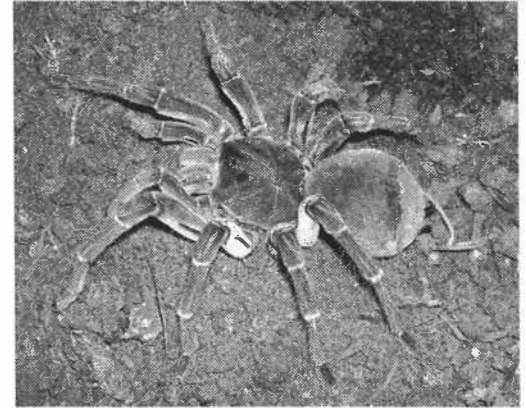


# A Big, Hairy Deal

Imagine trying to step on a spider that is larger than your foot! The goliath tarantula can grow to over 11 inches wide. This giant, hairy spider lives in the rainforests of South America. It bites with one-inch fangs to paralyze its prey. It can take on prey as big as a mouse! The goliath's powerful body and large fangs clearly help it survive. But this spider must also rely on another feature.



The goliath is covered with hairs. When threatened, it will sometimes kick hairs off its abdomen, sending a cloud of them at the intruder. Hairs that get into the intruder's eyes can damage its sight. The sharp, barbed hairs may also work their way into the intruder's skin. Chemicals in the hairs can kill smaller intruders.

Even when the goliath is very weak, its hairs still help it. Molting is a dangerous time for the spider. It must lie on its back for a long time. At first its new body is so soft that an insect could hurt it just by bumping it. So before molting, the goliath places hairs around its burrow. This barrier stops many animals from reaching the spider.

The goliath tarantula's size and fangs may be its most frightening features. But its hairs are its secret weapon.

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## Quiz Questions

1. What is the main idea of this story?

- a. The goliath tarantula relies on its large size, its fangs, and its sharp, barbed hairs.
- b. The goliath tarantula sometimes kicks hairs off its abdomen, sending a cloud of them at an intruder.
- c. Molting is a dangerous time for the goliath tarantula because it must lie on its back for a long time.

2. How does the goliath tarantula paralyze its prey?

- a. It places hair around its burrow.
- b. It bites its prey with one-inch fangs.
- c. It lies on its back for a long time.

3. What does the word **feature** mean in this story?

- a. the main story
- b. a special or important part
- c. to show or present something

4. Why does this tarantula place hairs around its burrow before molting?

\_\_\_ a. to make the burrow softer so that it can lie on its back for a long time

\_\_\_ b. to make a barrier that will protect it while it is weak

\_\_\_ c. to keep the burrow warm while it is molting

5. Why are the goliath tarantula's hairs its "secret weapon"?

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6. Select the best word for each definition.

rely

a hole in the ground

threatened

to depend on

abdomen

in danger

burrow

part of an insect's body

barrier

something that blocks the way

7. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

The goliath tarantula lives in the \_\_\_\_\_ of South America. Its body and large \_\_\_\_\_ help it survive. But another \_\_\_\_\_ helps the goliath tarantula too. Its body is covered with sharp, \_\_\_\_\_ hairs that can be dangerous. These hairs can work their way into the skin of an \_\_\_\_\_ and may cause death.

barbed, burrow, fangs, feature, intruder, molting, rainforests

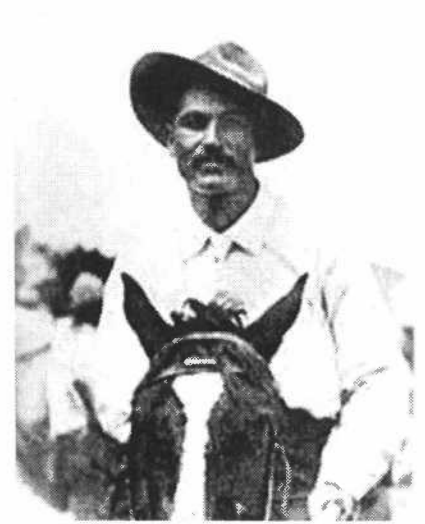
# An Incredible Sacrifice

On November 7, 1907, the fate of a Mexican town rested on the decision of one man. On that day, a train worker named Jesús García was to drive a load of dynamite up a steep mountain to a mine. But as he fired up the train's engine, cinders flew from the smokestack. The cinders landed on the train's load. A box of dynamite started smoking. Soon a fire was spreading.

