

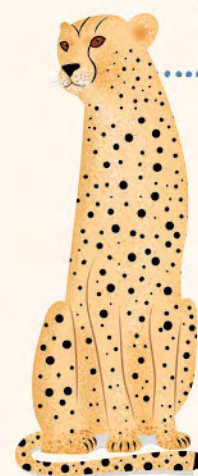
# THE WORLD'S FASTEST ANIMALS

Let us begin in high gear. Some of the animals you will read about are a match for a super-fast sports car. We are about to hold a great race, which will show us for sure which creature is the world's fastest.



## \* RACEHORSE

A racehorse is bred and trained to run fast. It has 252 bones in a huge, muscular body that weighs **600 kg**.



## \* CHEETAH

A beast of prey, the cheetah would be happy to see some of its rivals in today's competition on the menu. We must hope that the race will end with the full number of competitors. A cheetah reaches speeds of up to **120 km/h** – making it as quick as a car driving on a motorway.

## \* BROWN HARE

Although it inhabits mainly fields and edges of forests in Europe, the brown hare can also be found in Asia and elsewhere. It feeds on herbs and buds and tends to travel at around **40 km/h**. In an emergency, though, it can run almost twice as fast.



## \* OSTRICH

The flightless ostrich is the world's largest living bird and quickest creature on two legs. It lives in Africa. Its typical speed is **55 km/h**, although it can briefly maintain a speed of **90 km/h**.



## \* PRONGHORN

The pronghorn, which lives in North America, is aptly named: its horns are shaped like prongs. One of the world's fastest mammals, it can reach a speed of **80-90 km/h** and maintain it for many kilometres. The pronghorn is a great long-distance athlete.

## \* FASTEST HUMAN

The fastest recorded speed achieved by a human is **44.72 km/h**. This record is held by Jamaican athlete Usain Bolt, whose discipline was the 100 metres sprint. Shortly, we will see how Bolt's achievement compares with those of our planet's fastest creatures.



And the first to reach is the cheetah...



# RECORD-BREAKING RUNNERS

1



CHEETAH  
**120 km/h**

2



OSTRICH  
**90 km/h**

3



PRONGHORN  
**80-90 km/h**

4



HORSE  
**60 km/h**

5



HARE  
**40-80 km/h**

6



FASTEST HUMAN  
**44,72 km/h**

# WHAT ABOUT THE LITTLE ONES?

That's quite enough of the giants. After all, the very smallest also have a right to life. Let us look now at creatures that haven't grown much. If you happen to be in their vicinity, be careful not to tread on them. They have their records, too, you know – concerning how small they are.

## RECORDS HELD BY THE ETRUSCAN SHREW

By mass, the smallest known mammal. Though tiny, it can jump a distance of 20 centimetres.

### \* ETRUSCAN SHREW

At only **2 grams** (the weight of less than half a bag of sugar), it is the world's smallest mammal in terms of body weight. And as its body is only about **4 centimetres** long, it could fit inside a matchbox comfortably. This shrew has a life span of about one year. We find it in Europe, Africa and certain parts of Asia.



### \* BUMBLEBEE BAT

This bat is the world's smallest mammal in terms of body size; at only **3 centimetres** long, it is not much bigger than a human fingernail. It lives in Thailand and Burma.

## RECORD HELD BY THE EASTERN PYGMY POSSUM

It can sleep for over a year.

### \* EASTERN PYGMY POSSUM

It lives in Australia and Tasmania, weighs about **25 grams** and is a little less than **10 centimetres** long. Although tiny, in terms of body size it is not the very smallest mammal. It holds a different interesting record, however. In order to save energy from the food its body has taken in, it falls into a very long sleep.



# MOST BEAUTIFUL YOUNG ANIMALS

The very smallest are lovely, aren't they? So let us stay with little cuties for a while. These may not be the world's smallest, but for many readers they are the most beautiful. So here there are – the world's cutest young animals.

### \* YOUNG GORILLA

At birth, a gorilla weighs about **2 kg**. Its mother takes care of it until it is about **3 years old**. Gorillas are brought up by their parents in a similar way to humans, and they are highly intelligent. Some gorillas kept in a zoo can communicate in sign language. The western gorilla can live up to 60 years.



