

19. ハエの特殊能力(1)：構造理解

A fly can do one thing extremely well: fly. Recently a team of British scientists declared that the common housefly is the most talented aerodynamicist on the planet, superior to any bird, bat, or bee. A housefly can make six turns a second; *hover; fly straight up, down, or backward; land on the ceiling; and perform various other show-off maneuvers. And it has a brain smaller than a sesame seed.

Michael Dickinson, who studies fly flight in his lab at the California Institute of Technology, says the housefly isn't actually the best flier. "Hoverflies are the be-all and end-all," he says. They can hover in one spot, dash to another location, and then race back to their original hovering point — precisely.

Scientists, engineers, and military researchers want to know how creatures with such small brains can do that. Maybe they could reverse-engineer a fly to make a robotic device that could reconnoiter dangerous places, such as earthquake zones or collapsed mines.
