

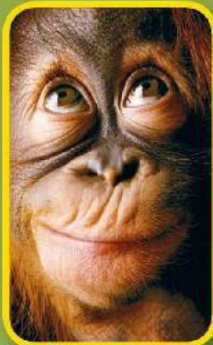
**National  
Geographic Wild  
Animal Atlas:  
Earth    s**



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

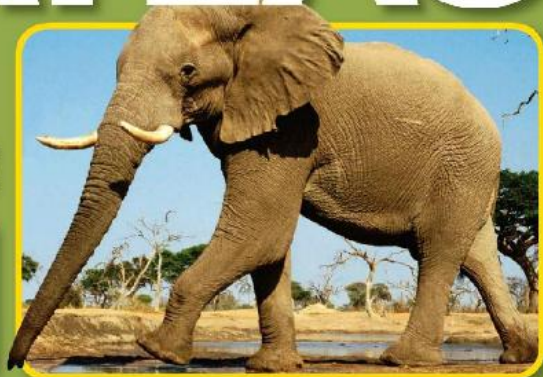


NAT GEO



# WILD ANIMAL ATLAS

Earth's Astonishing  
Animals and **WHERE  
THEY LIVE**



NATIONAL  
GEOGRAPHIC



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC  
**KIDS**



NAT GEO

# WILD ANIMAL ATLAS



Earth's Astonishing  
Animals and  
**WHERE THEY LIVE**



NATIONAL  
GEOGRAPHIC  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

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NOTE: The animals included in this book are not shown to scale.



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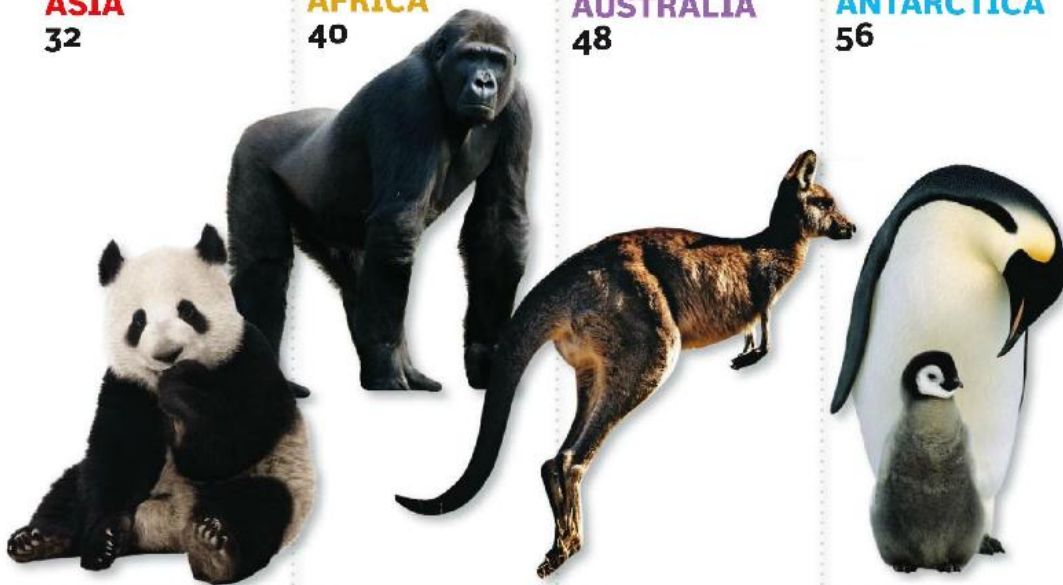
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# WHERE ANIMALS LIVE





# ANIMAL ECOSYSTEMS

**E**arth is made up of many different ecosystems. An ecosystem is a special community of plants and animals that depend on each other. Below are examples of some of Earth's main ecosystems.

**ICE CAP** This ecosystem, near Earth's poles, is always cold. Only animals that have adapted, such as these **King Penguins** in Antarctica, can survive this icy environment.

**TUNDRA** Found on high mountains and near Earth's polar regions, this cold ecosystem has only very short summers. Animals such as the **Caribou** live in this harsh region.

**DESERT** This dry ecosystem sometimes goes for years without rainfall. Animals such as this **Woma Python** near Ayers Rock in Australia survive with very little water.

**MOUNTAIN** The rocky landscape of this ecosystem is very challenging. Special hooves help animals such as these  **Ibex** in the Italian Alps move quickly over the steep slopes.

**FOREST** Trees make up this ecosystem. Forests near the Equator, called rain forests, have many colorful birds, such as this **Scarlet Macaw** in the Amazon River Basin.

**GRASSLAND** Grasses, tall and short, make up this ecosystem. **Elephants**, such as these in Kenya's Masai Mara Reserve, are found in regions of tall, tropical grasses called savanna.

**WETLAND** This ecosystem, which includes swamps and marshes, is covered with water at least part of each year. It is home to many animals, including this family of **Roe Deer**.

**CORAL REEF** Colorful fish swim through Australia's Great Barrier Reef. This ecosystem is made up of millions of skeletons of tiny sea creatures, such as these **Stony Corals**.

ICE CAP



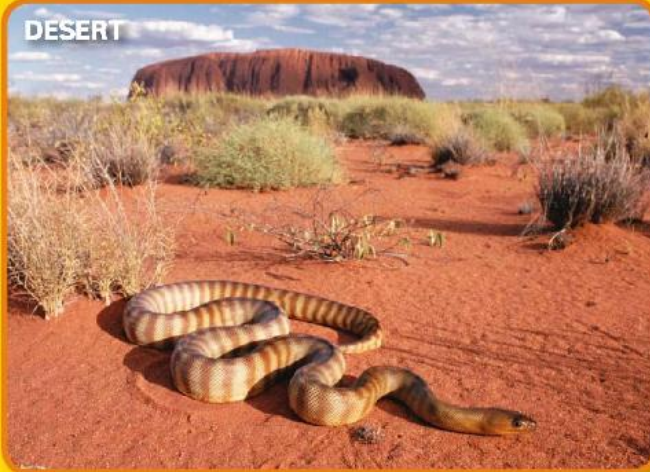
MOUNTAIN



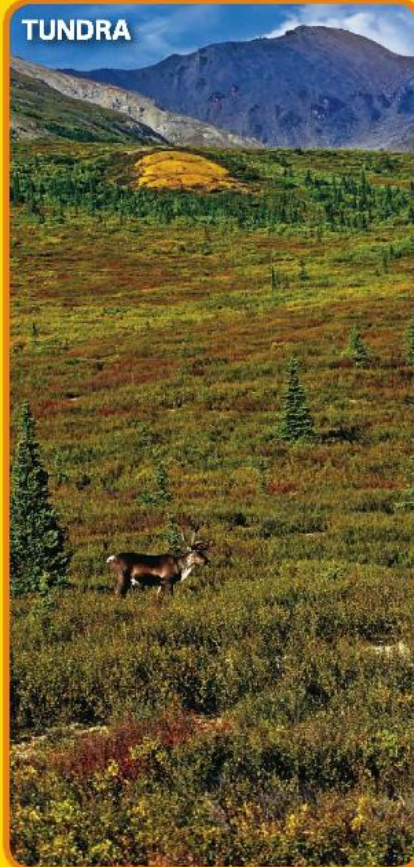
GRASSLAND



**DESERT**



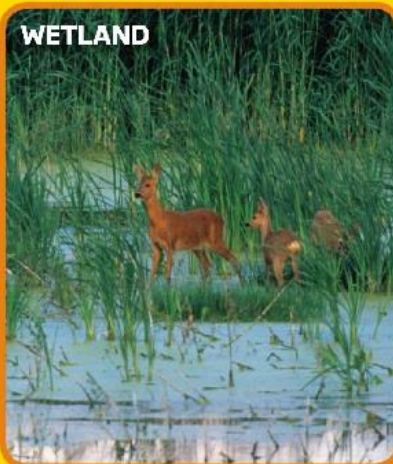
**TUNDRA**



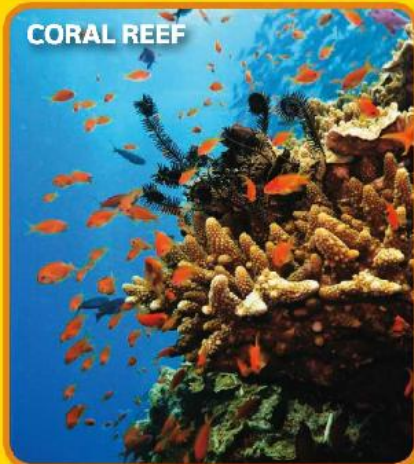
**FOREST**



**WETLAND**



**CORAL REEF**





ANIMAL BITES

DESPITE THEIR  
IMPRESSIVE SIZE,  
**GRIZZLIES**  
ARE QUITE **FAST**  
AND HAVE  
BEEN CLOCKED AT  
**30 MILES**  
(48 KILOMETERS)  
AN HOUR.

# NORTH AMERICA

**N**orth America is 9,449,000 square miles (24,474,000 square kilometers) in area. It is the third largest continent and makes up almost 17 percent of Earth's land area. It stretches from ice caps and tundra in the north to tropical forests in the south with grasslands, wetlands, mountains, and deserts in between. These ecosystems are home to many animals, including this **Grizzly Bear** trying to catch a salmon in a river in Alaska.







Where Animals Live in

# NORTH AMERICA

**N**orth America is made up of many different ecosystems. Each community of plants and animals represents special adaptation to its environment. Thousands of different animals live on the land, in the skies, or in the waters of the continent.

**ICE CAP/TUNDRA** This frozen region is home to many Arctic animals, including the **Polar Bear**. This giant mammal hunts seals in the icy waters of the north. Rising ocean temperatures and melting ice may put polar bears at risk by disrupting their food supply.

**DESERT** The **Texas Horned Lizard** is a fierce-looking member of the reptile family with numerous "horns" on its head and back. It eats mainly insects and lives in burrows in dry regions with very little vegetation.

**MOUNTAIN** **California Condors** live in rocky cliffs in the western mountains of North America. These huge birds can fly as high as 15,000 feet (4,572 meters). Condors are nature's housekeepers because they eat dead animals. Condors are an endangered species.

**FOREST** **White-tailed Deer** live mainly in forests and meadows of North America. The male deer, called a buck, can be identified by its antlers. White-tailed deer graze mainly at dawn or dusk and eat leaves, grasses, and twigs.