### \* YOUNG FENNEC

This lovely pointy-eared creature is most active at night, as it prefers a lower air temperature. It reaches adulthood at around **9 months** of age.



### \* GREY MOUSE LEMUR

The grey mouse lemur is one of the world's smallest primates – in adulthood it is only about **10 centimetres** long. It lives in Madagascar and gives birth to two or three young at a time. Its baby weighs only **6 grams**.



### \* YOUNG MEERKAT

Born blind, it begins to see after about **14 days**. Young are cared for by the whole meerkat colony, comprising up to **30 individuals**.



### \* YOUNG LION

Lions give birth to between one and four cubs at a time. When these cubs grow up, the leader of the pack drives them away: lions must make their own way in life.



## \* YOUNG GOLDEN EAGLE

The female lays two eggs, which she heats with her body for **45 days** before the eggs hatch and lovely, snow-white chicks emerge. Sadly, in many cases only the stronger sibling survives; in the fight for food, the weaker is pushed from the nest by the stronger. The golden eagle has a life span of about **25 years**.



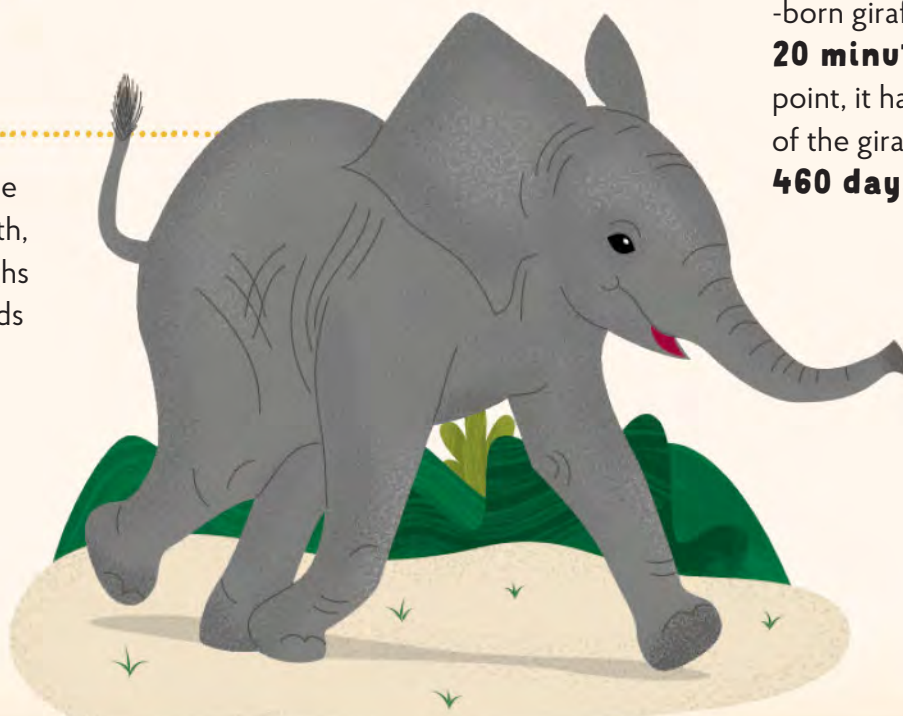
## \* YOUNG EMPEROR PENGUIN

The female presents one of her eggs to the male, who keeps it warm between his eggs for a period of 64 days. An adult emperor penguin can dive to a depth of over **500 metres** and stay underwater for **30 minutes**. Some penguins can achieve an underwater speed of **40 km/h**. Where they live, the temperature can drop to **-40°C**, so it's not surprising they have the densest feathers of all birds.



## \* YOUNG ELEPHANT

An unborn elephant grows inside its mother for 22 months. At birth, it is over **1 metre** tall and weighs around **100 kg**. The female feeds her calf for 2 years, and she will do all she can to protect it from danger. Elephants live for about **70 years**.

