becoming more one-directional in terms of spending time on careers and excelling in certain things. I have nothing against excellence, but it should be excellence that is well balanced in a broader social wellbeing. \*Laughs\*. I should have said that more clearly but ah well.

**First of all I'm a boomer, so who cares? Right? Don't listen to me.**

### **So what do you think about us CNS students?**

Every year, about 1/4 of the class just really doesn't care. "Leave me alone, I want to do imaging studies" or whatever. They normally don't show up to class and then write an essay to get it over with. You can often recognise the attitude within the essay, but not always, sometimes they are really good but they just don't want to spend too much time on it. The rest seem to be really into it, although maybe I am just hopeful? They seem happy that there is finally an opportunity to think and talk about those issues because they tend to think about it themselves anyway. But that doesn't always translate to good essays. So there is still a difference between people who really know how to reflect in a critically constructive way, and people who more go into chit chat in an essay. And this I think this is something to do with the training that you had in this, your experience in listening to perspectives that are different from your own and evaluating the arguments.

**This generation is a lot more concerned about, you know, equality, ecology, human rights.**

### **Do you enjoy reading the neurophilosophy essays?**

Yes! Totally! Yes yes yes. The only problem is that there are so many, which is really tough. Ok there are a few essays that are terrible but in a way that makes my life easier too because you can immediately see that this is a fail. The ones that are the most difficult to read/grade are the ones that don't really make sense but might be good enough if you read them constructively for long enough. But then at some point you have to say ok look, this is not good enough, try again because you need to learn.

But actually a very large segment of them are well written, and very interesting. And sometimes even very stimulating, I think I have recommended to 4 or 5 students over the last 5 years to submit their essays to a conference because they were that good.

So yes, it's a joy. But teaching in general for me is a very happy experience. I am a little bit worried these days that it might be time for me to stop as I'm getting old enough to be everyone's granddad, but as long as you are willing to listen I am happy to talk.

**Work towards self knowledge and self training I think. The grades will come in the process.**

**What message would you like to give to everyone reading this?**

First of all I'm a boomer, so who cares? Right? Don't listen to me. Actually that's the best advice, don't listen to what anyone else says, make your own choices for your own reasons.

But I think my main message would be, Relax. Maybe it is easier for me to say in my current position, but I do think I have always lived like that. The stress levels, this emphasis on achievement, this almost forced ambition that I can sometimes feel, is so detrimental to genuine achievements. I don't believe people who say that ambition is a big motivator, I think ambition is souring a lot of stuff, including people's mental muscles and thinking capacity. If you want to do certain things and you find them interesting you don't need to be ambitious, you'll do it anyway and you want to do it well because it touches you and it grasps you. You don't need ambition. Ambition distorts your focus I think. So relax. Practically all of you are good enough to be a good researcher eh? Sometimes you need a little bit of fortune or a lucky chance or an opportunity, and sometimes you don't get that which is a bummer, but there's a whole world outside of academia. And if you look at the world inside of academia, I'm not sure I would recommend it to everyone. It's a very weird world.

I would say enjoy the ride. Learn as much as you can, and make sure to develop your critical thinking capacity, which is more important than the actual knowledge that you gain. All of these things will be outdated 10 years from now anyway, including most of the practical skills. University is your chance to see who you are intellectually, where you stand, how you learn, what you do well, what you could have done better, you know. You're still flexible to change yourself in certain ways, so work towards self knowledge and self training I think. The grades will come in the process anyway. I don't know if I'm doing anyone a favour here but that is my advice.

I also want to tell students to go abroad. And not necessarily to the best universities. Everyone wants to go abroad to the United States because that will look good on your CV, and I understand and I respect that. However, I worked in Brazil for 6 years, 3 months on and 3 months off. I would be here to teach and then go back to Brazil, often on unpaid leave. I was in a very small place, somewhere not on the coastline at all, about 500 km away from it. And just seeing how students and teachers tried to keep a program running under really not such great circumstances made such a great difference to me in learning what teaching is really about, how fortunate we are in this country, or in the western world in general. It enlarges your perspective on things tremendously. So, go elsewhere, but choose wisely where you go.