**GRASSLAND** Much of central North America is grassland, where animals such as the **American Bison** graze in herds. Bison were hunted almost to extinction in the 1800s.

**WETLAND** The **North American Beaver**, North America's largest rodent, is found throughout the region. Beavers are skilled engineers. They build dams out of mud, stones, and sticks in rivers and ponds.



California Condor

Texas Horned Lizard

American Bison

North American Beaver

White-tailed Deer

Polar Bear



## Map Key

- Ice cap
- Tundra
- Desert
- Mountain
- Coniferous forest
- Deciduous forest
- Rain forest
- Grassland
- Wetland





## A Look at an Ecosystem

# THE SONORAN DESERT

**T**he Sonoran Desert covers 120,000 square miles (310,799 square kilometers) in the southwestern United States and northwestern Mexico. It is the hottest North American desert, but seasonal rains support a wide variety of plant and animal life.



RAINFALL IN  
THE SONORAN DESERT



**GILA WOODPECKER**  
This bird often nests in a hole made with its sharp beak in a Saguaro cactus.

### WESTERN DIAMONDBACK RATTLESNAKE

The Western Diamondback is the largest rattler living in the Sonoran Desert. Its venom can be deadly.



**BANDED GILA MONSTER**  
This desert reptile is one of just two poisonous lizards found in North America.

Animal at risk



**DESERT  
BIGHORN  
SHEEP**

Desert bighorns have padded hooves that enable them to move quickly over steep, rocky terrain.



**TURKEY  
VULTURE**

These birds, with a wingspan of 6 feet (almost 2 meters), feed mainly on dead animals.



**SONORAN  
PRONGHORN**

Sharp eyesight and great speed protect this endangered animal from desert predators such as wolves.



**GREATER  
ROADRUNNER**

This desert bird rarely flies, but can run as fast as 15 miles (24 kilometers) an hour.

**ANIMAL BITES**

WHEN FLOWERS ARE IN BLOOM IN THE SONORAN DESERT, **BEES & BIRDS** POLLINATE THEM DURING THE DAY. AT NIGHT, **BATS** TAKE OVER THE JOB.

**BOBCAT**

These felines live throughout North America, including desert areas. Because they hunt at night, bobcats are rarely seen.






ANIMAL BITES

THE AMERICAN BISON IS  
SO WELL INSULATED BY ITS  
THICK SHAGGY COAT

THAT **SNOW**  
CAN SETTLE ON ITS BACK  
**WITHOUT  
MELTING.**



## AMERICAN BISON

 A bison calf stays close to its mother. Calves weigh 30 to 70 pounds (14 to 32 kilograms) at birth.

 Snow clings to a bison's face in Yellowstone National Park. The animal's shaggy hair protects it from the bitter cold of winter.



**T**he American bison is a symbol of North America's frontier history. As many as 60 million bison may have roamed the grasslands of the Great Plains when Europeans first arrived. Most of the bison we see today are a product of breeding managed by conservationists. Although sometimes mistakenly called a buffalo, the bison is actually a relative of cattle and goats. Bison are the heaviest land animals in North America. They are considered to be more dangerous than a grizzly bear because they sometimes attack for no apparent reason, using their horns, their large skull, and their hind legs as deadly weapons.

**HABITAT** Bison once roamed the grasslands of the Great Plains where they were an important part of the Plains Indian culture. Today most bison are found on ranches or in game preserves where they are raised for their meat.

**DIET** Bison are herbivores, meaning they eat only plant material. Their diet includes grasses, herbs, shrubs, and twigs. Like cattle, bison graze and then settle down to chew their food, which is stored in a special stomach.

**SURVIVAL** In the 1800s, bison were hunted almost to extinction. By careful breeding and protection on ranches and preserves, the number of bison in North America is now about 200,000.



## FACTS AT A GLANCE

**HABITAT** Once found throughout the Great Plains of North America; now found on ranches and preserves

**LIFESPAN** An average of 12 to 20 years in the wild

**SIZE** 900 to 2,200 pounds (408 to 998 kilograms)

**DIET** Grasses, herbs, shrubs, twigs

 Despite their huge size, bison can change directions quickly and run at speeds up to 35 miles (56 kilometers) an hour.



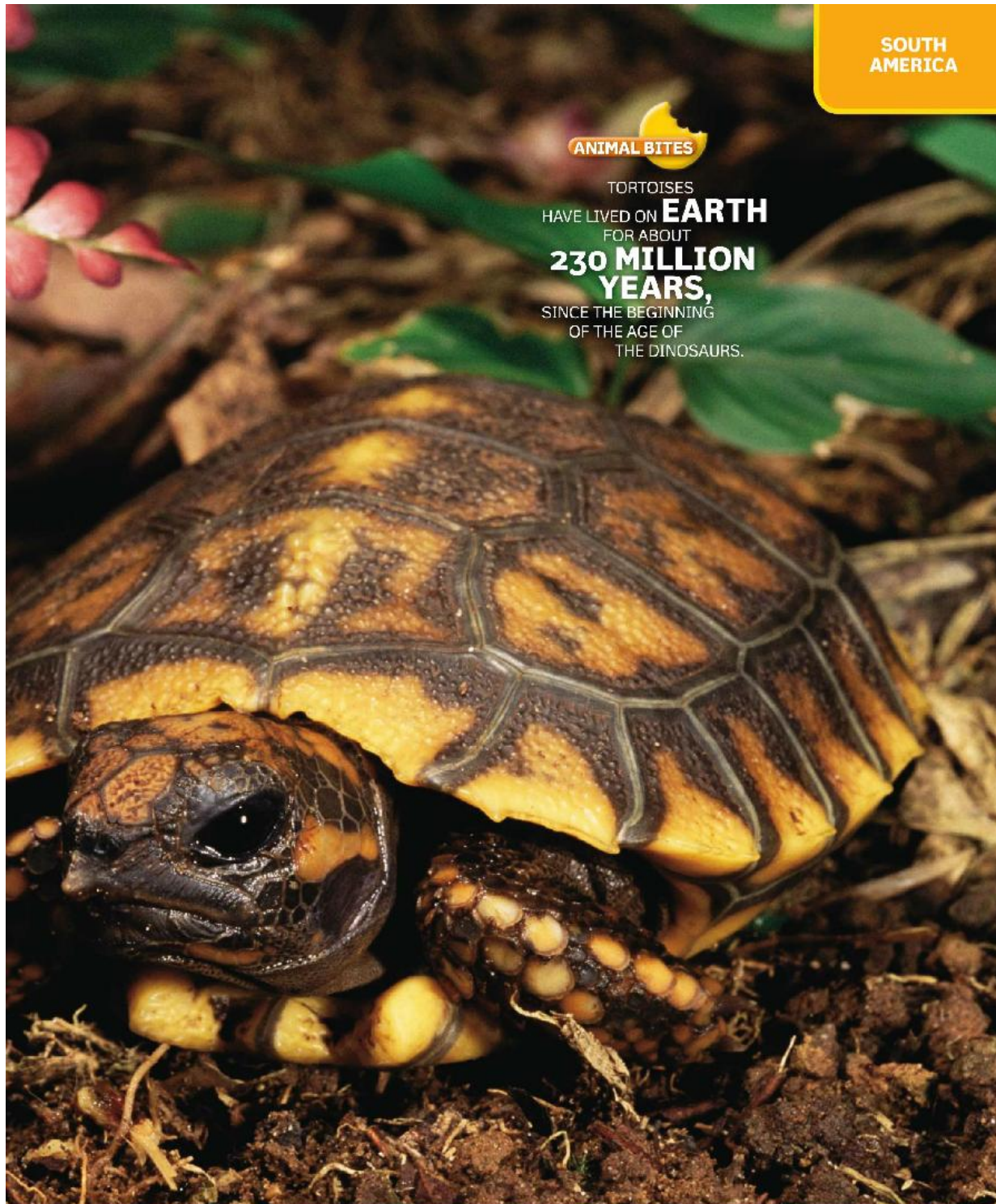
# SOUTH AMERICA

**S**outh America is 6,880,000 square miles (17,819,000 square kilometers) in area. It is the fourth largest continent and makes up 12 percent of Earth's land area. Tropical rain forests in the north are drained by the mighty Amazon River. Snow-capped mountains form a western spine. And winds sweep across southern plateaus. These ecosystems are home to many animals, including this South American **Yellow-footed Tortoise** that eats flowers, fruits, and insects in tropical forests.



ANIMAL BITES

TORTOISES  
HAVE LIVED ON **EARTH**  
FOR ABOUT  
**230 MILLION**  
**YEARS,**  
SINCE THE BEGINNING  
OF THE AGE OF  
THE DINOSAURS.





Where Animals Live in

# SOUTH AMERICA

**S**outh America is made up of many different ecosystems. Thousands of animals, birds, and fish live in the many environments—on the land, in the skies, or in the waters—of this continent.

**DESERT** The **Lesser Rhea** does not fly, but can run up to 37 miles (60 kilometers) an hour. These large birds live in herds of 5 to 30 individuals. They feed on plants and small animals.

**MOUNTAIN** Sure-footed **Llamas** are used by peoples in the Andes Mountains as pack animals on the rugged mountain terrain. Relatives of the camel, they are known to kick or even spit when tired.

**FOREST** **Poison Dart Frogs**, one of the most toxic animals on Earth, and bright colored butterflies, like the **Monarch**, are just two of the unique creatures living in South America's rain forests. Scientists believe the vivid colors that make these creatures so beautiful may protect them by frightening away predators.

**GRASSLAND** **Giant Anteaters** use their tongues—more than 2 feet (0.6 meters) long—to catch insects. Anteaters live in grasslands and rain forests where they feast on as many as 35,000 ants and termites daily.

**WETLAND** The swamps and streams of this continent are home to the **South American Tapir**. A relative of the horse, tapirs use their trunk-like snouts to pull up grasses and aquatic plants.