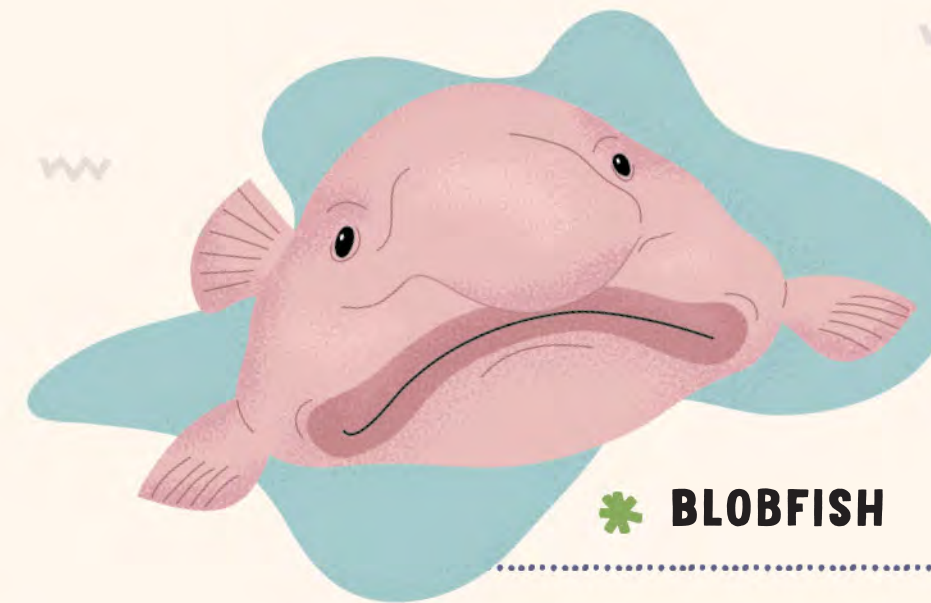


## \* YOUNG GIRAFFE

About **2 metres** tall, a new-born giraffe can stand within **20 minutes** of its birth. To that point, it has grown in the body of the giraffe mum for up to **460 days**.

# THE UGLIEST ANIMALS

What a fascinating place our world is! It contains animals large and small, animals fast and slow, animals that weigh tons and animals that weigh but a few grams. Alongside the magnificent creatures, however, we find some that are less than beautiful. But these, too, have a place in the bizarre animal world. Let us look at them now.



## \* BLOBFISH

This slimy fish is the **winner of the World's Ugliest Animal competition**. Too lazy to hunt for food, it just lies on the seabed with its mouth open, swallowing up whatever comes its way.

## \* PROBOSCIS MONKEY

This monkey with a cucumber-shaped nose lives on the island of Borneo. You wouldn't be the first to laugh at its appearance. The nose of the male is 10 centimetres long. For comparison, if the human nose and body were in the same proportion, the nose would be almost **30 centimetres long**.



## \* AYE-AYE

It has ears like a bat's, lives in Madagascar and is the world's **largest nocturnal prosimian**. Its long fingers end in nails. It uses its longest, middle finger to pick out its food – larvae from tree bark, the milk of the coconut and the contents of birds' eggs.

## \* PHILIPPINE TARSIER

This small, large-eyed animal comes from the rainforests of the Philippines. Active at night, it is about the same size as the human palm. It weighs about **100 grams** and can jump a distance of **5 metres**.





## \* UAKARI

The uakari is another monkey that would stand no chance in a beauty contest. It is something over **50 centimetres** long and immediately recognized by its red face. The darker the uakari's face, the healthier it is. Indeed, the male chooses a mate for the colour of her face.



## \* WESTERN LONG-BEAKED ECHIDNA

We find another oddity of the animal world on the island of New Guinea. The western long-beaked echidna looks a bit like a hedgehog with a bird's beak. A critically endangered nocturnal creature, it feeds on insects. As it is a mammal, its young are nourished on mother's milk. But unlike most other mammals, which give birth to live young, the echidna lays eggs from which its offspring hatch.

