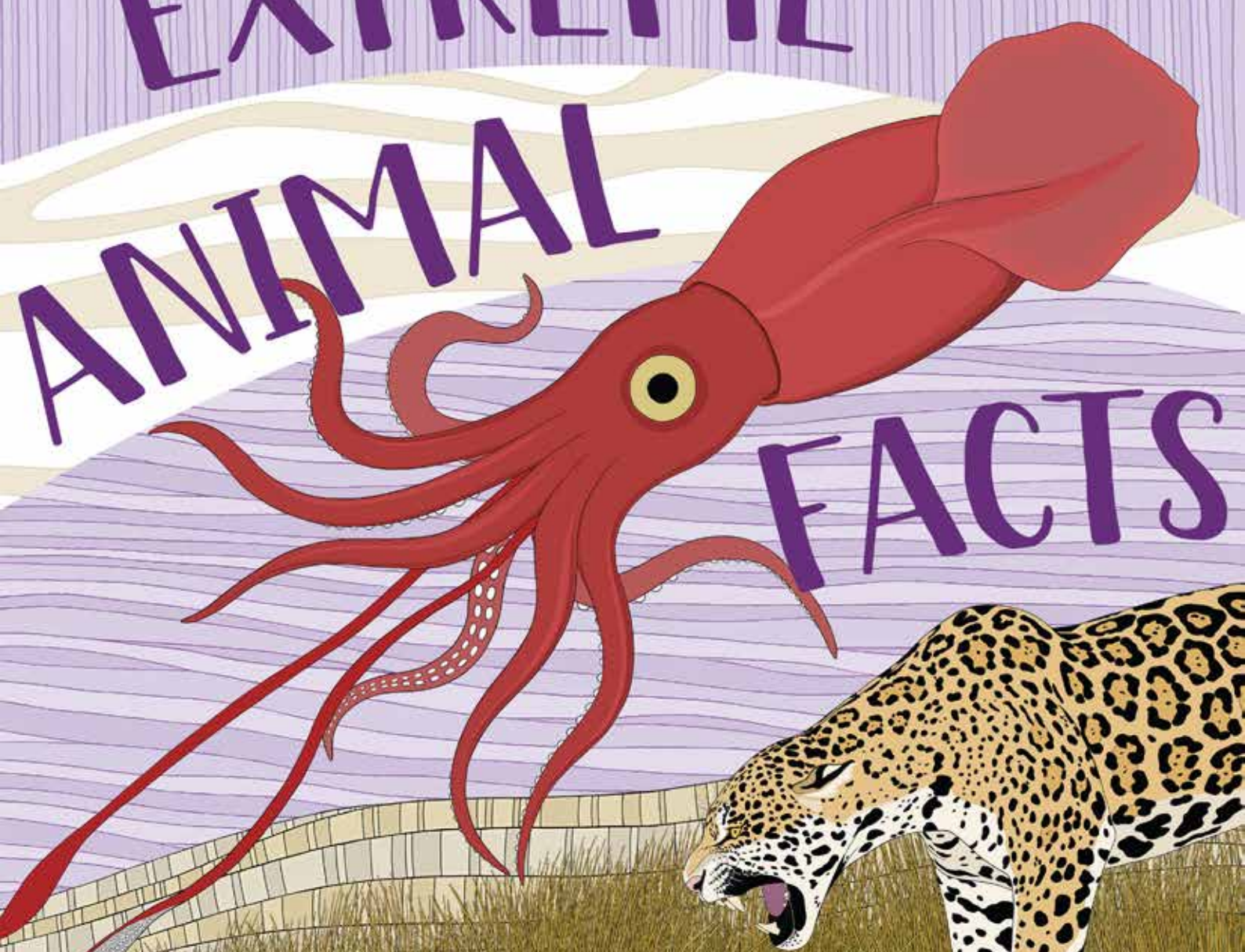




EXTREME

ANIMAL

FACTS



JENNIFER COSSINS

TEACHERS RESOURCES

EXTREME ANIMAL FACTS

JENNIFER COSSINS

Teachers Resources by Robyn Sheahan-Bright

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INTRODUCTION

Explore over 140 of the world's most extraordinary animals in this beautifully illustrated book from CBCA award-winning author-illustrator Jennifer Cossins.