Monarch Butterfly

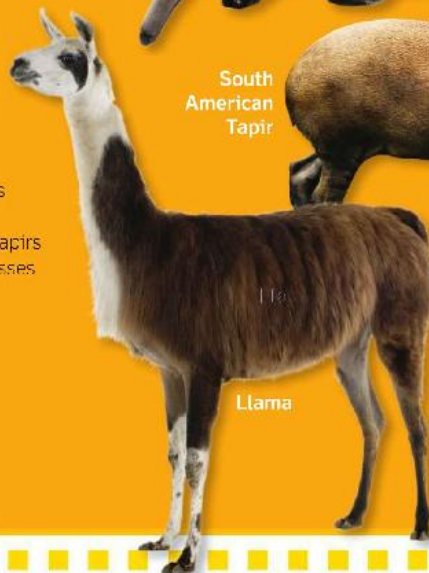


Lesser Rhea



Giant Anteater

South American Tapir



Llama



Poison Dart Frog





## A Look at an Ecosystem

# THE AMAZON RAIN FOREST

**T**he Amazon River basin includes Earth's largest rain forest. The rain forest covers an area almost the size of the 48 contiguous United States. Cutting down trees has put many rain forest animals at risk.



LAYERS OF THE AMAZON RAIN FOREST

● Animal at risk

### ANIMAL BITES

THE AMAZON RAIN FOREST  
PRODUCES ABOUT  
**20 PERCENT**  
OF EARTH'S  
**OXYGEN.**

#### GOLDEN LION TAMARIN

These small orange-yellow monkeys eat fruits, insects, and lizards. They are almost extinct in the wild.

#### SPOTTED JAGUAR

Jaguars are the third largest member of the cat family. They live near water in the dense forest.

#### GREEN ANACONDA

This powerful snake is the largest on Earth. It kills its prey by squeezing it to death.



**BLUE-AND-YELLOW MACAW**

This brilliant blue and orange bird—popular as a pet—uses its strong beak to crack nuts and even coconuts.

**THREE-TOED SLOTH**

These sloths live in the treetops of the rain forest where they eat a diet of leaves and fruit.

**PINK-TOED TARANTULA**

Dark, hairy legs make this spider scary to see, but its venom is weak and harmless to humans.

**RED-BELLIED PIRANHA**

This freshwater fish uses sharp teeth to consume meat. It does not aggressively attack humans, as sometimes reported.

**CAIMAN**

A member of the alligator family, caimans live in wetlands where they eat fish, reptiles, and birds.

Spotlight on

# POISON DART FROGS

**P**oison dart frogs display a wide range of colors and markings, which may be a signal to predators to stay away.



**M**ore than 300 different species of tree frogs live in Earth's tropical forests, but the greatest number are found in South America. They all have strong back legs that help them jump long distances. They also have special sticky pads on the tip of each toe. This makes it possible for them to move about on the undersides of leaves without falling to the forest floor far below. Most other tree frogs are green, brown, or gray. This helps them blend into the foliage of the forest. But

poison dart frogs have bright-colored markings that scientists believe may frighten away predators. Three species of poison dart frogs are poisonous to humans. They have one of Earth's deadliest venoms found in their skin.

**HABITAT** Tree frogs are found in the warm tropics around the world. As the name suggests, they live high above the forest floor among the leaves of tall rain forest trees.

**DIET** Most tree frogs hunt at night and live on a diet of bugs, flies, moths, and other small creatures that live in the forest. Tree frogs

catch their food with a fast flick of their long, sticky tongue.

**SURVIVAL** Most tree frogs are not endangered. However, as rain forests are cut down to make way for roads and agriculture, the habitat of tree frogs is lost. This may put these forest creatures at risk in the future.

**T**adpoles develop inside a jelly-like mass of frog eggs on a leaf. After the tadpoles hatch, they mature into frogs.



## FACTS AT A GLANCE

**HABITAT** Among the leaves in the canopy of the rain forest in tropical regions around the world

**LIFESPAN** 5 years in the wild

**SIZE** Average 3 inches (almost 8 centimeters)

**DIET** Crickets, flies, and other insects caught with a sticky tongue

**G**olden poison dart frogs range in color from bright yellow to pale green. Scientists are exploring ways to use the venom of these frogs to create a powerful painkiller.

SOUTH  
AMERICA



THE **SKIN** OF A GOLDEN  
POISON DART FROG  
CONTAINS ENOUGH  
**TOXINS** TO KILL  
UP TO **20** PEOPLE.





# EUROPE

**E**urope is 3,841,000 square miles (9,947,000 square kilometers) in area. It makes up almost 7 percent of Earth's land area. Only the continent of Australia is smaller. Europe is made up of many islands and peninsulas as well as broad plains and rugged mountains. These features provide the continent with diverse ecosystems. Among the many animals that call Europe home is this **Eagle Owl**, here soaring on silent wings at dusk.





EUROPE

ANIMAL BITES

EAGLE OWLS EAT  
ALMOST **ANYTHING**  
THEY CAN CATCH.  
THEY HAVE BEEN KNOWN  
TO EAT FOXES, DUCKS,  
CRABS, SNAKES, AND  
**EVEN OTHER  
OWLS.**



Where Animals Live in

# EUROPE

**T**he great variety of physical environments in Europe contributes to many different ecosystems. From the cold north to the warm Mediterranean shores, thousands of creatures live in these environments.

**TUNDRA** The **Arctic Fox** lives in the cold tundra, where temperatures fall below  $-50^{\circ}\text{F}$  ( $-46^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) in winter. The fox uses its bushy tail to stay warm.

**DESERT** The **Saiga Antelope** has a light brown summer coat, but a white winter coat. Its unusual bulging nose filters the dusty summer air and warms the freezing winter air.

**MOUNTAIN** In summer, herds of **Chamois** graze in high alpine meadows, but in winter they migrate to lower elevations.

**FOREST** The **Nightingale** is a morning songbird that is common in the forests of Europe. But in the winter months it migrates to Africa.

**GRASSLAND** The **Iberian Lynx** is a relative of the North American bobcat. It is the most endangered member of the cat family. The remaining Iberian lynxes are found on the Iberian Peninsula.

**WETLAND** **Eurasian Otters** spend much of the time in freshwater streams and lakes in forest areas. They live in dens called holts and eat fish. They hunt mainly at night.



Chamois



Arctic Fox



Saiga Antelope



Nightingale



Eurasian Otter



Iberian Lynx







A Look at an Ecosystem

# THE ALPS

**T**he Alps are mountains that stretch across south-central Europe from eastern France into eastern Europe. The rugged terrain creates many different ecosystems, ranging from snowy peaks to high meadows and low valleys.



ZONES OF THE ALPS MOUNTAINS

## ANIMAL BITES

THE ALPS HAVE  
**MORE THAN 30,000**  
ANIMAL SPECIES AND  
**13,000** PLANT SPECIES,  
MAKING IT A BIODIVERSITY  
HOTSPOT.

### SALAMANDER

These amphibians look like a cross between a lizard and a frog. They live in cool, moist forests.



### APOLLO BUTTERFLY

This butterfly lives in alpine meadows because it needs warmth from the sun in order to fly.



### ALPINE MARMOT

Marmots live in family groups in alpine meadows and pastures. They spend much of the year in hibernation.

Animal at risk

**ALPINE IBEX**

The male ibex has long curved horns; the female's horns are short. Ibex live on rugged mountain slopes.

**GOLDEN EAGLE**

This large bird soars on updrafts in mountainous terrain. It uses sharp talons to catch small mammals.

**ROCK PTARMIGAN**

This bird lives on rocky mountain slopes. Its feathers change from white in winter to brown in summer.

**CAPERCAILLIE**

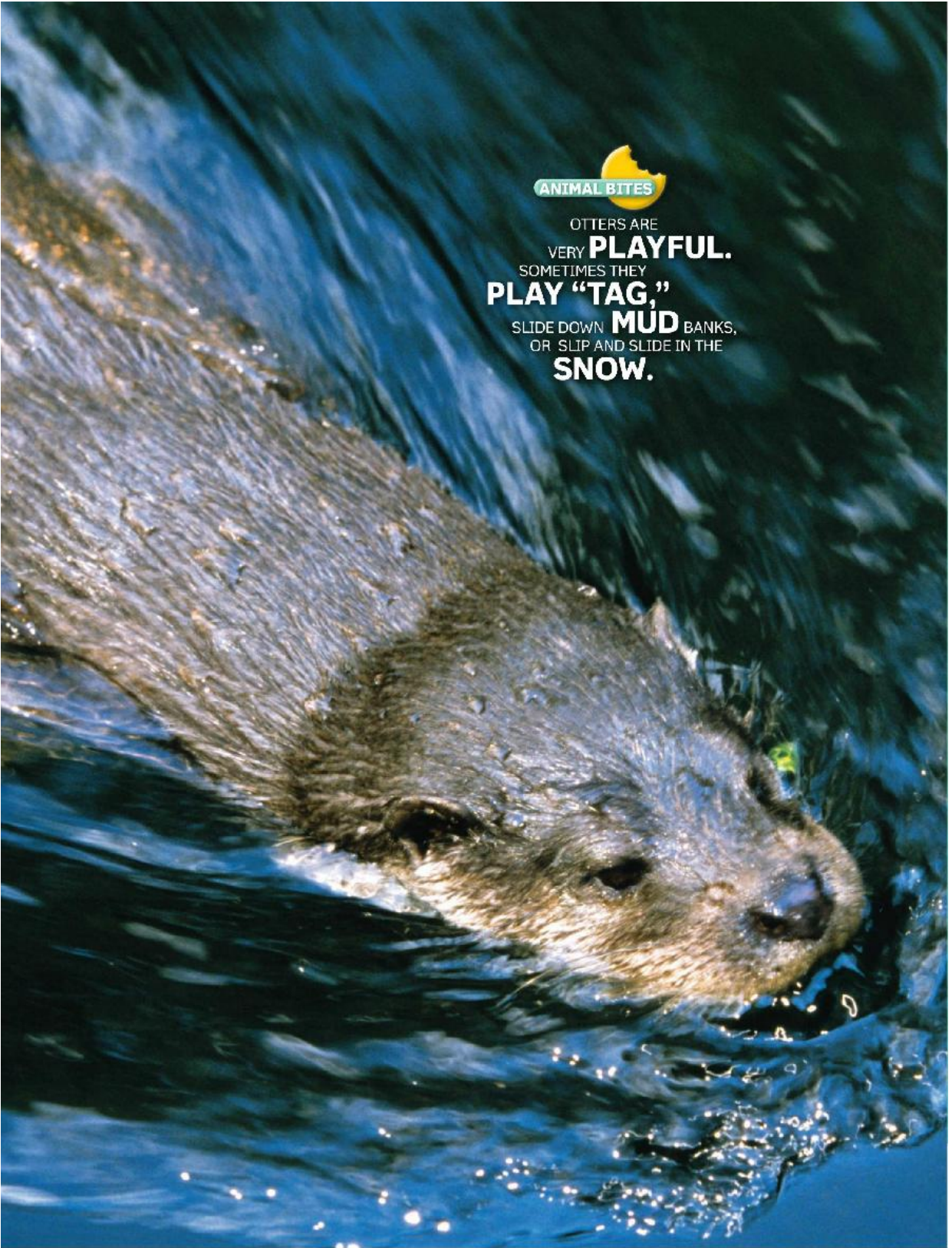
These birds are clumsy fliers because of their short wings and heavy bodies. They eat mainly berries.

