

# NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC



Meet the  
**ROBOTS**

Will smart machines  
make our lives better?



# CONTENTS

## On the Cover

This soft robotic hand—made with pliable materials to give it a more delicate and dexterous grip—was developed in the Robotics and Biology Laboratory at the Technical University of Berlin, Germany.

SPENCER LOWELL

## PROOF



# 6

### Light in Odd Places

To explore the effects of artificial lighting in a natural environment, the photographer flew lighted drones above some of Earth's most dramatic landscapes.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS  
BY REUBEN WU

## CORONAVIRUS

# 15

### THE BIG IDEA

### Harming Nature Risks Our Health

A damaged planet can't shield us as well from diseases. Here's why.

BY ENRIC SALA

### DATA SHEET

### Flattening the Curve of Influenza in 1918

That historic pandemic has lessons for today.

BY RILEY D. CHAMPINE  
AND DIANA MARQUES



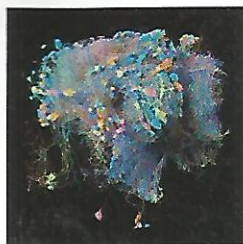
### TOOL KIT

### Scrutinizing Viruses

Handling some samples takes specific tools.

BY TAMAS VITRAY, JR.

## EXPLORE



# 24

### CAPTURED

### A Brain Circuitry Map Worth Buzzing About

Detailed diagramming of a fly's brain reveals millions of connections.

BY THERESA MACHEMER

### DECODER

### Shocking Behavior

Many fish use electricity to communicate and navigate—but some eels use it to hunt and defend themselves.

BY DIANA MARQUES

### ALSO

Fossilized Footprints  
The Year of the Panda  
Peculiar Turtle Traits