García saw that the train was close to the town of Nacozari. If the dynamite exploded near the town, many lives would be lost. Five thousand people lived there, including García's family. Fuel tanks and dynamite near the town would magnify the disaster.

García ordered the other train workers to jump off. Then he drove the train at full speed up the winding mountain path, away from town. If he made it to the top of the mountain, he too could jump off the train. Then the train would roll on alone down the other side. But the blast came too soon. García lost his life, but Nacozari was saved.

Mexico honors this incredible sacrifice. November 7 was made a national holiday. Songs, monuments, roads, and postage stamps commemorate García's brave act. And the town that owes its life to Jesús García was renamed Nacozari de García.



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## Quiz Questions

1. What is the main idea of this story?

- a. Jesús García's brave act saved many lives in the town of Nacozari.
- b. Jesús García lost his life driving a load of dynamite up a steep hill.
- c. November 7 is a national holiday in Mexico honoring Jesús García.

2. What was the town of Nacozari renamed?

- a. Jesús García
- b. Nacozari de García
- c. Mexico

3. What does the word **commemorate** mean in this story?

- a. honor
- b. build

\_\_\_ c. sacrifice

4. Why didn't García jump off the train?

\_\_\_ a. He had to get the train to the mine.

\_\_\_ b. He had to drive the train away from the town.

\_\_\_ c. He had to stop the train from blowing up.

5. Why do you think Jesús García made his incredible sacrifice?

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6. Select the best word for each definition.

fate

statues or buildings

incredible

amazing

monuments

make stronger

magnify

a place to get minerals

mine

what will happen

7. Move the events into the correct order.

A box of dynamite started smoking; a fire began to spread.

García lost his life, but Nacozari was saved.

García ordered the other train workers to jump.

García sped up the winding path away from Nacozari.

García was to drive a load of dynamite up to a mine.

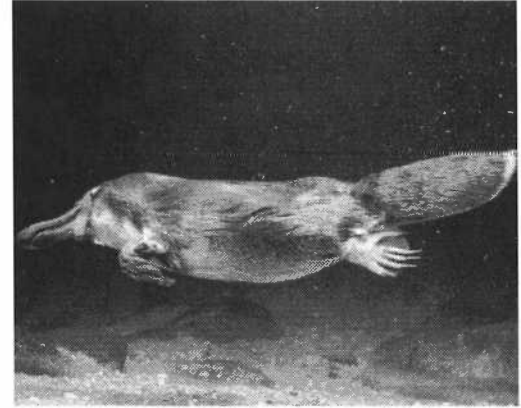
# An Unbelievable Animal

Imagine an animal about the size of a house cat. It has silky, brown fur and a wide, flat tail. It also has webbed feet and a bill shaped like a duck's. Could this animal be real? You have just imagined a platypus!

When scientists first saw a specimen of this strange-looking animal, many thought it might be a hoax. They even examined the bill to see if it had been sewn on. Over time, scientists learned that the platypus is, in fact, a real animal. They also learned that its unique appearance isn't the only thing that sets this animal apart.

The platypus is a mammal. Like other mammals, it breathes air, has hair, and nurses its young. Yet the platypus differs from most mammals in some important ways. The platypus does not give birth to live young. Instead, its tiny babies hatch out of small, leathery eggs. Another difference is the platypus's venomous sting. Few mammals carry venom. However, the male platypus has a venomous claw on each of its back legs. A platypus's sting is very painful and can even kill some animals.

The platypus lives only in Australia. It is shy and spends most of its time sleeping in underground burrows. It's no wonder people once doubted that this extraordinary animal was real.



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## Quiz Questions

1. What is the main idea of this story?

- a. The male platypus has a venomous claw on each of its back legs.
- b. The platypus is a unique and extraordinary mammal.
- c. The platypus is a shy animal that lives underground.

2. What does a platypus spend most of its time doing?

- a. swimming
- b. digging
- c. sleeping

3. What does the word **unique** mean in this story?

- a. not like others
- b. imaginary

\_\_\_ c. ordinary

4. Why did scientists originally think that the platypus was a hoax?

\_\_\_ a. It did not give birth to live young.

\_\_\_ b. It breathed air, had hair, and nursed its young.

\_\_\_ c. It looked unusual, and they had not seen one before.