**PINE MARTIN**


This member of the weasel family is about the size of a cat. Its main food is mice.



OTTERS ARE  
VERY **PLAYFUL.**  
SOMETIMES THEY  
**PLAY "TAG,"**  
SLIDE DOWN **MUD** BANKS,  
OR SLIP AND SLIDE IN THE  
**SNOW.**



# EURASIAN OTTERS

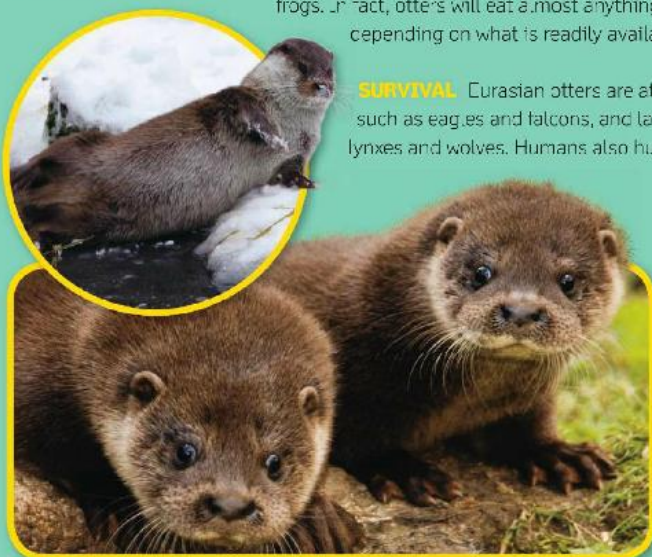
 Otters, with their webbed feet, are excellent swimmers and spend a lot of time in water.

**O**tters are sometimes referred to as the clowns of the animal kingdom because of their playful antics on land and in the water. The Eurasian otter has short legs and a long body that is covered with thick brown fur. Each webbed paw has five toes that help make the otter an excellent swimmer. Otters typically have two to three cubs in a litter. The cubs stay with their mother until they are about one year old.

**HABITAT** The Eurasian otter is the most widespread member of the otter family. Otters live in freshwater streams and ponds as well as in coastal areas. Otters dig burrows called holts in the banks of rivers. They are found throughout Europe, and also in Asia and North Africa.

**DIET** The Eurasian otter, like its cousins around the world, lives on a diet made up mainly of fish. But it also eats other aquatic life, as well as small birds, insects, and frogs. In fact, otters will eat almost anything they can hold. Their diet tends to vary, depending on what is readily available.

**SURVIVAL** Eurasian otters are at risk from humans, large birds of prey, such as eagles and falcons, and large meat-eating animals, such as lynxes and wolves. Humans also hunt them for their fur.



 These young otters appear curious about their environment. When otters are about ten weeks old, they venture out of the nest.

## FACTS AT A GLANCE

**HABITAT** Freshwater streams and coastal areas throughout Europe, Asia, and North Africa

**LIFESPAN** Up to 22 years in captivity

**SIZE** 15 to 22 pounds  
(7 to 10 kilograms)

**DIET** Mainly fish, but also other aquatic life, including amphibians



ANIMAL BITES

TIGERS CAN EAT  
**40 POUNDS**  
(18 KILOGRAMS)  
IN A SINGLE SITTING.  
AFTER A BIG MEAL,  
THEY CAN GO UP TO  
**ONE WEEK**  
WITHOUT EATING.

# ASIA

**A**sia is 17,208,000 square miles (44,570,000 square kilometers) in area. It is the largest of all the continents and makes up 30 percent of Earth's land area. Asia stretches all the way from the icy shores of the Arctic Ocean to the waters of the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Its many ecosystems range from mountains to tropical forests and deserts, with an equally broad range of animals living there, including the majestic but endangered **Bengal Tiger**.





ASIA





Where Animals Live in

# ASIA

**A**sia's vast expanse includes many ecosystems, ranging from cold to hot, and wet to dry. Many different animals, birds, and fish live on the land, in the skies, or in the waters of this continent.

**TUNDRA** Caribou are members of the deer family. Unlike other deer, both males and females have antlers. Caribou migrate hundreds of miles in search of food and use their large hooves to dig through the snow for food during the long winters.

**DESERT** Bactrian Camels live in the rocky deserts of Central Asia. They rely on fat stored in two humps on their back when water and food are not available.

**MOUNTAIN** Yaks live at elevations up to 19,000 feet (5,791 meters) in the mountains and plateaus of Tibet. Their broad hooves and heavy, woolly coat are adaptations to the extremes of the mountain environment.

**FOREST** Giant Pandas live in forests with a dense understory of bamboo, their favorite food. Pandas are endangered, with fewer than 2,000 remaining in the wild.

**GRASSLAND** Unlike its African relative, the Greater One-horned Asian Rhinoceros has just one horn. Its diet is mainly grasses, leaves, and fruits. This rhino is endangered, with only about 2,000 remaining in the wild.

**WETLAND** The Fishing Cat lives near marshes and streams where it hunts birds, small mammals, snakes, and fish. It dives into the water and uses partially webbed paws to catch prey.

Caribou

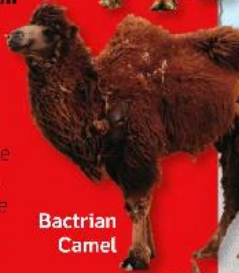
Bactrian Camel

Yak

Fishing Cat

Giant Panda

Greater One-horned Asian Rhinoceros







## A Look at an Ecosystem

# THE GANGES DELTA

**T**he Ganges Delta is made up of rich soil deposited by the Ganges and Brahmaputra Rivers. A vast wetland has formed where the rivers enter the Bay of Bengal. The seasonal rains of the summer monsoon often cause serious flooding in the delta.



MONSOON ARRIVALS IN THE GANGES DELTA AND SOUTH ASIA

### ANIMAL BITES

THE GANGES DELTA IS SHAPED LIKE A **TRIANGLE**. THE MIDDLE OF THE DELTA IS MADE UP OF SWAMPS, FORESTS, SMALL ISLANDS, AND CREEKS.

#### WILD BOAR

These wild pigs live in forested areas. They are a main food source for tigers and leopards.



#### CHITAL

This deer is common in forests of India. It has three-pronged antlers that are shed each year.



#### MUGGER CROCODILE

A clear, third eyelid allows these large crocodiles to keep their eyes open while swimming under water.



● Animal at risk

**BLACK-CROWNED  
NIGHT HERON**

This bird has a black cap, yellow legs, and red eyes. It has a shorter bill than other herons.

**BLUE-EARED  
KINGFISHER**

This small bird, with bright blue feathers, catches fish in pools and streams in the tropical forests.

**OLIVE RIDLEY  
TURTLE**

This small sea turtle gets its name from the color of its heart-shaped shell, called a carapace.

**GANGES RIVER  
DOLPHIN**

This animal's eyes have no lenses, so it is blind. It is endangered because of pollution in

**INDIAN**

Spotlight on

# GIANT PANDAS

🐼 Like most other bears, giant pandas are very agile. They are skilled tree-climbers and use their paws to grasp trunks as they climb.



🐼 Giant pandas have an extra wrist bone called "panda's thumb" that helps them hold and eat bamboo.

**B**lack-and-white giant pandas have long been associated with China, where they are considered a national treasure. Giant pandas have appeared in Chinese paintings for thousands of years. They are also a favorite animal in zoos around the world. Giant pandas are relatives of bears. They are similar to bears in the way they walk and climb. And like other bears, they can be quite dangerous. Panda cubs are born blind and weigh just 5 ounces (142 grams). They are born without any hair and develop their characteristic coloring as they mature. Adult giant pandas spend up to 12 hours each day feeding. Unlike many other bears, pandas do not hibernate.

**HABITAT** Giant pandas living in the wild are found at elevations ranging from 5,000 to 10,000 feet (1,524 to 3,048 meters) in cold, rainy broadleaf and coniferous forests that have a dense undergrowth of bamboo.

**DIET** In the wild, giant pandas live on a diet that is 99 percent bamboo. They have large molars and strong jaws that enable them to crush the tough, woody bamboo. In zoos, they also eat sugarcane, apples, and sweet potatoes.

**SURVIVAL** Giant pandas are endangered due to loss of habitat and shortages of bamboo. There are about 1,600 pandas remaining in the wild and another 150 living in zoos.



## FACTS AT A GLANCE

**HABITAT** In misty bamboo and evergreen forests of central China, elevations above 5,000 feet (1,524 meters)

**LIFESPAN** 20 years in the wild

**SIZE** Up to 300 pounds (135 kilograms)

**DIET** 99 percent bamboo

🐼 A mother panda gently cuddles her baby. At birth a panda cub is helpless. It may stay with its mother up to three years.



ASIA



ANIMAL BITES

PANDAS MAKE A  
**BLEATING**  
SOUND SIMILAR TO A  
LAMB OR A GOAT KID.  
IT'S A **FRIENDLY**  
NOISE THEY USE  
TO GREET EACH OTHER.



# AFRICA

**A**frica is 11,608,000 square miles (30,065,000 square kilometers) in area. It is the second largest continent and makes up about 20 percent of Earth's land area. The Equator runs through the middle of Africa. Ecosystems lie in broad bands to the north and south. Tropical forests form the core of Africa, with grasslands, deserts, and temperate environments farther out. Africa is home to many animals, including this pride of **Lions** in a South African grassland.



ANIMAL BITES

A MOTHER LION  
TAKES CARE OF HER  
**MALE** CUBS FOR  
ABOUT **TWO YEARS,**  
BUT **FEMALE** CUBS MAY  
LIVE WITH THEIR MOTHER  
FOR **LIFE.**



Where Animals Live in

## AFRICA

**A**frica includes many different ecosystems, but it has no extremely cold environments. The continent is a rich blend of mammals, birds, and fish living in different environments on the land, in the air, or in the water.