**Did you find it difficult to move to a country with a completely different language and culture?**

Coming back was actually harder. I kind of liked it there, maybe because the problems were more real in a way? And the interaction between people was therefore more supportive. Although you have to be careful too. Brazil is not a country where you can live without a social group. You don't survive there very easily on your own. I am not talking about life and death here, I mean to have a meaningful existence in a fragile country you need other people. So the dynamic between people is different; more meaningful, more honest. More brutal in a way too which is not always nice, but it's very real. Sometimes we are very artificial in our current rich Western society.

**That is true, although when I came here I was warned about how "upfront" the Dutch were.**

Yes that is also something I learned when I travelled \*laughs\*. But maybe that is also not always the best thing to do. We pride ourselves on it but actually we don't understand what vulnerability really means anymore in this country. Well you can still be in the wrong social strata, I myself come from a very simple family in the Netherlands, nothing elitist about it, but even so. The way you can go down in Brazil is much more dramatic than what we have here and that changes your attitude. You have to be more careful there.


**And finally, if you could be an animal, what animal would you be and why?**

A lion. So many reasons that I don't think I even need to explain.



## A WORD FROM THE BOARD

Dear Dondrites,

We hope the bad weather the last month did not get your mood down. Hopefully, the lovely activities organised lifted your spirits, and we can all look forward to the fun activities to come (like Synapsium, have you signed up yet?). 

The end of the academic year is nearing, and for most this means life will get busy in the next couple of weeks. Please know that Dondrite is here to help, for example by providing a platform where you can review each other's written assignments. But we are also here to provide some fun relief, for example with this newsletter!

Other than that, we are both excited and sad to announce that during the next General Assembly (date T.B.A, but somewhere in June), both Brittany and Eline will be leaving the Board. We are sad to miss them and their amazing work, however, we are extremely excited to meet our new two (or more!) Board members. *Everyone* is eligible to become a Board member, so don't hesitate to contact us if you're interested! Official sign-ups will open soon, so keep an eye on your inbox and our socials!

Love and read on,

Jochem, Brittany, Nele and Eline



# RECENT DONDRITE EVENTS

## Hindi language workshop

At the 22nd of May, Vaishnavi shared all her knowledge about the Indian culture and Hindi, which lead to a really interesting and fun evening.



## Hike for Hops

Last time, the Hike for hops had to be cancelled. Fortunately, it took place at the 15th of May! Many money was raised for the RAGweek and of course, all students had a lot of fun and enjoyed the hike (and beers). We think the winners Jasmin and Robin were especially have with their day as they went home with their new beer glasses!

## LaTeX workshop

On May 3rd, the LaTeX workshop took place. This workshop helped us to understand LaTeX better, which is very helpful for writing your thesis!



## Murder Mystery Walk

Are CNS students true detectives? This was the moment to find out! At the 22nd of May, the Murder mystery walk took place in which students tried to solve a murder.



## Meet (y)our Donderians

At the 21st of May, you got the chance to meet your favorite Donderians! This was the moment to ask them everything you wanted and this lead to some very inspiring (as well as some silly) conversations!

*Have you ever wondered what happens to all those beautiful pictures taken during Dondrite events? Well, you can find them on this website! You will also find some pictures from last year's events.*

[Click here!](#)



## Dondrite Diversity

Diversity in the (scientific) world becomes more important every day. This events takes place on the 27th of May and allows students to discuss about experiences with discrimination and hopefully find ways to overcome difficulties.

Just in case you hadn't heard, **Café Philosophique** has moved to 4.30pm on Mondays. With those neurophilosophy deadlines looming these chats are more helpful than ever.

The Education Committee have also set up an essay reviewing system for anyone who wants to have their neurophilosophy essay checked by a fellow student.