Did you know the immortal jellyfish has the longest lifespan of any creature on Earth? Or that the dung beetle is the strongest animal for its body size?

Get ready to explore the record-holders of the animal kingdom, from the animals that can dive the deepest in the ocean to those that can fly the highest in the sky. This beautiful book is perfect for readers aged 7+ who love learning about the world around them.

THEMES & CURRICULUM TOPICS

Several themes are covered in this book which might be related to the Australian Curriculum, including:

SCIENCE

<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/science/>

EXTREME ANIMAL FACTS

In the Introduction, Jennifer Cossins writes:

'In this book, I wanted to explore the record-holders of the animal kingdom. While our planet is full of amazing creatures, some really stand out. Have you ever wondered which animal is the very biggest in the world? Or the very smallest? Or which animal has the longest teeth or the best eyesight? Or how about the animals that can dive the deepest in the ocean, or fly the highest in the sky? Animals don't have to be the fastest or the strongest to be extraordinary, though. Some hold the record for having the most babies at once.'

Discussion Point: What was the most amazing fact you discovered in reading this book? What was the most surprising fact you discovered?

Discussion Point: What other amazing facts do you know about animals?

Discussion Point: This book covers a range of topics relating to the animals listed in the **Contents** that you may wish to research further. [See also the **Glossary** for a list to guide you in your further research.]

Discussion Point: What is the difference between a venomous and a poisonous animal?

Activity: Create a poster with a slogan aimed at educating the public about extreme animal facts.

THE LIFE CYCLES AND HABITATS OF ANIMALS

Activity: Investigate the life cycles of some of the animals in this book.

Activity: Investigate different animal species. [See **Bibliography**.]

Activity: Make an alphabetical list of any other extreme animal facts not included in this book and research them further. For example, sloths can take up to thirty days to digest a single leaf.

[See **Worksheet 2.**]

Activity: Study other books about unusual animals and compare them to this one. [See **Bibliography.**]

Discussion Point: What do the animals in this book eat? What was the most unusual food source you discovered in this book? There are three types of animals as defined by their diets: herbivores, carnivores and omnivores. Research these different types of animals and their food sources.

Discussion Point: Study the **survival skills** that animals employ to journey long distances, which often involves surviving harsh conditions. [See **Bibliography.**] Which animal's survival skills did you find particularly interesting?

Activity: Some animals use **camouflage** as a survival skill. There are four main types of camouflage: concealing colouration, disruptive colouration, disguise and mimicry. [See 'Animal Camouflage PowerPoint Lesson', *K-5 Computer Lab*, <<https://oakdome.com/k5/lesson-plans/multi-media/look-again-camouflage/index.php>>] Research extreme facts about animal camouflage.

Discussion Point: Encourage students to ask questions about animals and then to research the answers. [See **Worksheet 4.**]

Humanities & Social Sciences (HASS)

<<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/humanities-and-social-sciences/hass/>>

ENDANGERED ANIMALS

Discussion Point: Which of the animals in this book are endangered? What has caused them to become endangered?

Activity: Research the endangered status of any species from the book (e.g. the critically endangered Rüppell's griffon vulture) and what scientists have discovered about the human impact (via climate change or environmental pollution) on that animal.

Activity: Research the various causes of animals becoming endangered. For example, climate change is often cited as a cause. Human beings also destroy habitats, which can cause depletion in animal populations. Pollution can also endanger animals, as can deforestation. Research an endangered animal not included in this book and why that animal is endangered.

