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# Weird and Wonderful Animals, or Why Don't Ostriches Fly?



## Atlantic mudskipper

# Fish which you will encounter on dry land

The first animal that Fido met on his journey wasn't a bird but fish - and what fish! "You are upset that you cannot fly and they used to laugh at me because I crawl on dry land. They call me Atlantic mudskipper!"



HOW  
BIG AM I?

## Hardy stayer →

Did you know that fresh water fish cannot stand sea water and that sea water fish cannot live in a pond? As long as the water is liquid... We don't mind either.



## ← Courageous tree climber

Who would have thought that fish can go hunting for food on a tree? Climbing a tree trunk is a common exercise for me before lunch. However, as soon as I hunt down my food I have to quickly return into the water.



## ← The king of mangrove

My home is in the estuaries of rivers. I wallow in such places in swamps and among the mighty roots of trees and bushes which grow directly out of the water - they are called mangroves.

## Sharp-sighted hunter →

Our bulging eyes serve us really well while hunting. Thanks to them we can see into all directions. And we also notice in time snakes or predatory fish which would love to feast on us.



## ← Fish acrobat

I swim peacefully like any other ordinary fish most of the time. But when I use my fins I can also be soon cheerfully jumping in the mud on the banks. I can retain water in my gills and I also partially breathe air just like you.



## ← Fearless fighter

Watch how scary I look when I want to discourage a cheeky rival! We, mudskippers, guard our territory and attack anybody who would dare to meddle in our lives!



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MUDSKIPPERS ARE UNUSUAL FISH WHICH CAN CRAWL AND HUNT ON DRY LAND. THEIR SKIN ALMOST DOESN'T DRY OUT AND THEY ARE ABLE TO RETAIN A SUPPLY OF WATER IN THEIR GILLS. THEY BOUNCE OFF THE GROUND WITH THE HELP OF THEIR STRONG LITTLE FINS.

„It looks like we, ostriches, are not the only ones who differ so much from their relatives," occurred to Fido when he said good-bye to the mudskipper. Nevertheless, his determination to learn to fly was already compelling him to venture further...



Bonnethead shark

Shark which is almost a vegetarian

Fido has been sailing in the sea for several days when suddenly he spotted a shark! He froze with fear when he saw the shark's mouth coming to the surface... "Hola, amigo! Have you got any seagrass? I am the bonnethead shark. And don't worry, I am not going to eat you!"

Scientific celebrity →

We are shy and it is not our style to show off. That's probably why the scientists until recently had no idea that we, as the only species of shark, are omnivores. And now they are greatly interested in us...

← Bright observer

Thanks to our eyes which are wide apart and positioned at the ends of the "hammer" we can see perfectly well into all directions.

Eternal swimmer →

There is only one thing in which we don't differ from the majority of other sharks: we have to swim forward all our lives as it is only during movement forward that oxygen streams into our gills and enables us to breathe.

WHICH OTHER SHARKS CAN GIVE US A BIG SURPRISE?

SHARKS HAVE INHABITED SEAS SINCE PREHISTORIC TIMES AND THEY ARE FEARED PREDATORS. SOME OF THEIR SPECIES DO NOT HESITATE IN EXCEPTIONAL CASES TO ATTACK HUMANS BUT MOST OF THEIR FOOD CONSISTS OF FISH.

Fido felt sorry for the bonnethead shark because it isn't as scary as the other sharks. But the more he was thinking about it the more he could see that the shark isn't bothered by being different. That's interesting, he thought.



← Seagrass lover

Me, being a bloodthirsty killer as they say about sharks? Definitely not. The biggest treat for me is seagrass. More than half of my diet consists of seagrass. And I only catch crabs or small fish.

SO WHAT IS IT THAT I EAT?



HOW DID I ASTONISH THE SCIENTISTS?



← Good friend

I would put my fin into the fire for my friends! We live in shoals where we communicate without words: by shaking our heads, snapping our jaws, colliding with each other, arching ourselves and so on.



Master of messages →

We are capable of releasing a special liquid into the water which tells other bonnethead sharks from far away that we are here. "Go away, this is my territory!" is the message for our fellow sharks.





## Galápagos penguin

### The Arctic explorer who came to like the tropics

One day Fido arrived at a picturesque tropical island and made himself comfortable in the shadow of the palm trees. He expected all sorts of creatures – but penguins?!