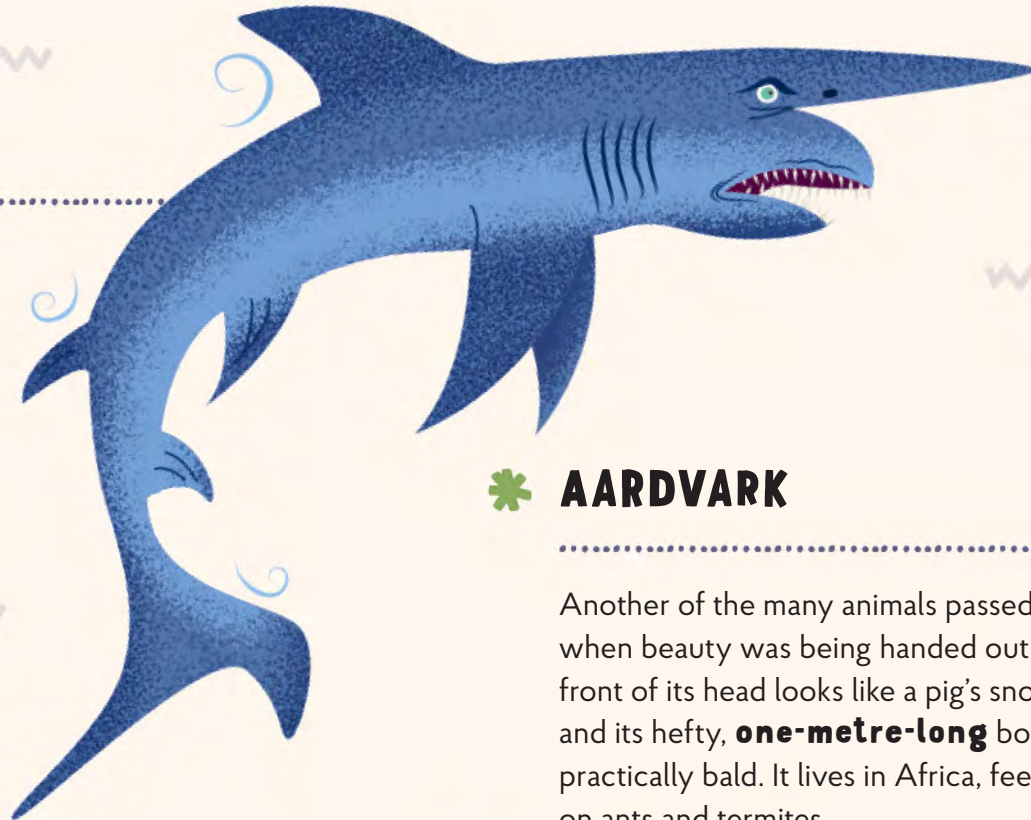


## \* AMAZONIAN MANATEE

The Amazonian manatee lives in the Amazon Basin, is **2.5 metres long** and weighs **300 kilograms**. It spends half the day sleeping underwater. When it sleeps, half of its brain remains active, allowing it to come to the surface and breathe.

## \* GOBLIN SHARK

The strange shark with a bayonet on its head is the goblin. It is a living fossil, which means that its appearance hasn't changed for tens of millions of years.



## \* AARDVARK

Another of the many animals passed over when beauty was being handed out. The front of its head looks like a pig's snout, and its hefty, **one-metre-long** body is practically bald. It lives in Africa, feeding on ants and termites.



## \* PIG-NOSED TURTLE

This species of turtle is easily recognized by its nose, which ends in a snout like a pig's. Females lay up to **30 eggs** in hollows in the sand of the riverbank. It lives in Australia and on the island of New Guinea.



## \* AXOLOTL

The larva of the axolotl can grow to be **35 centimetres** long. Native to the lakes of Mexico, if it happens to lose a limb, it can generate a new one.