Discussion Point: International cooperation is needed to protect the habitats of animals. What are governments doing to protect endangered animals? [See **Bibliography.**]

PROTECTION OF WILDLIFE AND MORAL ISSUES

Activity: Some animals included in this text are extremely dangerous – for example, the inland taipan of Australia, or the Australian box jellyfish. Research this topic further. When humans are confronted by dangerous animals, they often resort to injuring or killing them. But should we kill or remove such animals from their habitat simply because they pose a threat to human life?

Discussion Point: Some animals are hunted for the precious commodities that they produce. For example, elephants used to be hunted for ivory. That trade has now been banned, although

some continue to poach. Research the trade in animal products and how government authorities have dealt or are dealing with it.

VALUES

Discussion Point: Discuss the key values conveyed in this text.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE & LITERACY

<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/english/>

The text of this book might be studied in relation to the following aspects:

Activity: The entries on each animal are written in third person as expository texts. Invite students to create an alphabet of extreme animal facts. Have each student make a short list of several animals not included in this book. Then invite them to write a short expository text (fact) about any of the animals. There are different types of expository writing, e.g. descriptive, sequential or cause/effect. [See **Bibliography** for examples of such texts.] [See also **Visual Literacy** exercise below.] [See also **Worksheet 2** below.]

Activity: Test your students' comprehension by asking them questions about the written text. [See also **Worksheet 4**.]

Activity: Read poems about animals. Then encourage students to write in a similar style about an extreme animal fact.

Activity: Invite students to write an acrostic poem using the letters in 'narwhal'. [See **Bibliography**.]

Activity: Write a lyrical poem about an animal using models written by published poets to encourage students' expression. [See **Bibliography**.]

Discussion Point: First Nations people in many countries have shared stories about animals for thousands of years. Read some in published picture books and discuss the animal facts revealed in these stories. Traditional '**pourquoi tales**', or '**origin stories**' and '**trickster tales**', are told in many cultures and often feature animals. Discuss the conventions employed in these tales and what they reveal about animal behaviour. [See **Bibliography**.]

Activity: Discover the collective nouns for some of the animals in this book. [See **Worksheet 6**.]

Activity: Invite students to write a simple story about their favourite extreme animal fact as the basis for a picture book.

VISUAL LITERACY

<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/the-arts/visual-arts/>

The visual text in this book combines with the written text to illustrate features of the various animals described.

Discussion Point: The **cover** of the book depicts a colossal squid with several other animals. Can you identify the others? What does this cover suggest to you about the book's content and emotional impact?

Discussion Point: The endpapers feature a repeated image of a baby sunfish. The publication details page features an image of a jellyfish. Design your own endpapers for the book.

Activity: The **title page** features peacock spiders. Design another appropriate title page.

Activity: The **format** of the book allocates a double or single page to each animal topic. Create images to go with the various expository texts you created for your alphabet of extreme animal facts. [See **English Language & Literacy** exercise above.]

Activity: The **medium** employed is digital art. Jennifer Cossins draws on a Wacom Cintiq, starting with a simple line sketch drawn from looking at photographs, then slowly adds detail and **colour**, foregrounded on stark white backgrounds. Invite students to create a portrait in this medium of one of the animals they've researched.

Activity: Create a **collage image** of one of the animals from this book [See **Worksheet 1.**]

Activity: Students might be encouraged to use critical literacy skills to unearth further meaning in this text by examining each image and its associated text closely.

Activity: Invite students to illustrate the animal story they wrote under **English Language & Literacy** above. (Discuss the conventions of the picture book format before embarking on this exercise.)

CREATIVE ARTS

There are many creative activities suggested by this text:

1. **Craft:** Make a **model** of any of the animals included in this text, e.g. a pufferfish. [See **Bibliography.**]
2. **Craft:** Create an **animal mobile** using images of some of the extraordinary animals you have discovered in this text. [See **Worksheet 5.**] [See **Bibliography.**]
3. **Craft:** Create an **origami animal.** [See **Bibliography.**]
4. **Music:** Discover **simple songs** about extraordinary animals. Watch this video and encourage students to make up their own verses to create a new song: 'Habitats Song' by Bill Oliver, *YouTube*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0qlbcCSd868>
5. **Craft:** Create a **diorama** depicting a box jellyfish in its habitat. [See **Bibliography** for relevant resources.]
6. **Script:** Create a **book trailer** to promote this book. [See **Bibliography** for relevant resources.]

LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES

Activity: Research topics suggested in these notes online. [See **Bibliography.**]

MATHEMATICS

Activity: Discover mathematical facts about the animals in this book, such as how long a narwhal's tusk is.

FURTHER TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

- Research the work of Jennifer Cossins.
- Investigate any other topic suggested by this text.

CONCLUSION

This beautifully designed and illustrated non-fiction text, like Cossins' previous titles, is both entertaining and instructional, and will encourage creative research into the extreme features and skills of many animals throughout the world. It will also encourage students to observe and protect wildlife. In this book, Cossins provides young readers with carefully researched, fascinating insights into how animals demonstrate extreme abilities, making for intriguing and often astounding reading.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

Jennifer Cossins is a CBCA award-winning artist and writer with a passion for nature, the animal kingdom and all things bright and colourful. A born and bred Tasmanian, Jennifer also designs homewares, textiles and stationery, which she stocks in her store in Hobart, Red Parka. Jennifer's other books include *Book of Curious Birds*, *A–Z of Endangered Animals*, *101 Collective Nouns*, *The Baby Animal Book*, *A–Z of Australian Animals*, *The Ultimate Animal Counting Book*, *A Flamboyance of Flamingos*, *The Mummy Animal Book*, *The Daddy Animal Book*, *The Ultimate Animal Alphabet Book* and *Book of Curious Birds*. See her website: <<https://redparka.com.au/pages/about-me>>

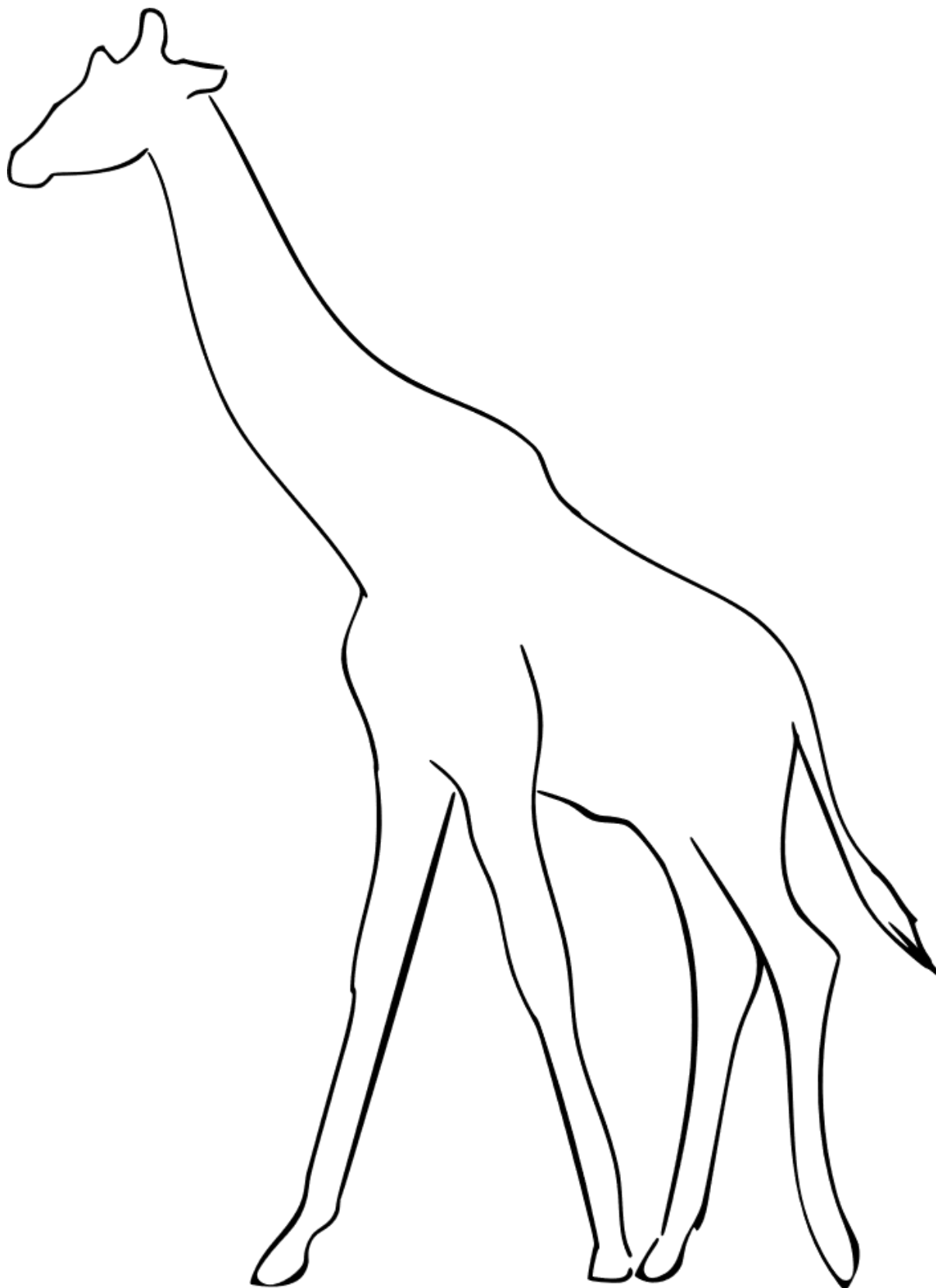
ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THE NOTES