**DESERT** The **Spiny-Tailed Lizard** is a desert dweller. It tolerates hot days and chilly nights. It eats leaves, seeds, and insects, but requires very little water. Some varieties reach 30 inches (76 centimeters) in length.

**MOUNTAIN** **Gorillas** live near the Equator on mountain slopes and in bamboo forests, as well as in lowland rain forests. They live in groups called troops, led by a large male called a "silverback."

**FOREST** **Chimpanzees** live in social communities of several dozen animals in the rain forests and woodlands of central and western Africa. Among all creatures of the animal kingdom, they are the most closely related to humans.

**GRASSLAND** Many animals associated with Africa, such as **Zebras** and **Cheetahs**, are found in tropical grasslands called savannas. Zebras are grass-eaters. But cheetahs are meat eaters that hunt other grassland animals for their food.

**WETLAND** The **Hippopotamus** lives in rivers and lakes of Africa. On land it can outrun the fastest human, at least for a short distance. Hippos spend their days in the water, but come out at night to graze on land.



Cheetah



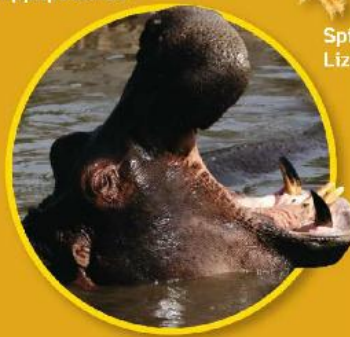
Gorilla



Zebra



Spiny-Tailed Lizard



Hippopotamus



Chimpanzee





## A Look at an Ecosystem

# THE SAVANNA

**T**he African savanna is home to many of Earth's big game animals. It is a grassland with two seasons—wet and dry. Towering above the savanna in Tanzania is Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest mountain.



**HORNBILL**  
Named for their large curved bills, hornbills live on a diet of fruit, insects, and small animals.



**GIRAFFE**  
With its long legs and neck, the giraffe is Earth's tallest animal. It grazes on tree leaves instead of grasses.

### GABOON VIPER

This poisonous member of the puff adder family has the longest fangs of any snake on Earth.



**HYENA**  
This scavenger animal is a skilled hunter but often eats scraps left by other hunters of the savanna.

Animal at risk

## ANIMAL BITES

THE ACACIA TREE SURVIVES  
DROUGHT BECAUSE ITS  
**LONG ROOTS**  
REACH WATER SOURCES  
**DEEP**  
UNDERGROUND.

**IMPALA**

Male impalas use their long horns to fight other males for territory and control of the herd.

**WILDEBEEST**

Also known as a gnu, this member of the antelope family grazes in large herds on the savanna.

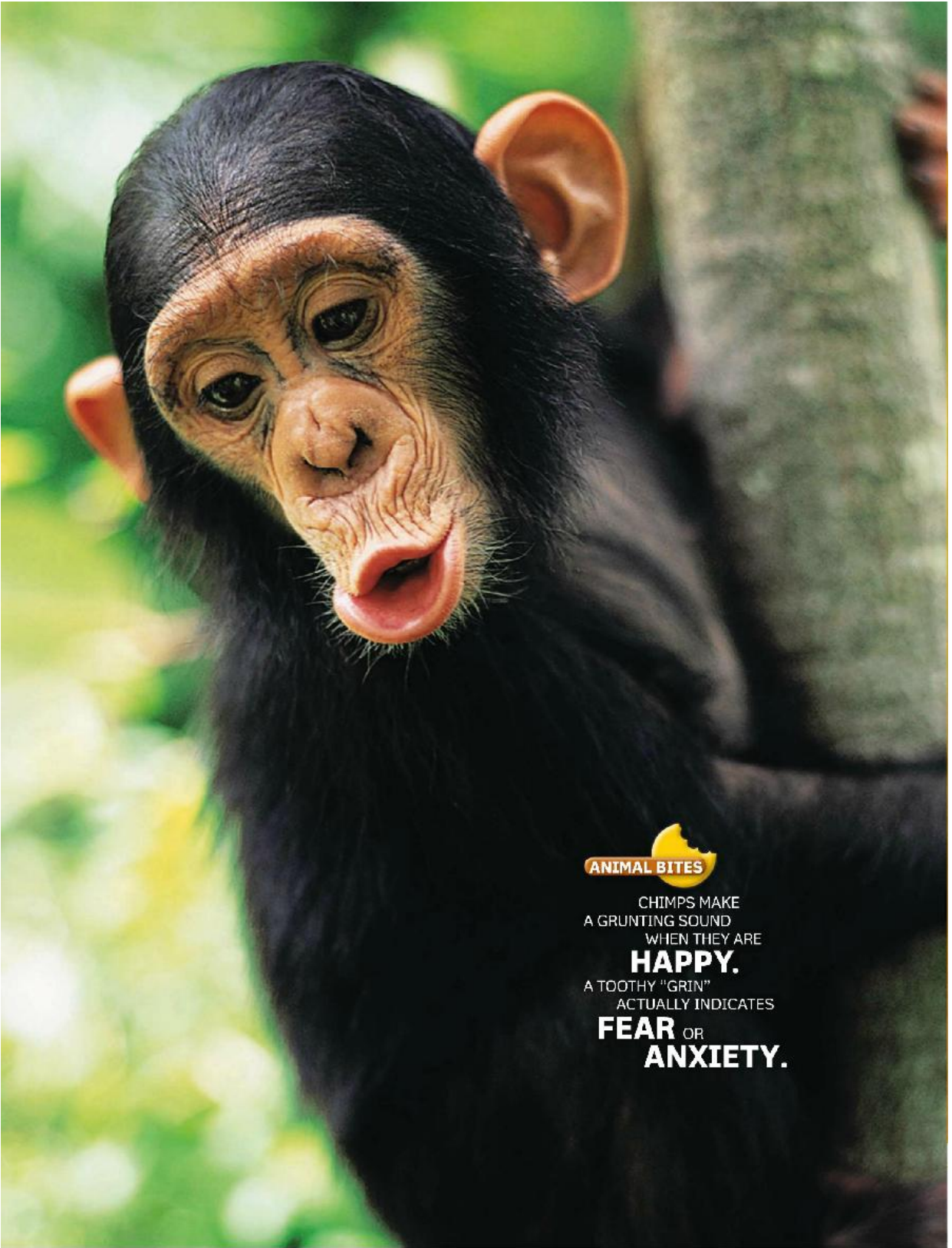
**AFRICAN ELEPHANT**

The largest land animals on Earth, African elephants use their trunks to spray water to keep cool.

**SAVANNA HARE**

Keen hearing and smell help the savanna hare avoid predators. Hares eat leaves, roots, berries, and bark.






**ANIMAL BITES**

CHIMPS MAKE  
A GRUNTING SOUND  
WHEN THEY ARE  
**HAPPY.**

A TOOTHY "GRIN"  
ACTUALLY INDICATES  
**FEAR** OR  
**ANXIETY.**

# CHIMPANZEES

 A chimpanzee in Africa clings to a tree as it watches something on the ground below. A chimp's facial expression often shows human-like emotion.


**C**himpanzees are very intelligent animals. They often behave in ways that remind us of humans. Chimpanzees are one of the few animals that use tools. They often use sticks to dig insects out of the ground. They also use stones to crack open nuts. Some chimpanzees have even learned to communicate with humans using simple sign language. Because they can be taught to perform many different tasks, chimpanzees are often used in scientific studies. In fact, the first "American" in space was actually a chimpanzee named Ham who orbited Earth in 1961.

**HABITAT** Chimpanzees live in many different forest settings in western and central Africa. They live in steamy tropical rain forests. But they also thrive in lowland and mountain forests. Chimpanzees live in family groups of 6 to 10 individuals. These family groups live in communities that may include as many as 100 members.

**DIET** Chimpanzees enjoy a varied diet. They mainly eat fruit, seeds, leaves, bark, and insects. But they also eat meat and eggs. Chimpanzees usually search for food alone, but sometimes they hunt in small groups.

**SURVIVAL** Chimpanzees are considered an endangered species. Expanding human populations have destroyed their natural habitat. People also hunt chimpanzees for food.



 A female chimpanzee cradles her three-month-old baby. Young chimps stay with their mothers until they are seven years old.



 Strong arms and hands that can grip allow these chimpanzees in a park in Nigeria to swing from vines and tree branches.



## FACTS AT A GLANCE

**HABITAT** Tropical rain forests, as well as lowland and mountain forests of western and central Africa

**LIFESPAN** An average of 45 years in the wild, but up to 50 years in zoos

**SIZE** 4 to 5.5 feet (about 1 to 2 meters) tall

**DIET** Fruits, plants, insects, eggs, meat



# AUSTRALIA

**A**ustralia is 2,970,000 square miles (7,692,000 square kilometers) in area. It is the smallest of all the continents and makes up just over 5 percent of Earth's land area. Australia's closest neighbors are New Zealand and other island countries of the South Pacific Ocean region. Because of its relatively remote location, Australia has many unusual animals, such as these furry **Koalas** that are found in the wild nowhere else on Earth.



ANIMAL BITES

WHEN A KOALA IS  
BORN IT IS ABOUT  
THE SIZE OF  
A BIG **JELLY BEAN.**  
IT CAN'T SEE OR HEAR,  
BUT IT CAN  
**CLIMB!**



Where Animals Live in

# AUSTRALIA

**A**ustralia's interior is desert and dry grasslands. Coastal areas receive ample rainfall and have more vegetation. The continent has many unique mammals, birds, and fish that live in different environments.

**DESERT** **Galah Cockatoos** live in the desert and semi-arid interior of Australia. This colorful bird generally feeds on the ground, eating seeds of melons and pines that are found near water sources.

**Dingoes** are wild dogs that have lived in Australia for at least 15,000 years. Although they howl, dingoes do not bark like other dogs. They eat small animals, which they hunt mainly at night.

**MOUNTAIN** **Wombats** live in burrows in mountainous forested areas of southeastern Australia. Babies live in a pouch on the mother's belly for five months. Wombats come out at night to feed on grasses, roots, and bark.

**FOREST** The **Brushtail Possum** is a nocturnal animal, meaning it sleeps during the day and is active at night. It lives high in the trees on a diet of leaves, fruit, buds, and bark.