5. Why is a platypus hard to find?

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6. Select the best word for each definition.

examined

feeds with milk

webbed

connected by a layer of skin

leathery

looked at a thing carefully

nurses

tough but easy to bend

burrows

tunnels in the ground

7. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

When scientists first saw the platypus, they thought it might be a \_\_\_\_\_. The platypus has \_\_\_\_\_ feet and a bill shaped like a duck's. It is a mammal but does not give birth to \_\_\_\_\_. Instead, its tiny babies hatch out of small, \_\_\_\_\_ eggs. Another difference between the platypus and other mammals is that the male platypus has a \_\_\_\_\_ sting.

doubted, hoax, leathery, live young, nurses, venomous, webbed

# Black Mamba

In Africa, where the black mamba lives, there are many frightening stories about this deadly snake. Some stories say it uses its tremendous speed to chase people for miles. Others claim it can stand on its tail and rise as high as a person's head. Still others say it plans attacks on humans by going into their homes. These stories are all inaccurate. But it's easy to see how they originated.

The black mamba is indeed fast. It can move at speeds of over ten miles per hour. But this snake does not pursue people. Actually, it tries to avoid humans. The black mamba generally uses its speed to flee from enemies.



A black mamba can elevate a third of its body off the ground. This ability does not mean it can stand as tall as a person. Most black mambas are about nine feet long, so they can raise their bodies about three feet.

When people construct houses in the black mamba's habitat, the snake sometimes finds its way inside. It isn't planning an attack, but it may bite a person if it feels cornered. Unless the person receives treatment, the black mamba's venom can kill in less than an hour.

Stories may exaggerate this snake's abilities. Still, it is clear why people fear the black mamba!

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## Quiz Questions

1. What is the main idea of this story?

- a. The black mamba is very fast and is able to move at speeds of over ten miles per hour.
- b. When people construct houses in the black mamba's habitat, the snake sometimes finds its way inside.
- c. Most of the stories about the black mamba are inaccurate, but it is easy to see how they originated.

2. How high can a black mamba raise its head off the ground?

- a. three feet
- b. nine feet
- c. ten feet

3. What does the word **elevate** mean in this story?

- a. to gain speed
- b. to attack

\_\_\_ c. to lift

4. Why might a black mamba go into someone's house?

\_\_\_ a. It might wait there to surprise a person when he or she comes home.

\_\_\_ b. It might wander into a house that was built in its habitat.

\_\_\_ c. It might chase someone inside the house.

5. Why do people fear the black mamba?

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6. Select the best word for each definition.

tremendous

most of the time

treatment

started or came to be

generally

very large or great

originated

place where something lives

habitat

something that fixes a problem

7. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

Stories \_\_\_\_\_ the black mamba's abilities. This snake does not \_\_\_\_\_ people.

Actually, it tries to \_\_\_\_\_ people. But people construct houses in the black mamba's

\_\_\_\_\_, and the snake sometimes goes inside. If the black mamba feels \_\_\_\_\_,

it may bite.

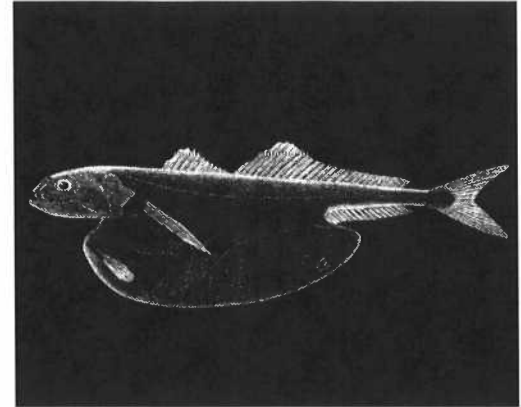
avoid, cornered, exaggerate, habitat, pursue, treatment, tremendous



# Black Swallower

Have you ever felt really stuffed after a big meal? Imagine if that meal were even larger than your own body! Could a stomach actually hold that much food? Amazingly, the black swallower's stomach can!

The black swallower is a fish that lives near the bottom of the ocean. Its big mouth and elastic stomach allow it to swallow other fish whole. A black swallower can consume a fish more than three times its own length! In order to make room for the bigger fish, the black swallower's stomach expands like a balloon. The stomach stretches out so much that it becomes transparent. Some people have found and studied dead black swallowers. They have seen large, whole fish still sitting in the black swallowers' stomachs.



Why do black swallowers eat such big meals? Deep in the ocean, food is difficult to find. Not many creatures inhabit these cold, dark waters. Perhaps the black swallower makes up for this scarce food supply by eating a lot at once. You might eat a lot too if you didn't know when your next meal was coming!

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## Quiz Questions

1. What is the main idea of this story?

- a. People have found and studied dead black swallowers.
- b. The black swallower can consume a fish larger than its own body.
- c. The black swallower lives at the bottom of the ocean.