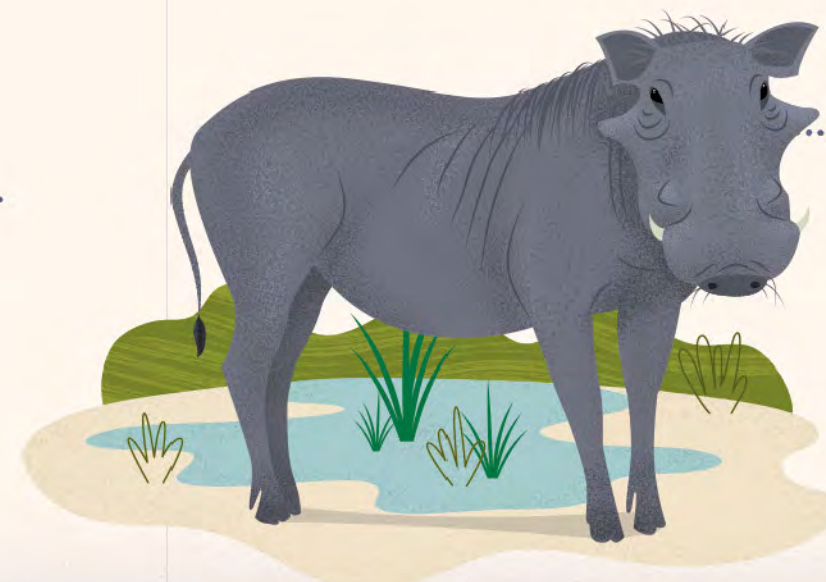


## \* PLATYPUS

Like the echidna, the platypus is a very odd-looking, egg-laying mammal. It has a broad, flat tail and the front of its head looks rather like a duck's. It lives only in eastern Australia. Its body temperature is only **32°C**.

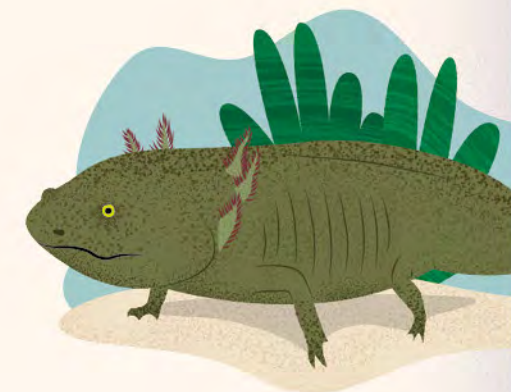
## \* NAKED MOLE-RAT

Native to Africa, this odd rodent is exceptional for being born in a nest shared by **300 other individuals** of its species. Young are cared for in the group. It uses its large, protruding teeth to dig out a labyrinth of corridors underground, in which everything – including a precisely demarcated larder, bedroom and toilet – has its place. The mole-rat is almost blind.



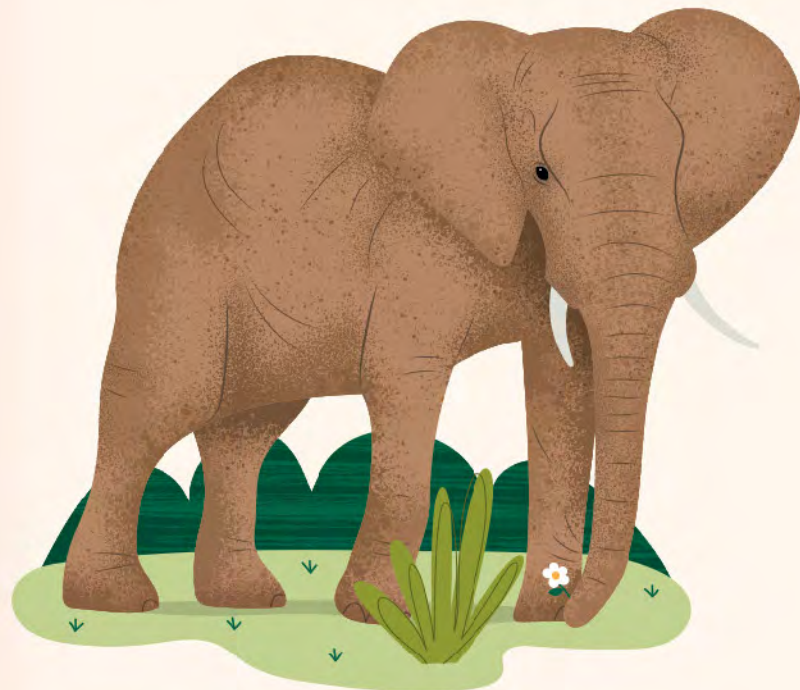
## \* DESERT WARTHOG

This strange wild pig lives in Africa. It is about **80 centimetres** tall and **1.5 metres** long, and it weighs **150 kilograms**. Its face is adorned by three pairs of warts. The tusks protruding from its upper jaw can be **60 centimetres** long. A second pair of tusks growing from the lower jaw are about half that length.