#### Fighting against adversity →

Apart from hunters, big animals and polluted environment we have been in the recent years killed mainly by a phenomenon called El Niño. The sea gets warmer and not many fish survive – and we are, therefore, losing our food.

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THE WORLD LEARNT ABOUT PENGUINS ONLY THANKS TO THE STORIES OF SAILORS WHO WENT ON ADVENTUROUS EXPEDITIONS IN 16TH CENTURY TO THE COLD WATERS AROUND SOUTH AMERICA AND SOUTHERN TIPS OF AFRICA. SAILORS, HOWEVER, THOUGHT FOR A LONG TIME THAT PENGUINS WERE FAT FEATHERED FISH!



#### Always faithful →

When I fall in love I am faithful to my partner for the rest of my life. We care together for our young ones which are born twice or three times a year.



#### ← The equator enthusiast

It is not true that penguins only live in the land of snow and ice around Antarctica. We, the Galápagos penguins, found our home in the warm areas and even directly at the Equator! We sometimes even swim over to the Northern Hemisphere.



#### ↑ The ruler of temperatures

I can only survive in the tropics thanks to the cold sea currents and ingenious “cooling” mechanisms: a special cooling gland next to my beak, short feathers, keeping my wings further away from the body and fast breathing with my beak open.

WHO ELSE LIVES IN THE GALÁPAGOS ISLANDS?

## What is El Niño?

SINCE TIME UNKNOWN A STRANGE PHENOMENON CALLED EL NIÑO HAS BEEN OCCURRING AT THE COAST OF SOUTH AMERICA. THE WATERS GET UNUSUALLY WARM AND FISH, WHICH ARE USUALLY ABUNDANT HERE, DISAPPEAR. IT HAS CONSEQUENCES FOR THE WEATHER AROUND THE GLOBE, AS IT CAN CAUSE BIG DROUGHTS OR DEVASTATING FLOODS. EL NIÑO IS GETTING WORSE WITH THE POLLUTING OF NATURE.



#### ← Smart fisherman

We hunt in big groups. We swim together around a school of fish until confused little fish create a cluster inside of which we can easily swim. Sometimes we also churn up the sand at the bottom on purpose.

#### Small but skilful →

I am one of the smallest penguins in the world. I weigh from 2 to 2.5 kilograms and I average about 50 centimetres in length. In the water, however, I am very swift and agile.



When Fido discovered so many interesting things about the life of the Galápagos penguins he started thinking for a while that being unique might perhaps sometimes be a reason to be proud... But then he continued his journey.



## Grumpy cat which barks

"Miaof! Miaof! Miaof!" Is it a cat or a dog? "I am a manul, what do you want?" growled a small creature grumpily. "I do not like company so quickly before I lose my temper with you."



### Grateful eater ↑

I don't need varied and original food. Half of my diet consists of pikas, creatures resembling rats, and apart from them I also hunt other small rodents.



### Invisible but always alert →

If I didn't want it myself, you would never find me amongst the rocks. It is because I can hide perfectly. My discreet-coloured fur, which also hides my ears, helps me with it.



### ← Master of disguise

My miaouwing is close to dog's barking and my looks resemble a small bear but, surprisingly enough, I am a cat! I look so unusual because I have the thickest and longest fur from all Felidae. even in the deep snow.



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THE FELIDAE ARE, OUT OF ALL PREDATORS, THE ONES THAT PREFER THE MOST CARNIVOROUS WAY OF LIFE. THEREFORE, THEY ARE, WITHOUT ANY EXCEPTIONS, OUTSTANDING HUNTERS – EVEN THE ORDINARY DOMESTIC CAT IS PERFECTLY SUITED TO HUNTING.

### ← The king of temperature extremes

You can find me in Asian steppes where temperatures often change from tiring heat to cruel frost. The temperatures here can differ by 100 degrees Celsius! Thanks to the long fur on my stomach I manage to walk even in the deep snow.

MANUL, WHY DO YOU HAVE SUCH SMALL EARS?



### ← Lone fighter

I am not friends with anybody – animal, man or even another manul. Even my newly born, still blind young ones sometimes hiss and growl at each other – they simply cannot stand anybody next to them.

### Daylight hunter →

I am not a nocturnal creature which is something you can recognize by the fact that unlike other cats I have round pupils which are adapted to daylight.