Dr Robyn Sheahan-Bright AM operates justified text writing and publishing consultancy services, and is widely published on children's literature. In 2011, she was recipient of the CBCA (Qld Branch) Dame Annabelle Rankin Award; in 2012, the CBCA (National) Nan Chauncy Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature in Australia; and in 2014, the QWC's Johnno Award. In 2021, she was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia.

WORKSHEETS

WORKSHEET 1. CREATE A COLLAGE

Collage this giraffe, then create a landscape behind the animal and collage that as well.



WORKSHEET 2. CREATE AN ALPHABET OF EXTREME ANIMAL FACTS

Write the names of animals that don't appear in this book from A to Z, and then write one extreme fact beside each of them.

	Animal	Extreme Animal Fact
A		
B		
C		
D		
E		
F		
G		
H		
I		
J		
K	Koala	
L		
M	Mayfly	
N		
O	Olive ridley sea turtle	
P	Pangolin	
Q		
R		
S		
T	Tardigrade	
U		
V		
W		
X		
Y		
Z		

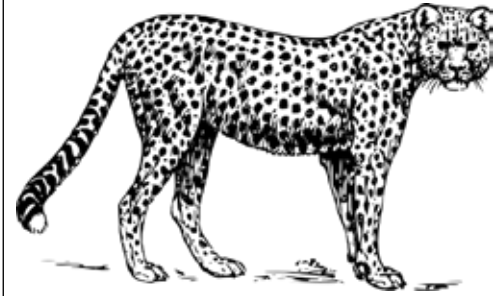
WORKSHEET 3. NAME THIS ANIMAL



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



7.



8.



9.

Answers: 1. Seahorse. 2. Platypus. 3. Cheetah. 4. Saltwater crocodile.
5. Three-toed sloth. 6. Hippopotamus. 7. Arctic tern. 8. Narwhal. 9. Wildebeest.

