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Scientists attach a camera to a beetle – 20th July, 2020

Level 0

Scientists made a tiny camera that can be put on a beetle. It records where the beetle goes. It gives a beetle's view of the world. A researcher said: "Insects can [cross] rocky environments, which is really challenging for robots....This system can also help us out by letting us see...hard-to-navigate spaces."

The camera is light enough for bugs to wear. It weighs just 250 grams*. It has a wireless camera. A big challenge was making the battery. It had to be small, light, and have enough power for a few hours. The researchers said no beetles were hurt in their tests. All the beetles "lived for at least a year" after the tests finished.

Level 1

Scientists made a tiny camera that can be put on a beetle. It records where bugs go. It gives a bug's-eye view of the world. Researchers can see places never seen before. A researcher said: "Insects can [cross] rocky environments, which is really challenging for robots to do....So this system can also help us out by letting us see...hard-to-navigate spaces." He added: "It is the first time that we've had a first-person view from the back of a beetle."

The scientists say their camera is light enough for bugs to wear. It weighs just 250 grams*. A researcher said: "We have created a low-power, low-weight, wireless camera system." He said a big challenge was making the battery. It had to be small and light, with enough power to last a few hours. The researchers said no beetles were hurt in their tests. They said all the beetles "lived for at least a year" after the experiments finished.

Level 2

Scientists developed a tiny camera that can be put on a beetle. The camera records where the bug goes. This gives scientists a bug's-eye view of the world. The researchers say the camera will explore places never seen before. A researcher explained why the camera could be useful. He said: "Insects can traverse rocky environments, which is really challenging for robots to do at this scale. So this system can also help us out by letting us see...hard-to-navigate spaces." He said: "This is the first time that we've had a first-person view from the back of a beetle while it's walking around."

The scientists are from the University of Washington. Their camera is light enough for bugs to wear. It weighs just 250 grams* and can record five frames per second. A researcher said: "We have created a low-power, low-weight, wireless camera system that can capture...what's happening from an actual live insect." He said a big challenge was making the battery. It had to be small and light, with enough power to last a few hours. The researchers said no beetles were hurt in their tests. They said all the beetles "lived for at least a year" after the experiments finished.

Level 3

Scientists have developed a tiny camera that can be put on the back of a beetle. The camera can record where the bug goes. This will give the scientists a bug's-eye view of the world. The researchers want to use the camera to explore places never seen before. Researcher Vikram Iyer explained why the camera could be useful. He said: "Insects can traverse rocky environments, which is really challenging for robots to do at this scale. So this system can also help us out by letting us see or collect samples from hard-to-navigate spaces." Mr Iyer is excited to see what the cameras record. He said: "This is the first time that we've had a first-person view from the back of a beetle while it's walking around."

The scientists are from the University of Washington in the USA. They wanted to develop a camera light enough for bugs to wear. It weighs just 250 grams*. Their wireless camera records images at up to five frames per second. A researcher said: "We have created a low-power, low-weight, wireless camera system that can capture a first-person view of what's happening from an actual live insect." He said one of the biggest challenges when making the camera was the battery. It had to be very small and very light, with enough power to last a few hours. The researchers stressed that no beetles were hurt in their tests and that all the insects "lived for at least a year" after the experiments finished.

* Error: The camera weighs 250 micro-grams and not 250 grams.

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