ALSO OTHER FELIDAE KNOW HOW TO SURPRISE!

"Miof, miaaaaaof! Miaof!" barked manul in the end and Fido realized that it means he should leave his friend alone. Manul is much more interesting than the ordinary cats, admitted the little ostrich.



Pangolin

A mammal with armour made of scales

A strange scaly creature which had its young one resting on its back introduced itself to Fido. "I'm the pangolin and I have just been telling my son about courageous animals. You must be surely one of them!"



A sad record collector →

Unfortunately, some people still today believe that my scales are curable or they even consider me to be a delicacy. I am the most smuggled animal in the world.



← An ant eater

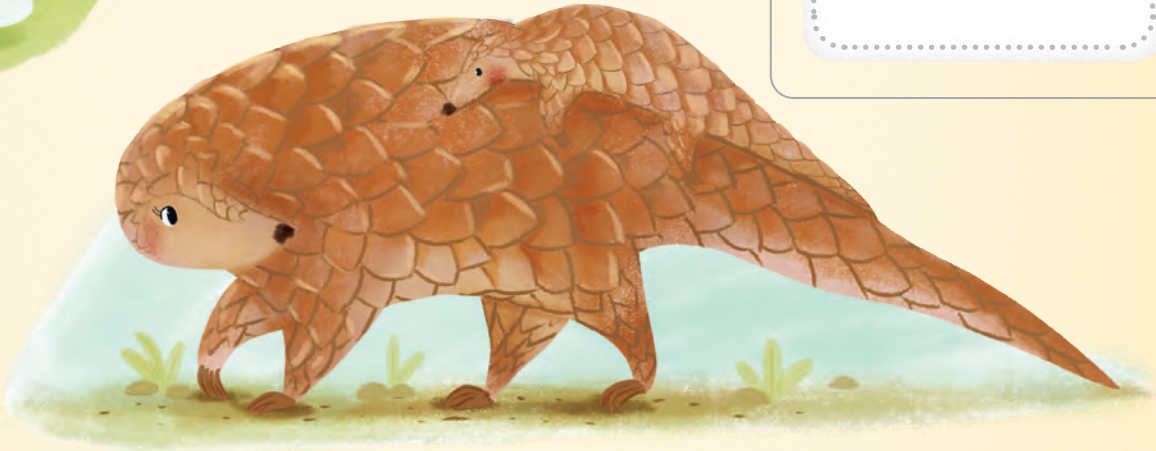
You will find only ants and termites on my plate. I hunt them with the help of my long, sticky tongue. Would you like to try some?

WHAT ACROBATIC SKILL DO I HAVE?



Bus for youngsters →

I carry my young ones on the root of my tail. They enjoy it a lot!



← A living ball

When I am afraid I curl up into a ball and safely hide my bare belly. Nobody can get to me because my scales are firm and sharp. Don't touch me, you fool!



← With bad smell against enemies

I am capable of spraying the predator which is getting ready to attack me with a juice which smells so bad that the enemy immediately runs away!




An artichoke with legs and a tail →

People allegedly nicknamed me "an artichoke on legs" – if only they knew that my scales are cornified hairs! Did you know that my closest relatives are predatory mammals?

\* THE FUR OF MAMMALS IS ADAPTED TO THE WAY THE ANIMAL LIVES. FOR EXAMPLE, THE OTTER'S FUR IS WATERPROOF, SEALS ARE MISSING UNDERFUR SO THAT THEY COULD BE KEPT WARM BY THE THICK LAYER OF FAT AND HEDGEHOGS AND PORCUPINES DEVELOPED PROTECTIVE SPINES AND QUILLS FROM THEIR HAIRS.

"I hope you are not worrying about not being able to fly anymore?" asked the pangolin lady in the end. "No, I am not worrying anymore," confirmed Fido. "I am going back home as I have learnt something important in the world."





The world might seem unfair sometimes, especially if you're an ostrich. Little ostrich Fido cannot deal with the fact that ostriches are flightless birds. So he sets off on a journey into the big wide world to find somebody who will teach him how to fly. But, as fate would have it, he meets all sorts of weird and wonderful creatures instead. All of them are, just like our little hero, a bit different from the others. But more surprisingly, they are all proud of their differences! In this unique encyclopaedia, you will meet the most extraordinary animals that inhabit our planet and learn what makes them stand out from the crowd!