**GRASSLAND** **Kangaroos** use their powerful hind legs to hop through the grasslands and desert margins of Australia. Male red kangaroos can be more than 5 feet (1.5 meters) tall. A group of kangaroos is called a mob.

**WETLAND** **Platypuses** are very unusual animals. They have a bill and webbed feet like a duck and a tail like a beaver. They live in land burrows, but they are good swimmers and hunt food under water.



Dingo



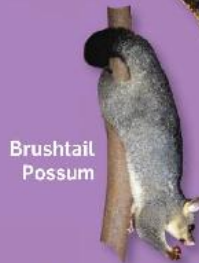
Galah Cockatoo



Wombat



Kangaroo



Brushtail Possum

Platypus



INDIAN OCEAN







A Look at an Ecosystem

# THE GREAT BARRIER REEF

**S**tretching more than 1,400 miles (2,200 kilometers) along Australia's northeast coast, the Great Barrier Reef is made of skeletons of tiny marine animals called corals. The reef is home to many different sea animals.



ZONES OF THE GREAT BARRIER REEF

## ANIMAL BITES

CORAL REEFS ARE CONSIDERED THE **RAIN FORESTS** OF THE SEA BECAUSE THEY PROVIDE FOOD AND SHELTER FOR UP TO **25 PERCENT** OF ALL MARINE LIFE.



### LEATHERBACK SEA TURTLE

Leatherbacks can dive to depths of 4,200 feet (1,280 meters) and stay down as long as 85 minutes.



### BOX JELLYFISH

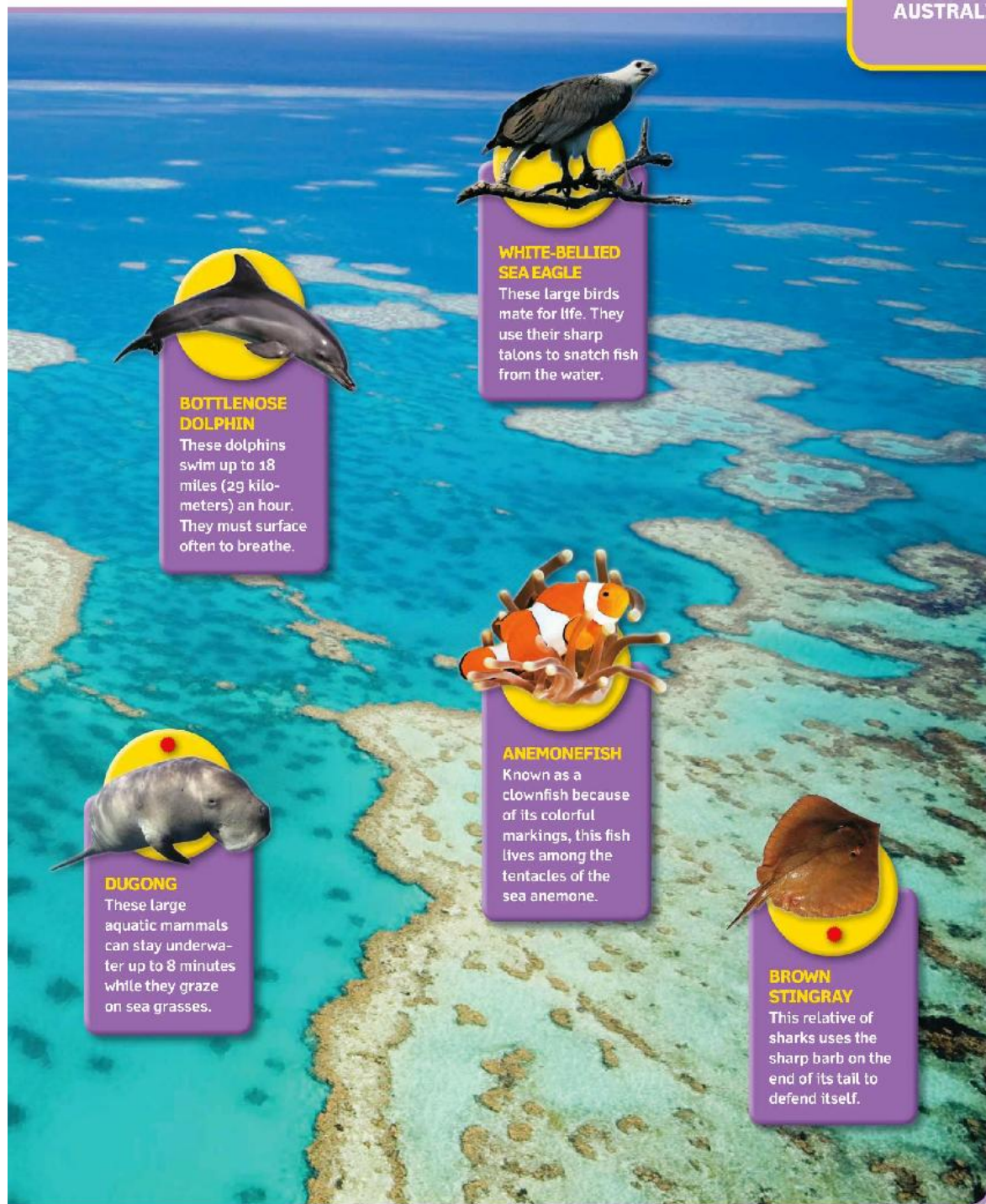
Stinging cells on each tentacle of this jellyfish deliver one of the most deadly toxins on Earth.



### BLACK-TIPPED REEF SHARK

These sharks swim in shallow water, hunting for fish among the coral reefs. They try to avoid swimmers.

● Animal at risk



**BOTTLENOSE DOLPHIN**

These dolphins swim up to 18 miles (29 kilometers) an hour. They must surface often to breathe.

**WHITE-BELLIED SEA EAGLE**

These large birds mate for life. They use their sharp talons to snatch fish from the water.

**DUGONG**

These large aquatic mammals can stay underwater up to 8 minutes while they graze on sea grasses.

**ANEMONEFISH**

Known as a clownfish because of its colorful markings, this fish lives among the tentacles of the sea anemone.

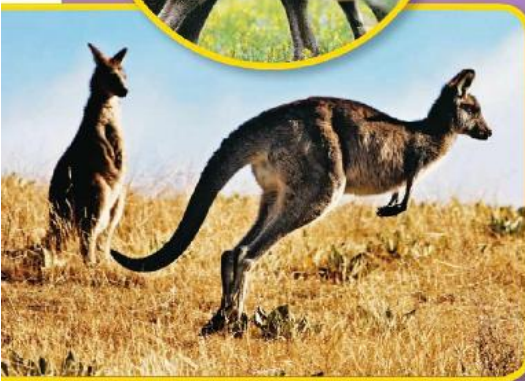
**BROWN STINGRAY**

This relative of sharks uses the sharp barb on the end of its tail to defend itself.



# KANGAROOS

🦘 While balancing on their tails, male kangaroos use their short front legs and strong hind legs to "box" with other males.



🦘 Kangaroos use their powerful hind legs to hop across the landscape at more than 30 miles (48 kilometers) an hour.

**K**angaroos are the only large animals on Earth that travel by hopping across the landscape. Red kangaroos, the largest of all kangaroos, are known to cover up to 25 feet (almost 8 meters) and jump up to 6 feet (almost 2 meters) high in a single leap. Throughout Australia, there are many different types of kangaroos, including the wallaby, a smaller relative. Kangaroos, along with koalas and wombats, belong to the marsupial family of animals. This means that after their young are born, they live in a pouch on the mother's belly until they are old enough to live on their own. At birth, a baby kangaroo is only about the size of a cherry.

**HABITAT** Kangaroos live in many different environments throughout Australia. They can be found in forests and grasslands, as well as in the desert of interior Australia and the tropical forests of northern Australia. Kangaroos live in groups, called mobs, of only a few members or as many as 100 animals.

**DIET** Kangaroos are herbivores, meaning they eat only plant material. Much like cattle and sheep, they graze mainly on grasses, but also eat leaves, shrubs, and twigs. They have specially adapted teeth for chewing grasses and stems.

## SURVIVAL

Kangaroos are found throughout Australia, but they are increasingly at risk due to loss of habitat as humans develop more and more land. In addition, kangaroo meat is becoming a popular human food.



## FACTS AT A GLANCE

**HABITAT** Only in Australia in the wild; adapted to various environments, including forests, grasslands, and deserts

**LIFESPAN** Up to 23 years in the wild

**SIZE** 3 to 5 feet (1 to almost 2 meters) tall

**DIET** Grasses, leaves, shrubs, twigs

🦘 A young kangaroo, called a joey, peeks from its mother's pouch. Babies spend up to 9 months in the pouch, living on the mother's milk.



AUSTRALIA

ANIMAL BITES

KANGAROOS HAVE  
PLENTY OF **NICKNAMES.**

A **FEMALE** IS CALLED  
A DOE, FLYER, JILL, OR ROO.

A **MALE** KANGAROO IS  
CALLED A BUCK,  
BOOMER, JACK, OR OLD MAN.



