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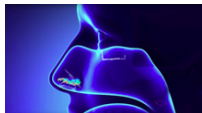
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After spending the past decade studying ground-nesting wasps a team of researchers from the Australian National University believe that they've unlocked the secret to the insects' uncanny homing abilities -- one they hope can be applied to future UAV development. Modern, autonomous UAVs have to be laden with high resolution cameras, GPS radios and a slew of other high-tech gadgetry in order to know where they are and where they're going. Wasps, on the other hand, only need their compound eyes and a daily refresher flight.

The ANU team used high-speed cameras to track the wasps eye movements and, from that data, figure out where the insects were looking. "The learning and homing abilities of wasps make them smarter than anything humans know how to build," ANU Professor Jochen Zeil said in a statement. "Roboticians look to replace expensive high resolution cameras and reduce power consumption without losing information that is crucial for visual navigation and our research could help with this." The research should also help biologists better understand the mental mechanisms involved in the insects' navigational skills.

Via: Slash Gear

Source: Australian National University

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