# UPCOMING DONDRITE EVENTS

## Synapsium 2021

The Synapsium committee worked really hard to organize the ninth edition of Synapsium! With the theme "Let's talk science together", a lot of information about empathy, social neurocognition, language processing and communication will be discussed. Get connected with your fellow scientists and join the Synapsium at the 29th of May!



# SCRIBE'S STUDY BOARD MAY

From now on, you can promote your study, or look for a study to participate in, on the Scribe Study Board! It's a win-win situation for everyone! Click the titles to go to the respective SONA page of each study. To promote your study, send the name of your study, the SONA link, e-mail address, duration, payment and inclusion criteria to [scribedondrite@gmail.com](mailto:scribedondrite@gmail.com)!

**[DCCN] Behavioural: How well do you see under threat?**

**Duration and payment:** 135 mins, €20  
**Inclusion criteria:** send a message to [eline.hagenberg@donders.ru.nl](mailto:eline.hagenberg@donders.ru.nl)  
**Contact:** [eline.hagenberg@donders.ru.nl](mailto:eline.hagenberg@donders.ru.nl)



**[DCCN] fMRI: Freeze all motor functions!**

**Approach-avoidance decisions for money**  
**Duration and payment:** 150 min, €24 + bonus  
**Inclusion criteria:** 16-35 years old; right handed; MRI compatible; not claustrophobic/epileptic/pregnant  
**Contact:** [f.klaassen@donders.ru.nl](mailto:f.klaassen@donders.ru.nl)

**[DCCN] MEG/Gedrag: Nieuwe Nederlandse woorden leren**

**Duration and payment:** 150 min, €24  
**Inclusion criteria:** native Dutch speaker; MEG compatible (no dental wire); no dyslexia  
**Contact:** [f.schneider@donders.ru.nl](mailto:f.schneider@donders.ru.nl)

**[DCCN] BEH/MRI: Test your memory.**

**Duration and payment:** 1h + 3h, €40  
**Inclusion criteria:** right handed; 18+ years old; MRI compatible  
**Contact:** [a.ferrari@donders.ru.nl](mailto:a.ferrari@donders.ru.nl)



**[DCCN] BEH/fMRI: Leer een Nieuwe Taal!**

**Duration and payment:** 3x 60 min + home sessions, €68  
**Inclusion criteria:** right handed; no dyslexia; native Dutch speaker; not bilingually raised  
**Contact:** [w.menks@donders.ru.nl](mailto:w.menks@donders.ru.nl)



Hi!  
 My name is *synapsium*  
 and I'm looking for  
*sign-ups!*

**MERCHMERCH**  
**MERCH**  
 Those of you that ordered merch will receive an e-mail about the payment and pickup soon!

Do you have anything you want to share here? Send us your message at  
[scribedondrite@gmail.com](mailto:scribedondrite@gmail.com)

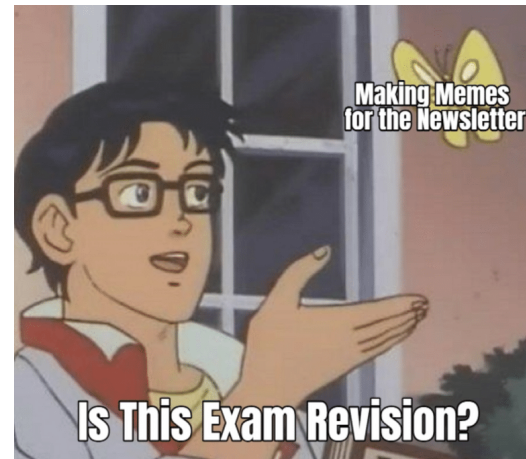


This month Scribe asked our members for some of their favourite places to run and skate!

We hope that June will bring some nice weather so that we can check these out!

- Bommel
- Heumensoord
- De Horst, Groesbeek
- Lent via Ressen to Arnhem-South
- Ooijpolder
- Around zweefvliegveld Malden

And we have to mention the wonderful [blog post](#) made by our travel committee where they gave us some fun places to go in Nijmegen!