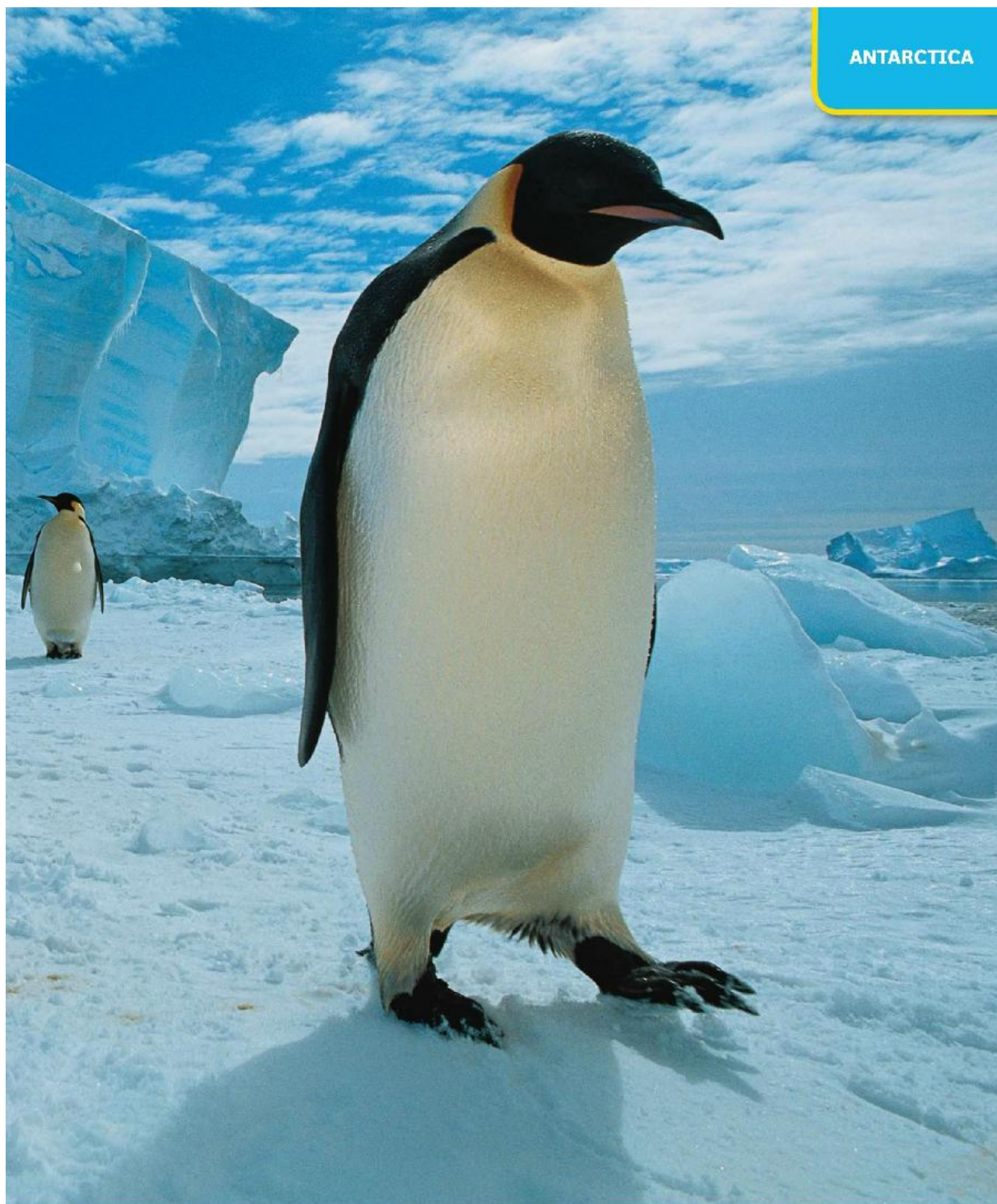
EMPEROR PENGUINS  
**CAN'T FLY,**  
BUT THEY SURE CAN SWIM.  
THESE PENGUINS  
**DIVE DEEPER** THAN  
ANY OTHER BIRD—UP TO  
**1,850** FEET  
(565 METERS).



# ANTARCTICA

**A**ntarctica is 5,100,000 square miles (13,209,000 square kilometers) in area. It ranks fifth among all the continents and makes up almost 9 percent of Earth's land area. About 98 percent of Antarctica is buried beneath vast ice sheets that are nearly 3 miles (5 kilometers) thick in places. Despite forbidding cold and darkness for part of the year, Antarctica has many animals, including these **Emperor Penguins** that live on the coastal ice and water of Antarctica.







Where Animals Live in

# ANTARCTICA

**A**lthough most of Antarctica lies under thick ice sheets and about half of the year is spent in darkness, the coastal ice and waters surrounding the continent are home to a wide variety of animal life.

**KRILL** Although they average only 2 inches (5 centimeters) long, these tiny sea creatures are a very important part of the global food chain, providing food for fish, birds, and whales.

**LEOPARD SEAL** These seals are named for their spots, which resemble those of a leopard. They are fierce predators that use their powerful jaws to capture smaller seals, fish, and squid.

**WHALES** These ocean giants are Earth's largest animals. They live on a diet of krill, consuming up to 4 tons daily. **Blue Whales** are the largest of all whales and live 80 to 90 years. **Humpback Whales** are known for their songs, which can be heard for great distances through the world's oceans.

**EMPEROR PENGUIN** The largest of all penguins, these flightless birds, the only animals that spend winters in Antarctica, huddle together to avoid the frigid temperatures of the continent.

**SOUTH POLAR SKUA** This bird, known for its powerful flight, is a fierce defender of its nesting territory. It feeds mainly on krill, small fish, and penguin eggs and chicks.

**SNOW PETREL** These birds are named for their snow-white feathers. They feed by skimming the surface of the cold ocean waters.

Snow Petrel

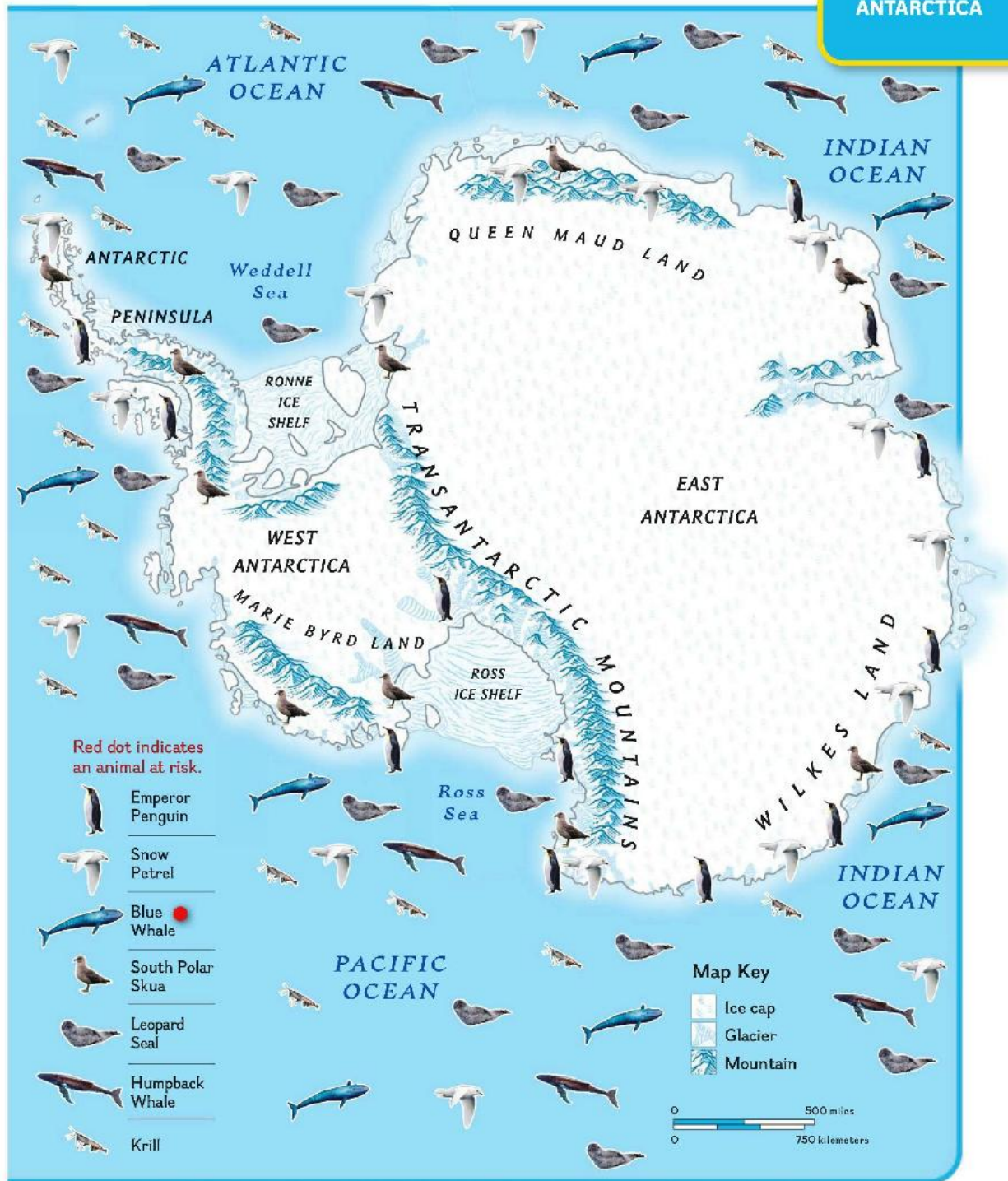
Blue Whale

South Polar Skua

Leopard Seal

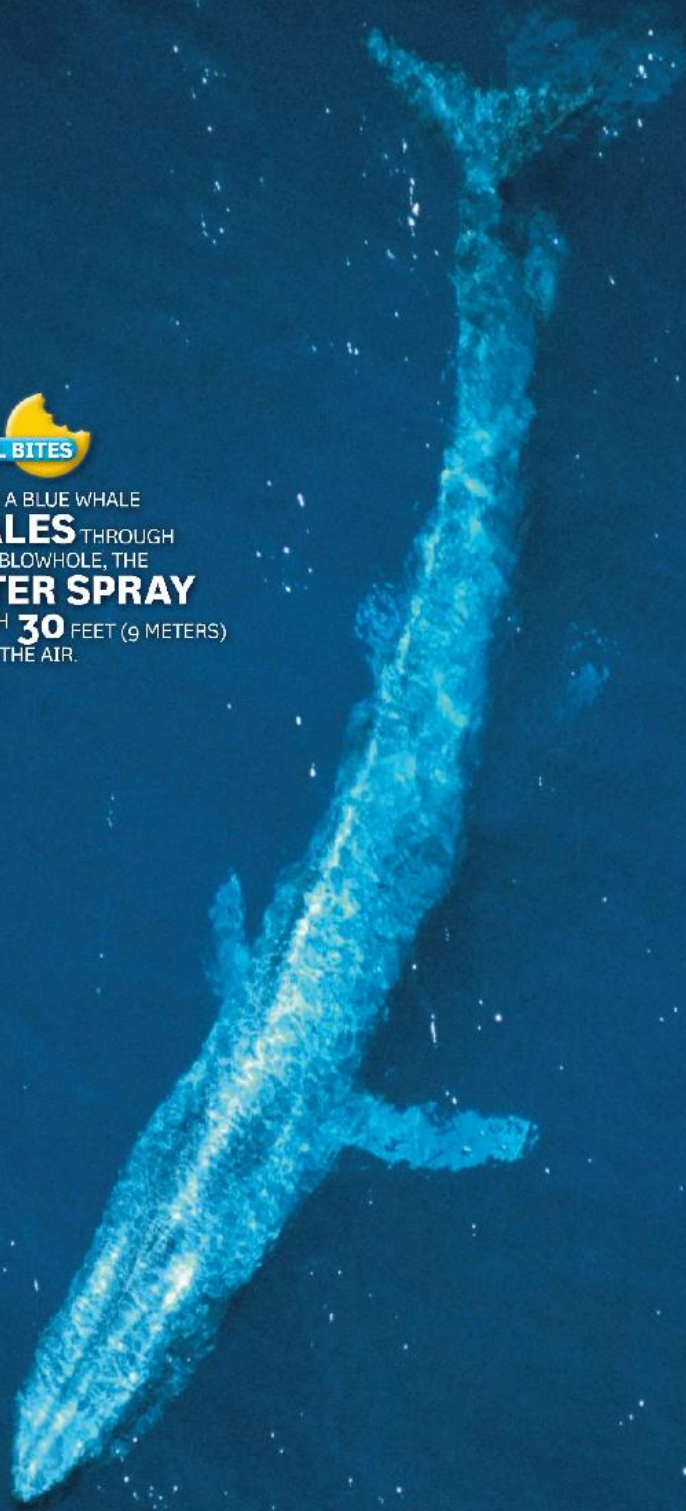
Humpback Whale

Krill







WHEN A BLUE WHALE  
**EXHALES** THROUGH  
ITS BLOWHOLE, THE  
**WATER SPRAY**  
CAN REACH **30** FEET (9 METERS)  
INTO THE AIR.