2. What allows a black swallower to eat larger fish?

- a. an elastic stomach
- b. living in cold, dark waters
- c. a scarce food supply

3. What does the word **inhabit** mean in this story?

- a. to eat or drink
- b. to stretch out
- c. to live in a place

4. How did people know what black swallows ate?

- \_\_\_ a. They could see through the black swallower's transparent stomach.
- \_\_\_ b. They saw that black swallows lived at the bottom of the ocean.
- \_\_\_ c. They knew that the food supply was scarce in cold, dark waters.

5. Why might the black swallower eat such big meals?

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6. Select the best word for each definition.

- |           |               |
|-----------|---------------|
| stuffed   | truly         |
| scarce    | very full     |
| supply    | amount to use |
| actually  | not enough    |
| amazingly | surprisingly  |

7. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

Can you \_\_\_\_\_ eating something bigger than your whole body? A black swallower's big mouth and \_\_\_\_\_ stomach allow it to eat fish much larger than itself. To hold this much food, a black swallower's stomach \_\_\_\_\_ like a balloon. Black swallows may eat such big meals because they \_\_\_\_\_ cold, dark waters. Deep in the ocean, food can be \_\_\_\_\_ and hard to find.

elastic, expands, imagine, inhabit, scarce, stuffed, supply

# Extreme Ironing

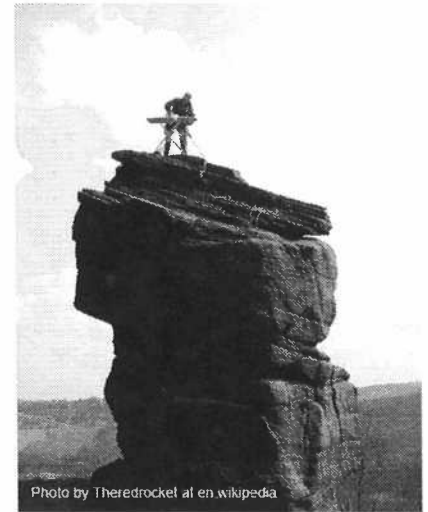
A man climbs to the top of a mountain. Then, he unfolds an ironing board and begins to iron a shirt. What is going on? This man is taking part in a funny sport called extreme ironing!

As participants like to say, the sport "combines the thrills of an extreme outdoor activity with the satisfaction of a well-pressed shirt." Some people iron while riding bicycles. Others iron while skiing. Some even iron while bungee jumping or skydiving!

Extreme ironing got started in 1997. After a long day at work, Phil Shaw did not feel like doing his chores indoors. So, he took his wrinkled clothes outside and ironed in his back yard. Later, he and a friend decided to iron while rock climbing.

The idea caught on, and by 2002, people had set up the Extreme Ironing World Championships. The event had contestants from ten countries. They ironed while climbing a wall, hanging from a tree, and sitting in a canoe. Judges scored the contestants based on speed, style, and quality of ironing.

Is extreme ironing a real sport, a joke, or both? Whatever it is, participants have shown that ironing can be fun!



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## Quiz Questions

1. What is the main idea of this story?

- a. Phil Shaw started the sport of extreme ironing in 1997.
- b. Extreme ironing judges score contestants on quality, speed, and style.
- c. Extreme ironing is a funny sport that combines ironing with outdoor activities.

2. Why did Phil Shaw take his wrinkled clothes outside?

- a. He didn't feel like doing his chores indoors.
- b. He wanted to start a new sport called extreme ironing.
- c. He wanted to iron while riding his bicycle.

3. What does the word **chores** mean in this story?

- a. wrinkled clothes
- b. outdoor activities

\_\_\_ c. small jobs

4. What was the first activity to be combined with ironing?

\_\_\_ a. rock climbing

\_\_\_ b. canoeing

\_\_\_ c. bungee jumping

5. What are some extreme activities that people combine with ironing?

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6. Select the best word for each definition.

caught on

event

satisfaction

iron

participants

a good feeling

became popular

to make clothes smooth

something that is planned

people who take part

7. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

Extreme ironing is a \_\_\_\_\_ that combines outdoor activities with ironing. People iron while skydiving, skiing, or even \_\_\_\_\_. Extreme ironing got its start when a man ironed his \_\_\_\_\_ clothes outside. By 2002, people had set up a World Championship \_\_\_\_\_. Judges scored contestants on quality, speed, and \_\_\_\_\_.

