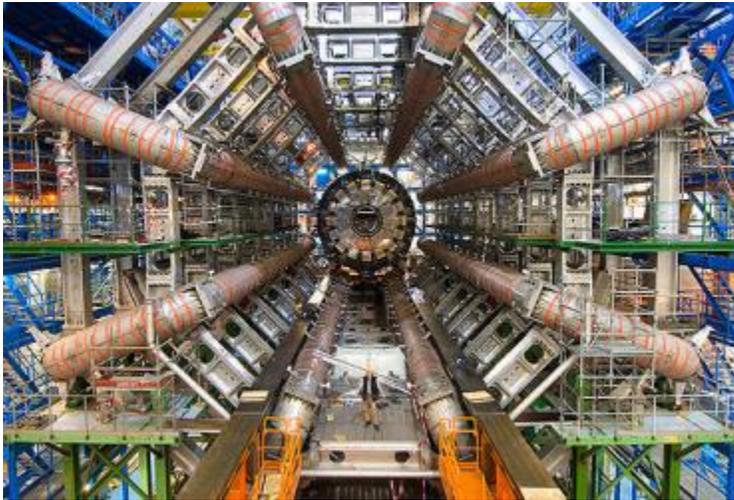


## PerfScience

# LHC faces power cut caused by a rodent that chewed power cable off

Karan Gosal, May 1, 2016, PerfScience



The Large Hadron Collider (LHC) came to standstill due to a small furry weasel, which chewed through a power cable to ultimately meet its end. The creature caused short circuit and caused the 17-mile long particle smasher running under the Swiss-French border to shut down on Friday morning due to power failure.

It was a beech marten, identified in a European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) document by its French name, fouine. It entered a 66 kilovolt transformer and damaged transformer connections. The short circuit took place at 5:30 a.m. local time Friday; causing power cut at CERN that affected all accelerators. The CERN reported this week as not the best one for LHC.

However, the machines didn't face any damage due to the issue. Recent CERN reports have informed that the connectivity will be soon restored. The repairs will take a few days and LHC is expected to start smashing particles again somewhere in middle of the next month.

This is not the first incident of this sort to occur at LHC, a similar power cut took place in 2009, when a bird dropped a piece of baguette on a substation.

“It may take a few days to repair but such events happened a few times in the past and are part of the life of such a large installation. This was a story that was told, but we never knew exactly what happened,” said Arnaud Marsollier, CERN spokesperson.

When the incident took place on Friday, LHC was working and suddenly switched off. The Large Hadron Collider is colliding particles at its highest energy level. Scientists working at CERN hope to conclude data from the experiments soon. This information will help them find the origins of a mysterious 750-gigaelectronvolt particle that was hinted at by data collected last year.

A report published in CNN revealed, "CERN's Large Hadron Collider, the world's biggest particle accelerator located near Geneva, Switzerland, lost power Friday. Engineers who were investigating the outage made a grisly discovery -- the charred remains of a weasel, CERN spokesman Arnaud Marsollier told CNN."

The little critter gnawed through a 66-kilovolt transformer inside an electrical facility outside the main building. Just for perspective, one kilovolt is 1,000 volts of energy. Chewing the wiring ended up frying the creature into oblivion and causing a wide power outage around CERN, the European Organization for Nuclear Research.

"It's one of the physics world's most complex machines, and it has been immobilized — temporarily — by a weasel. Spokesman Arnaud Marsollier says the world's largest atom smasher, the Large Hadron Collider at CERN outside of Geneva, has suspended operations because a weasel invaded a transformer that helps power the machine and set off an electrical outage on Friday," according to a news report published by Fox News.

Authorities say the incident was one of several small glitches that will delay plans to restart the \$4.4 billion collider by a few days. Marsollier says Friday that the weasel died — and little remains of it. Officials of the European Organization for Nuclear Research, known by its French acronym CERN, have been gearing up for new data from the 17-mile circuit that runs underground on the Swiss-French border.

According to a report in IB Times by Himanshu Goenka, "The world's most powerful scientific instrument, the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) — a 17-mile long particle smasher running under the Swiss-French border — went offline early Friday morning after a marten gnawed through a power cable, causing a short circuit. The furry little creature — adult males of the species weigh less than 4 pounds — met a more unfortunate end: it died."

The beech marten, identified in a European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) document by its French name, fouine, entered a 66 kilovolt transformer and damaged transformer connections. The “electrical perturbation” took place at 5:30 a.m. local time Friday (11 p.m. EDT Thursday), leading to a CERN-wide power cut that “affected all accelerators.” The CERN report concluded with the words: “Not the best week for LHC!”