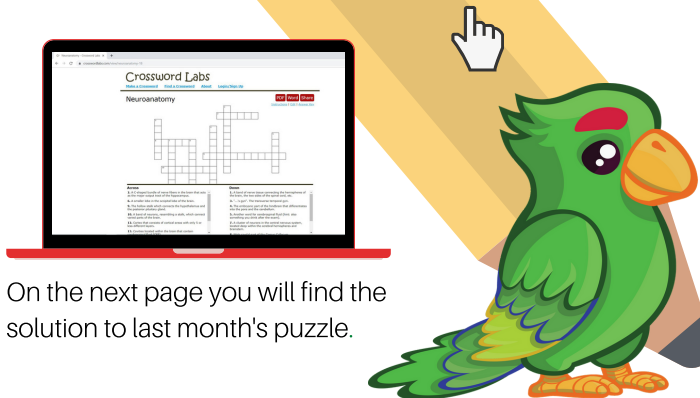
# CROSSWORD

You are probably be waking up to birds chirping or day dreamed watching birds flying high up in the sky or spotted few during the walk in the woods of Nijmegen. But how well do you know the names of the regular birds we come across? Test your knowledge in this month's crossword and see how many bird names you know! Have fun!

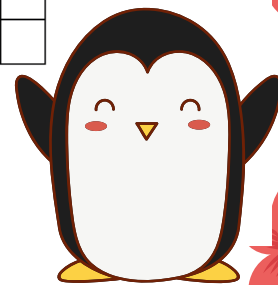
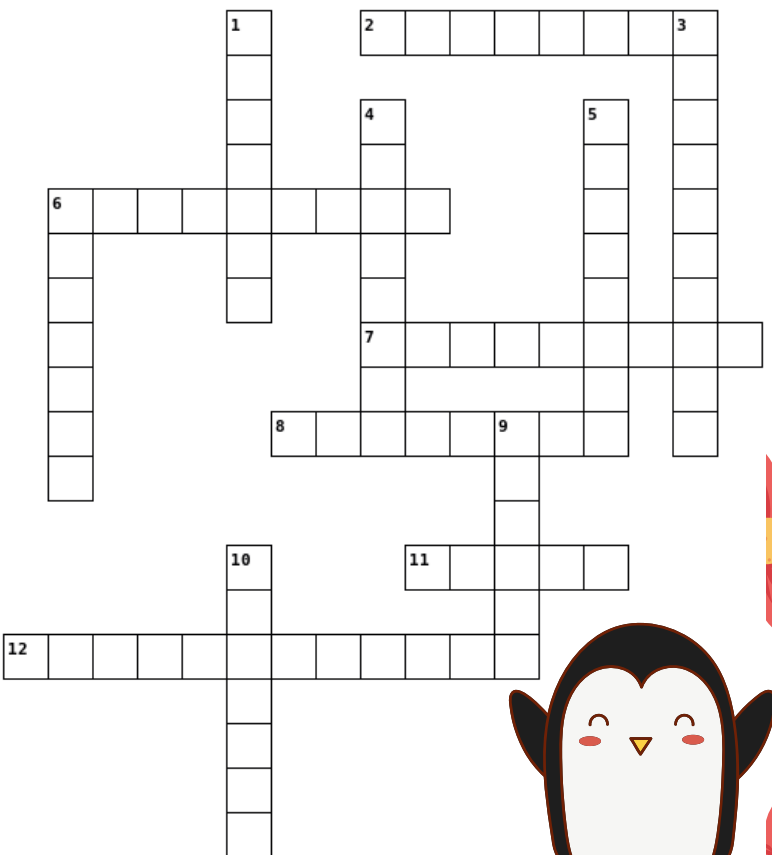
On the next page you will find the solution to last month's puzzle.



<https://crosswordlabs.com/view/birds>



On the next page you will find the solution to last month's puzzle.