WORKSHEET 4. EXTREME ANIMAL FACTS QUIZ

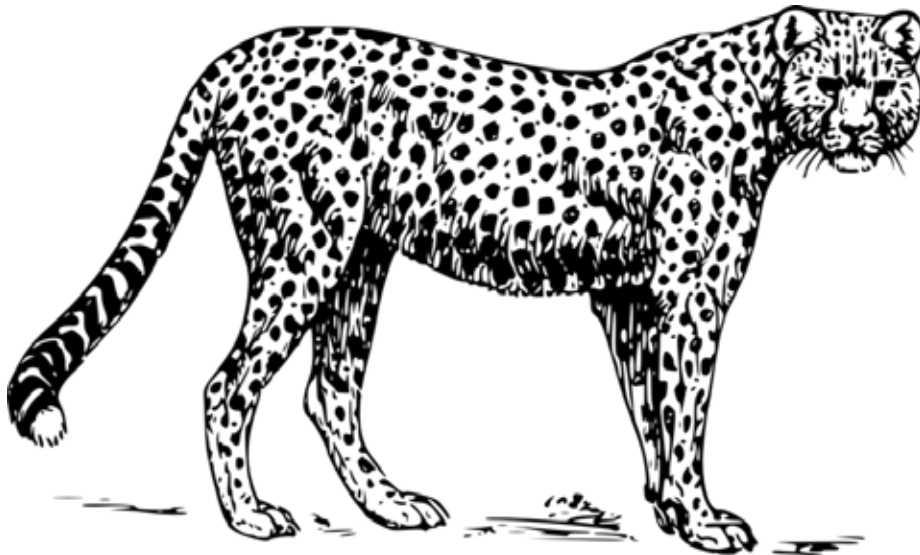
1. What is the biggest creature ever to have lived on Earth?
2. What is the largest snake in the world?
3. What is the smallest creature in the world?
4. What is the smallest fish in the world?
5. What animal has the longest tongue of any land mammal?
6. What insect has the longest insect tongue in the world?
7. What is the loudest animal in the ocean?
8. What is the loudest land mammal?
9. What is the smelliest animal on Earth?
10. What is the smelliest bird in the world?
11. What is the deepest diving reptile?
12. What crustacean has the longest legs?
13. What creature has the longest lifespan of any creature on Earth?
14. What is the longest living reptile?
15. What fish has the shortest lifespan?
16. What mammal has the shortest lifespan?
17. What creature has the largest eyeballs of any creature in the animal kingdom?
18. What creature holds the record for flying higher than any other creature?
19. Why are boxer crabs also known as 'pom pom crabs'?
20. What nasty defence mechanism do European roller chicks use to deter predators?
21. What is the fastest land animal in the world?
22. What is the fastest reptile in the world?
23. What is the slowest moving mammal in the world?
24. What is the slowest fish in the ocean?
25. What is one of the most colourful fish in the ocean?
26. What is one of the world's most colourful moths, with vivid green, blue and red markings on its wings?
27. What creature has the longest recorded horns on Earth?

28. What creature has the best distance vision of all animals?
29. What is the most numerous vertebrate in the world?
30. What is believed to be the most numerous bird in the world?
31. What is the rarest, most critically endangered creature in the world?
32. What is the rarest big cat in the world?
33. What is one of the largest mammal migrations on Earth?
34. What is the longest migration journey?
35. What bird holds the record for the longest single flight time?
36. What bird has the fastest wingbeat of any bird?
37. What bird has the widest wingspan of all birds?
38. What insect has the largest wingspan of all insects?
39. What is the most venomous animal in the world?
40. What is the deadliest spider in the world?
41. What is likely the most poisonous animal in the world?
42. What is the world's most deadly animal?
43. What bird performs one of the world's most unusual mating rituals?
44. What makes the mating rituals of the praying mantis so dangerous?
45. What is the strongest animal in the world for its body size?
46. What creature has the strongest punch of any creature on Earth?
47. What cat is the best jumper of all?
48. What creature has the longest tooth in the animal kingdom?
49. What creature has the strongest bite in the world?
50. What land mammal has the strongest bite?
51. What creatures are considered the smartest animals on Earth?
52. What birds are considered to be the smartest?
53. What creature gives birth to the most babies?
54. What insect produces the most eggs?
55. What animal has the strongest sense of smell?
56. What creature is among the best scent detectors in the world?