# RECORD HOLDERS IN LIFE SPAN

The average life span of the human is a little less than eighty years; only occasionally do we meet a person who has lived to be over a hundred. The longest-lived human died at 114 years of age. But some of our planet's creatures go way beyond that.



## THE INDIAN ELEPHANT AND THE BOWHEAD WHALE

are the mammals with the longest life span. The oldest known bowhead whale lived for 211 years.



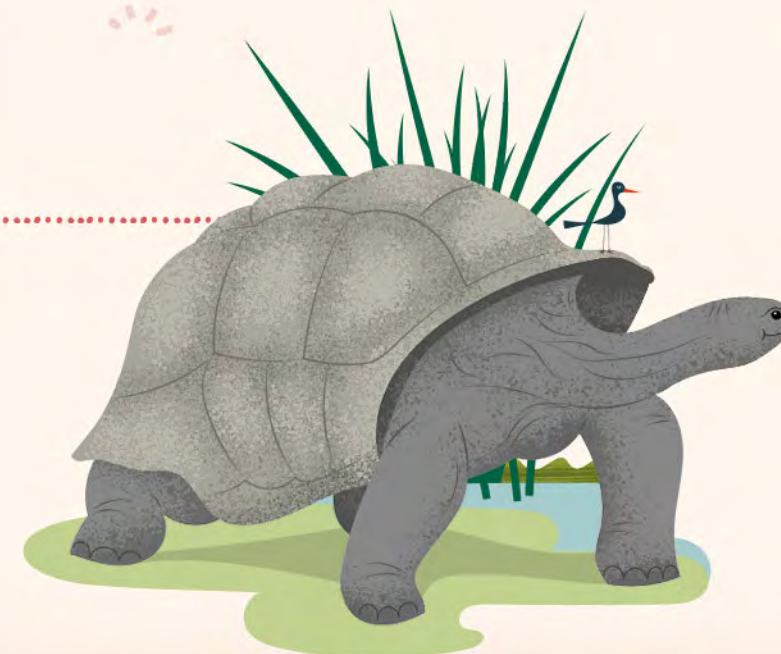
## \* KOI

The Japanese keep carp for decoration. The koi commonly lives for about **50 years**, but there is one known case of a koi living **226 years**.



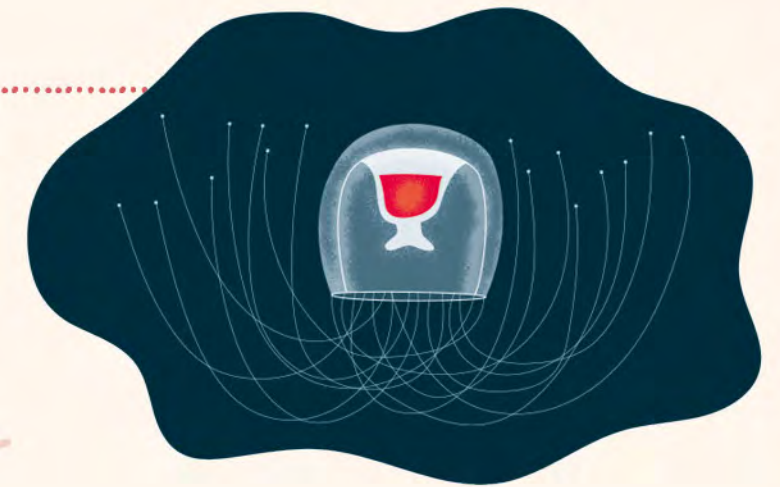
## \* GIANT TORTOISE

This tortoise weighs 200 kilograms. It lives in the Seychelles, commonly for **160 years**. A tortoise called Adwaita, which was taken by British sailors from its native islands to Calcutta Zoo, lived to the age of **255 years**.