**Across**

- 2. These flightless birds live on the Antarctic ice and in the frigid surrounding waters
- 6. These famous pink birds can be found in warm, watery regions on many continents.
- 7. These birds roam African savanna and desert lands and get most of their water from the plants they eat
- 8. These are large birds that glide on air currents, conserving energy while searching the forests or savanna below for the corpses of dead animals.
- 11. These birds are found in every U.S. state and Canadian province at one time of the year.
- 12. They are thought to be the most abundant and wide-ranging duck on Earth.



**Down**

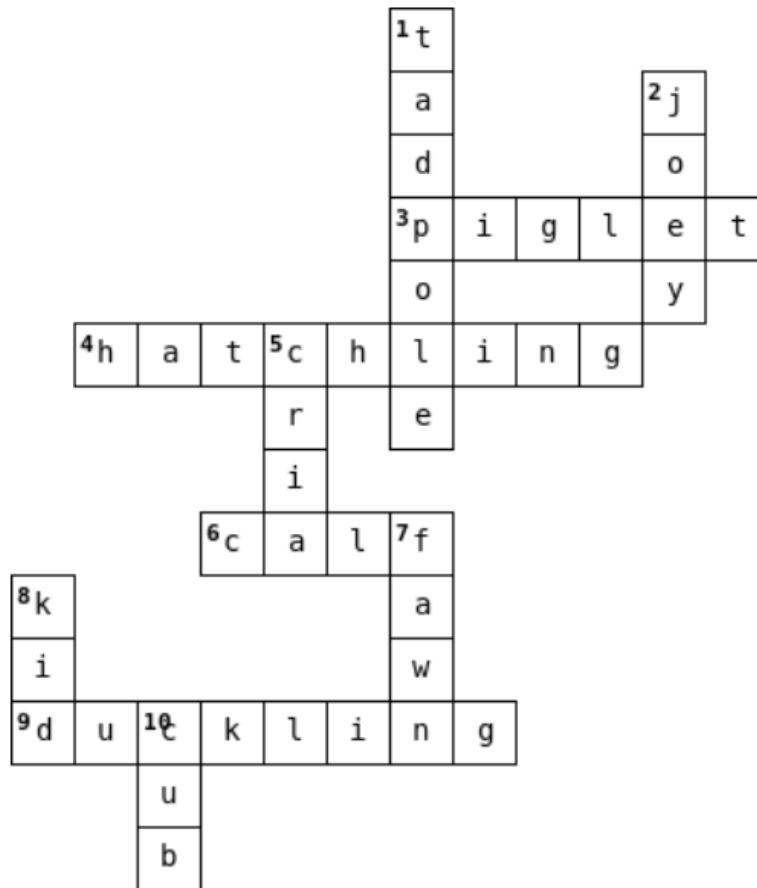
- 1. These birds live most of their lives at sea, resting on the waves when not swimming.
- 3. These are small to medium-sized birds, but they have relatively long legs that they put to good use.
- 4. This ghostlike owl has unmistakable white plumage that echoes its Arctic origins.
- 5. These birds are large and colourful with iridescent tails.
- 6. These birds hunt from above and after sighting their prey, drop into a steep, swift dive that can top 200 miles an hour (320 kilometres an hour).
- 9. These sleek, blackbirds do an elaborate dance of chases, dives, and rolls during mating.
- 10. These birds have been popular companions throughout history because they are intelligent, charismatic, colourful, and musical.



# CROSSWORD

## solution

### Baby animals



#### Across

3. Baby animal of a pig
4. Baby animal of both a snake and alligator
6. Dumbo is a ...
9. Baby animal of a duck

#### Down

1. We all tried to catch these animals in the water when we were younger
2. Baby animal of an opossum
5. Baby animal of an alpaca
7. Bambi is a ...
8. Baby animal of a goat (and name of a human child)
10. The baby animal of both a bear and lion

**FOLLOW FOR ALL THE LATEST  
DONDRITE UPDATES**



DON DRITE



DONDRITE



DONDRITECNS

**"That's not a sphere, that's a potato."**

- Anonymous neuroimaging professor