



The *platypus*, a very unusual animal, lives in streams, ponds, and rivers in

Australia. It is a mammal, but it lays eggs. Its feet are webbed. Part of the male platypus' back legs is poisonous. This poison will not kill a person, but it will be very painful. The platypus closes its eyes under water. The platypus bill is very sensitive and helps find its prey. Then the platypus uses its bill to sift through the mud for small fish, frogs, and insects. Platypuses are usually about 20 inches long and weigh about 5 pounds.



The *hyena* is found in Africa and parts of Asia.

Sometimes hyenas are

called scavengers because they eat other animals' leftovers. But sometimes they hunt. They travel in packs or groups. Together, these packs of hyenas can pull down animals much larger than themselves to eat. Hyenas can weigh up to 150 pounds. They have a very sensitive nose and can smell prey from very far away.



The *African elephant* is the largest land animal in the world. It can be up to 13 feet tall and weigh more than 14,000 pounds. One of the elephant's most

unusual characteristics is its long nose or trunk. The trunk can weigh 400 pounds and be 6 feet long. The elephant uses its trunk to breathe, pick things up, suck up and spray water, talk with other elephants, take a bath, and protect itself. The elephant's trunk has more than 100,000 muscles, but our whole bodies only have 600 muscles.



The *American alligator* lives in swamps and rivers in the southeastern

United States. Alligators grow to be 14 feet long and weigh up to 1,000 pounds. They eat fish, turtles, birds and other small animals. Alligators use their nose and tails to dig holes called "gator holes". These holes can be as big as swimming pools. These holes help other animals when there has been no rain. Alligators hunt by lying quietly in the water with only their eyes and nose sticking out. When an unlucky animal gets too close, the alligator uses its powerful tail to lunge forward and grab it.



The *star-nosed mole* has 22 little “fingers” on the end of its nose. This mole spends his whole life

underground. Since its eyes are useless, it uses its nose to find its way through a maze of tunnels. The mole eats worms, snails, and insects that it finds with its nose using both the sense of smell and touch. The star-nosed mole grows to be 7 inches long.



You can only see the ears of the *humpback whale* through a small

opening in the whale’s head. The humpback’s hearing is very good. The whales talk to one another by singing songs. They can hear each other’s songs from 100 miles away. Humpbacks are mammals. They can be 50 feet long and weigh nearly 50 tons. Humpbacks are found in all of the world’s oceans.



The *yellow winged bat*, like all bats, makes a chirping noise as it flies. Humans cannot hear the chirping because the sound is too

high. The chirping sound echos off objects and the bats can use that sound to move in around in the dark. The echos even help the bats find and catch insects to eat. The yellow-winged bat lives in Africa. Their wings can stretch up to 14 inches.



The *field cricket’s* ears are on its two front legs. The cricket can tell where sound is coming from by

pointing its body (and its ears) in different directions. Field crickets are about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch long and live in North America. They make a chirping sound by rubbing the edges of their wings together. The warmer the weather, the faster they chirp. You can guess the temperature by counting the number of chirps in 15 seconds and add 40. That sum will be close to the outside temperature.



The antelope jackrabbit is really a hare, which is a relative of the rabbit. It has very long ears and lives in the desert. Its large ears help it stay cool.

The antelope jackrabbit eats grass and shrubs. It can grow to 2 feet in length.



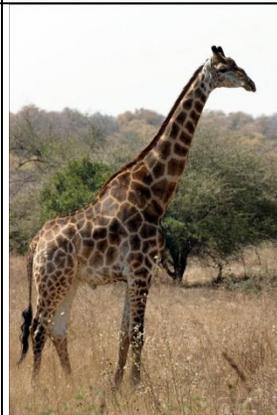
The *five-lined skink* has a long tail that can break off when it is attacked. When

the skink breaks off its tail, it distracts the enemies and the lizard gets away. The skink can be 5-8 inches long. It lives in the eastern United States. It eats insects and worms. Losing its tail does not hurt the lizard. It soon grows a new one.



The *striped skunk* is found all over North America. Like other skunks it can spray its attackers with a

rotten-smelling, eye-stinging liquid. Skunks eat everything including fish, small mammals, bird eggs, fruit and seeds. They can be longer than 2 feet and weigh up to 14 pounds. The striped skunk warns its enemy by raising its tail. If that doesn't work, it stands on its front legs, bends its back, and shoots its spray over its head. Skunk spray smells up to ten feet away.



The world's tallest animal is the *giraffe*. It lives in Africa and can grow up to 19 feet tall. The giraffe feeds on leaves at the tops of the trees in the grasslands. Other animals cannot reach these

leaves. It protects itself from enemies, like the lion, by kicking its powerful back legs. It also uses its long tail to brush flies and other insects from its back.



The *scorpion* is a relative of the spider. Scorpions were around when dinosaurs lived, nearly 400 million years ago. Back

then, they were close to 3 feet long. Now scorpions are only 8 ½ inches long. They live in warm weather all over the world. They eat spiders, lizards, and small mammals. They hunt at night. They find their prey by using their sense of touch. Then they use their stinger at the end of their tail to paralyze the animal so that it won't get away.



The *spider monkey* can use its tail like a fifth “hand”. At the end of the spider monkey’s tail is skin that has a special groove that helps it hold things. The

spider monkey’s tail is longer than its body, which can be as tall as 2 feet. The spider monkey can hang by its tail and eat fruit, leaves and flowers.