WORKSHEET 4. Answers: 1. The blue whale. 2. The green anaconda from South America. 3. The tiny fairy fly. 4. The stout infantfish. 5. The giant anteater. 6. Wallace's sphinx moth. 7. The pistol shrimp. 8. The howler monkey. 9. The striped polecat, sometimes called a zorilla. 10. The hoatzin. 11. The leatherback sea turtle. 12. The Japanese spider crab. 13. The immortal jellyfish. 14. The Galápagos tortoise. 15. The Sign Eviota, also known as the pygmy goby. 16. The mountain giant Sunda rat. 17. The colossal squid. 18. Rüppell's griffon vulture. 19. 'This is thanks to their peculiar habit of carrying sea anemones around on their front claws, and waving them to warn off predators.' (p 20) 20. 'European roller chicks will cover themselves in their own vomit, making them smell and look unappealing to would-be predators.' (p 21) 21. The cheetah. 22. The perentie, which is also the largest lizard in Australia. 23. The three-toed sloth. 24. The dwarf seahorse. 25. The mandarin fish. 26. The Madagascan sunset moth. 27. The wild water buffalo. 28. The bald eagle. 29. The bristlemouth, a deep-sea fish. 30. The house sparrow, a small bird found on every continent except Antarctica. 31. The vaquita is a porpoise that is not only the smallest marine mammal in the world, but also the rarest. 32. The Amur leopard. 33. 'The giant wildebeest herds of Africa are famous for their migration, which is one of the largest mammal migrations on Earth.' (p 34) 34. The Arctic tern. 35. The common swift. 36. The male ruby-throated hummingbird. 37. The wandering albatross. 38. The white witch moth. 39. The Australian box jellyfish. 40. Australia's funnelweb spider. 41. The pufferfish. 42. 'Despite not being poisonous or venomous, the tiny mosquito is the world's most deadly animal.' (p 43) 43. The bowerbird. 44. 'About 20 per cent of praying mantis mating rituals end in cannibalism.' (p 45) 45. The dung beetle. 46. The peacock mantis shrimp. 47. The snow leopard. 48. The narwhal. 49. The saltwater crocodile. 50. The hippopotamus. 51. 'Orangutans are most often considered to be the smartest animal on Earth after humans.' (p 52). 52. 'Many experts consider crows and ravens to be the smartest birds' (p 53). 53. 'Seahorses hold the record for the most babies – they often give birth to over 1000 babies at a time!' (p 54) 54. 'In the insect world, the record is thought to be held by the African driver ant, which produces 3–4 million eggs every 25 days.' (p 55) 55. The African elephant: 'Their sense of smell is so sensitive they can even detect water from up to 20 kilometres away.' (p 56) 56. The male silk moth.

WORKSHEET 5. ANIMAL MOBILE

Enlarge this sheet to A3 and stick it onto craft paper. Invite students to colour in and cut out the three animals, then attach them to fishing line and hang them from a straw, a metal hanger or an embroidery hoop to create an animal mobile. [See 'How to Make a Mobile', *Wikihow*, <<http://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Mobile>>]



WORKSHEET 6. COLLECTIVE NOUNS

1. A _____ of howler monkeys.
2. A _____ of cheetahs.
3. A _____ of Arctic terns.
4. A _____ of box jellyfish.
5. A _____ of pufferfish.
6. A _____ of snow leopards.
7. A _____ of saltwater crocodiles.
8. A _____ of hippopotamus.
9. A _____ of seahorses.
10. A _____ of African elephants.

Answers: 1. Troop. 2. Coalition. 3. Colony. 4. Swarm, bloom or smack. 5. School. 6. Since it is so rare to see two snow leopards together, there actually is no term for a group of snow leopards. (A group of leopards is called a leap.) 7. Bask, float or nest. 8. Bloat. 9. Herd. 10. Herd or parade.



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