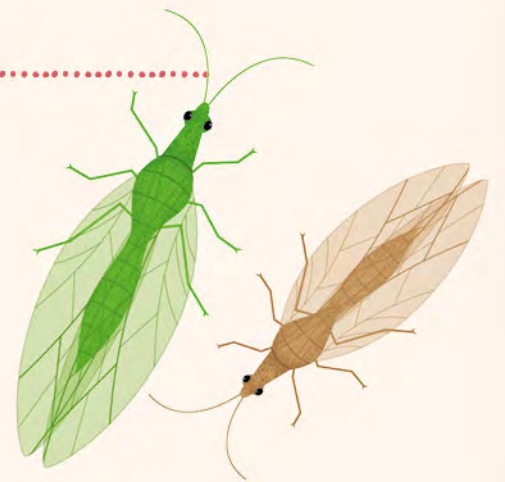
## \* THE IMMORTAL JELLYFISH

For its ability in an emergency to reverse its life cycle, the creature with the Latin name *Turritopsis dohrnii* is known as 'the immortal jellyfish'. Imagine if a human in distress could return to their childhood! It sounds incredible, but this is exactly what this jellyfish can do.



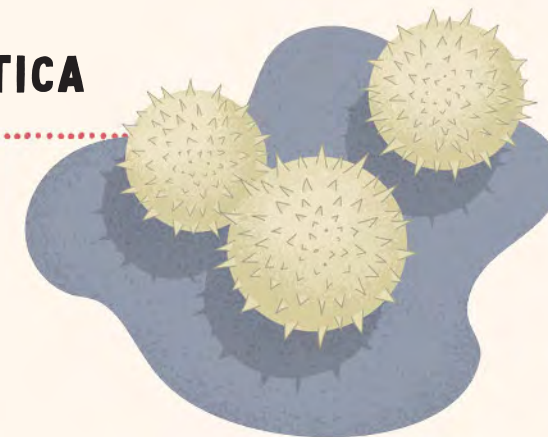
## \* MAYFLY

Now let us look at the other end of the life-span scale. The winged insect known as the mayfly lives for a record short time – only **1 – 3 days**.



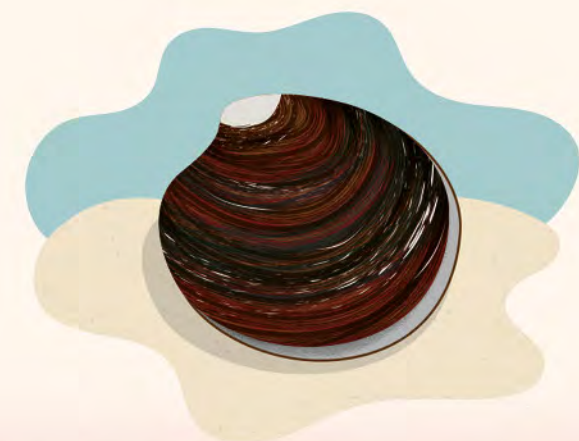
## \* CINACHYRA ANTARCTICA

he species of sponge *Cinachyra antarctica* lives in the cold seas of the continent it is named for. It is known to have lived for **1550 years**.



## \* OCEAN QUAHOG

This species of marine bivalve lives in the Atlantic Ocean for hundreds of years. The oldest individual specimen lived **507 years**.





The animal world has practically infinite variety. The powers of many of its creatures are found in the human world only in made-up superheroes. The world's fastest animals can move at the speed of a fast car, while there's one small creature with the strength of a trained weightlifter. That's right, the world's strongest animal can lift many times its own weight! And the longest-lived animal goes on for several hundred years. Fastest, slowest, strongest, largest, smallest, longest living, furthest jumping, most dangerous, most beautiful, ugliest, deepest diving... These and many other record-holders of the animal kingdom fill this book with unexpected, fascinating facts. So join us and immerse yourself in the world of animal supers!

**The world's fastest animals**  
**Record-breaking flyers/runners/swimmers/jumpers**  
**The greatest slowcoaches**  
**The world's strongest animals**  
**The largest animals**  
**The smallest of the small**  
**The most beautiful young animals**  
**The ugliest animals on the planet**  
**The most dangerous animals**  
**Record holders in life span**