The *chameleon* is found in Africa, Asia, and Europe. Its eyes are set very far apart. The chameleon can

move each of its eyes separately. This makes it easy to watch out for its enemies. The chameleon catches insects by quickly sticking out its tongue, which is longer than its body. The chameleon lives in the trees. It grows up to 27 inches long. It can also change the color of its skin to match its surroundings.



The *bald eagle* lives in North America and is the symbol of the United States. It

hunts using its sense of sight. It soars high in the air looking for rabbits, small birds, and fish. Its eyesight is 4-8 times better than a human’s. The bald eagle is a large bird. Its wings can spread more than 7 feet wide. When it is diving to get food it can fly faster than 150 miles per hour. The bald eagle is not really bald. Its head is covered with white feathers.



The *horned lizard* is sometimes called a “horny toad”. It lives in southwest America. It is small,

only 3 to 5 inches long. It is covered with sharp spikes. This lizard eats ants and other insects. It protects itself in an unusual way. First it tries to hold very still. If that doesn’t work it puffs itself up with air so that it looks bigger. If that doesn’t work, it will squirt blood from the corners of its eyes. The enemy gets confused and the horned lizard runs away.



In the rivers of South America lives a fish that can look above and below the water at the same

time. The four-eyed fish really only has two eyes, but each eye is divided. When it is swimming on top of the water, the top half of each eye can look up and watch out for enemies or insects to eat. The bottom half of the eye can watch out for enemies under the water. The four-eyed fish is about 10 inches long.



The *bush baby* lives in Africa and makes the sound of a crying baby. That is how it got its name. It is a

relative of the lemur and monkey. It lives in the trees and is a mammal. It is only about 6 to 9 inches tall and weighs less than $\frac{1}{2}$ a pound. It sleeps during the day and hunts insects, lizards and mice at night. The bush baby has very large, round eyes that lets it see at night. Its eyes don’t move so the bush baby has to turn its head from side to side to see.



Chimpanzees are humans’ closest animal relative. They are very smart animals and live in the

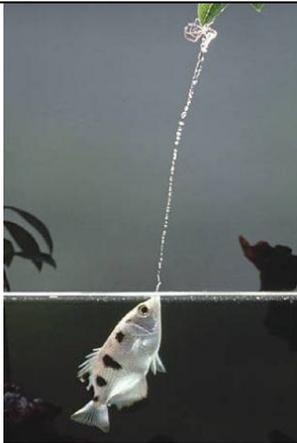
forests of Africa. They are usually about 5 feet tall and weigh about 135 pounds. They have thumbs like people. They also have big toes that look that thumbs. This helps them be able to pick up things with their feet. They eat fruit, leaves, insects, and sometimes small animals.



The *blue-footed booby* lives on the Pacific coasts of North and South America. The only thing they eat is fish. They are large birds with wings that can stretch to about 5 feet. When the male booby wants to impress a female, he does a fancy dance, lifting his bright blue feet one at a time. At the same time, he points his beak to the sky, spreads his wings and whistles.



The *water strider* is found all over the United States. It lives on calm rivers and ponds. It is able to walk on water because at the end of its long legs it has tiny hairs that won't let it sink. The water strider's body is less than 1 inch long. It eats dead insects it finds floating on top of the water.



The *archerfish* hunts by looking for insects on branches hanging low over the water. When it sees a butterfly or beetle, the archerfish squirts water out of its mouth and knocks the insect down into the water so it can be eaten. The archerfish is about 10 inches long. It can shoot water as far as 3 feet. Archerfish live in the waters from the east coast of Africa to Australia.



***Geckos* are noisy insect-eating lizards that can walk on walls and ceilings. They are named after the unusual chirping sound**

they make. The bottoms of the gecko's feet are covered with millions of tiny hairs and pads that help them cling to just about any surface – even glass. Most geckos are about 7 inches long



The *mountain goat* that lives in the mountains of North America is not really a goat. It is more like an

antelope. This animal is at home on very steep and rocky slopes. The mountain goat has special hooves that help it go where other animals can't. These hooves have a hard outside covering that helps them grip the rocks. They also have a pad on the bottom that keeps the mountain goat from slipping. The mountain goat can be 4 ½ feet tall and weigh nearly 300 pounds. More mountain goats are killed by rockslides and large amounts of falling snow than by their enemies.



The *brown pelican* is found on the coasts of North and South America. It has a large pouch of skin on the

bottom part of its bill. The pelican flies 50 to 60 feet above the water looking for fish. When it sees a school of fish, it dives into the water and opens its mouth. The pouch of skin becomes like a net and can hold up to 3 gallons of water and fish. The pelican then takes out the water and eats the fish. Brown pelicans are large birds that can grow to be up to 4 ½ feet long.



The *tiny mosquito* is the animal most dangerous to humans. This insect can spread deadly

diseases as it sucks blood. The mosquito has a nose like a needle. It uses its needlelike nose to stab the skin of people and animals. Then it sucks blood through a hollow tube in its nose. We itch after being bitten by a mosquito because it leaves behind chemicals.



The *giant anteater* lives in Central and South America. It eats mostly

termites, not ants. It can eat up to 30,000 termites in a day. The giant anteater can be 8 feet long and weigh 100 pounds. It has a long mouth shaped like a tube. It does not have any teeth. Its tongue is 2 feet long. It uses its sticky tongue to catch insects.



The *egg-eating snake* has jaws that can unhook and skin that is like elastic. That is how it can eat

eggs that are wider than its body. It may take a snake many hours to swallow an egg. It has no teeth but breaks the egg with a special bone in its throat. This African snake will eat as many eggs as it can then go without food for the rest of the year. It grows to about 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ feet long.