# BLUE WHALES

 A blue whale, seen from above, can remain underwater for up to 20 minutes.



 Huge triangular tail fins, called flukes, rise in the air as this blue whale dives.

**T**he blue whale is the largest animal that has ever lived on Earth. These giants of the deep live in every ocean, moving through the water at more than 5 miles (8 kilometers) an hour. Their seasonal migrations can take them thousands of miles.

**HABITAT** Blue whales are found in all of Earth's oceans, including the waters around Antarctica, sometimes referred to as the Southern Ocean. They spend summers feeding in cold waters at high latitudes and migrate in winter toward low latitudes, where they breed.

**DIET** Blue whales live almost entirely on tiny creatures called krill. An adult may eat as many as 40 million krill in a single day. Whales catch their food by diving into a school of krill with their mouths wide open. Then they squeeze out the water and swallow the krill, along with any fish or crustaceans that were also caught.

**SURVIVAL** Blue whales were once threatened by the whaling industry. Since the 1960s, hunting blue whales has been banned, but they are still considered endangered. Changing ocean temperatures associated with global warming may pose a new risk by reducing the supply of krill.



 Pleated skin on a blue whale's throat and belly expands to take in huge amounts of water and krill while feeding.



## FACTS AT A GLANCE

**HABITAT** Earth's oceans; feeding in polar regions in summer; migrating to the Equator as winter approaches.

**LIFESPAN** An average of 80 to 90 years in the wild

**SIZE** 82 to 105 feet (25 to 32 meters) long

**DIET** Shrimplike creatures called krill

## Glossary

**Adapted/adaptation:** changing to fit an environment

**Animal at risk:** animals that are in danger of no longer being found in the wild because of loss of habitat or danger from humans

**Canopy:** the layer of a rain forest under the emergent layer. Trees in this layer of the rain forest grow from 65 to 130 feet (20 to 40 m) tall.

**Carnivore:** a meat-eating animal

**Climate:** average weather conditions of a region

**Coniferous forest:** evergreen, needleleaf trees that bear seeds in cones

**Contiguous:** touching along an unbroken boundary

**Continent:** one of the seven large pieces of land on Earth. These include North America, South America, Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, and Antarctica

**Coral reef:** an underwater formation made of skeletons of coral and other natural substances

**Deciduous forest:** trees, such as oak and maple, that lose their leaves in the cold season

**Deforestation:** the process of cutting down forests

**Delta:** a triangle-shaped piece of land made of mud and sand at the mouth of a river

**Ecosystem:** a system of living things that live together and interact with their environment

**Emergent layer:** the tallest layer of a rain forest that grows above the canopy. Trees in this layer of the rain forest grow up to 270 feet (82 m) tall.

**Environment:** the air, water, plants, and animals that make up the natural life in an area

**Extinction:** the loss of one or more forms of life

**Food web:** the group of food chains that interact in an ecosystem

**Forest floor:** the bottom layer of a rain forest where fallen leaves, branches, stems and other natural materials are found

**Global warming:** warming of the Earth's air and water due in part to air pollution

**Grassland:** land covered in grasses instead of shrubs and trees

**Growing season:** the part of the year when it is warm enough for plants to grow

**Habitat:** a plant or animal's natural home

**Herbivore:** a plant-eating animal

**High latitude:** the part of Earth's surface that is closer to the North or South Pole

**Ice cap:** a thick layer of ice on land that flows out from its center

**Island:** land that is completely surrounded by water

**Low latitude:** the part of Earth's surface that is closer to the Equator

**Majestic:** extremely beautiful

**Mammal:** a warm-blooded animal that has hair and produces milk to feed its young

**Mangrove:** trees or shrubs in tropical areas that grow shallow salt water

**Monsoon:** winds that change direction seasonally, bringing heavy rain in summer

**Omnivore:** an animal that eats both plants and meat

**Peninsula:** land that sticks out into a body of water and is almost completely surrounded by water

**Plateau:** a broad, elevated area of flat land

**Pollinate:** to move pollen from one plant or flower to another

**Predator:** an animal that hunts and kills another animal for food

**Prey:** an animal that is hunted and killed by another animal for food

**Pride:** a group of lions

**Rain forest:** an area of forest with tall trees near the Equator that receives heavy rainfall

**Reptile:** a cold-blooded animal that has skin covered with scales or bony plates

**Scavenger:** an animal that feeds on the remains of dead animals

**Shrub layer:** layer of the rain forest below the understory with low-growing plants

**Species:** a group of plants or animals that share common characteristics

**Temperate:** an area of mild climate that does not have extremely hot or extremely cold weather

**Temperature:** the degree of hotness or coldness of an environment

**Tundra:** a region at high latitude or high elevation that has cold temperatures and low vegetation

**Understory:** trees and shrubs found between a forest canopy and the ground

**Vegetation:** the plants that live in a particular environment

**Vulnerable:** animals that are at risk of becoming endangered

**Wetland:** land that is either covered or soaked by water, such as swamps, for at least part of the year

**Woodland:** land covered with trees and shrubs

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**Defenders of Wildlife**  
<http://www.kidsplanet.org/>

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**National Geographic Atlas Web Site**  
<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/kids-world-atlas/>

**National Geographic Kids**  
<http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/Animals/>

**The National Zoo**  
<http://nationalzoo.si.edu/Audiences/kids/>

**San Diego Zoo**  
<http://www.sandiegozoo.org/kids/index.html>

**World Wildlife Fund**  
[http://www.panda.org/about\\_our\\_earth/](http://www.panda.org/about_our_earth/)

**Yahoo Kids**  
<http://kids.yahoo.com/animals>

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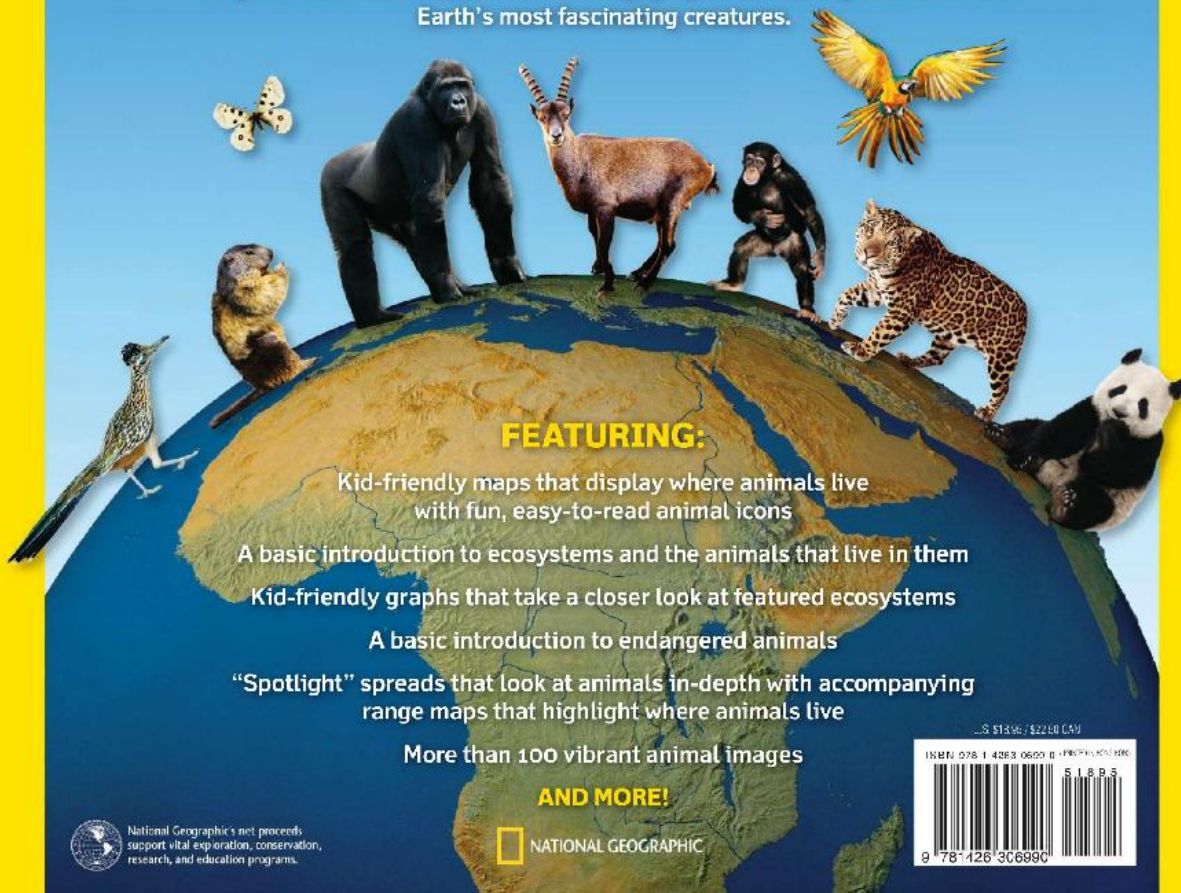






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