bungee jumping, event, iron, satisfaction, sport, style, wrinkled

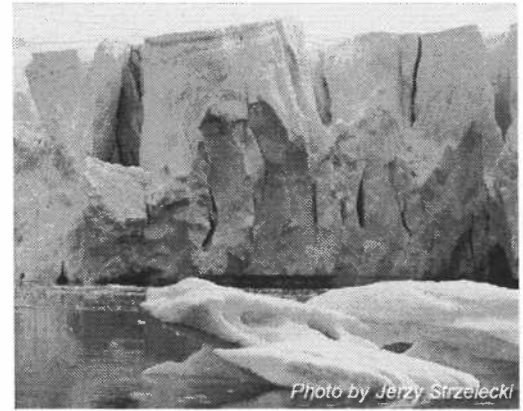
# Lynne Cox

Could you swim in the coldest water on Earth? In 2002, Lynne Cox traveled to the frigid waters off the coast of Antarctica. She wanted to swim a mile there—without a wetsuit!

Lynne was already a famous cold-water swimmer. In 1987, she swam over three miles from Alaska to Russia. Being in such cold water for so long could cause a person's heart to stop. How did Lynne survive? Scientists discovered that Lynne's body fat was very evenly distributed, which kept her insulated. Lynne was also fit, and she stayed focused on her goal.

But the waters of Antarctica were colder than any she had ever been in. Lynne had to take many precautions. She trained hard for two years. To shield her toes from rocks, she let her nails grow long. To help insulate her head, she let her hair grow long. She even had special earplugs made to protect her eardrums and brain from the icy water.

Finally, it was time for Lynne's Antarctic mile. The ocean was almost cold enough to freeze. When Lynne jumped in, the cold nearly took her breath away. As she swam, she avoided chunks of ice. At one point, penguins swam with her. At last, after 25 minutes, Lynne reached Antarctica! She was the first person to achieve this feat.



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## Quiz Questions

1. What is the main idea of this story?

- a. Lynne Cox was the first person to swim a mile in the frigid waters of Antarctica without a wetsuit.
- b. Lynne Cox's body stayed insulated because her body fat was very evenly distributed.
- c. Lynne Cox was a famous cold-water swimmer who was able to swim from Alaska to Russia.

2. How did Lynne protect her eardrums during her cold-water swim?

- a. She had special earplugs made.
- b. She let her hair grow long.
- c. She avoided chunks of ice.

3. What does the word **shield** mean in this story?

- a. train
- b. keep warm

\_\_\_ c. protect

4. Why did Lynne keep swimming even though the water was cold?

\_\_\_ a. Antarctica was not too far away.

\_\_\_ b. She wanted to reach her goal.

\_\_\_ c. Penguins started swimming with her.

5. What precautions could you take before swimming in frigid water?

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6. Select the best word for each definition.

distributed

gave full attention to

fit

spread out over an area

focused

healthy and strong

coast

where ocean touches land

insulated

protected from the cold

7. Move the events into the correct order.

Lynne avoided chunks of ice and swam with penguins.

Lynne reached Antarctica after 25 minutes.

Lynne swam over three miles from Alaska to Russia.

Lynne trained hard for two years.

The cold water almost took Lynne's breath away.

# Roadrunner

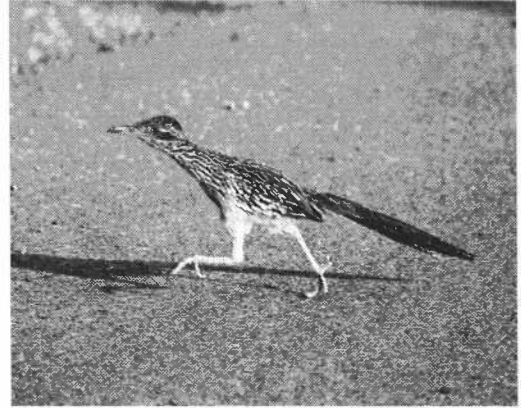
To many animals in the American Southwest, the rattlesnake is a serious threat. But this venomous snake often won't stand a chance against a fairly harmless-looking bird: the roadrunner.

This two-foot-long bird is slim. It doesn't have big, strong claws, and it doesn't fly often or far. But it can run at speeds close to 20 miles an hour. The roadrunner uses its long tail to make quick turns. Its speed and agility help it dodge and outrun dangerous animals.

Yet the roadrunner doesn't try to escape when it meets a rattlesnake. Instead, it circles the snake to see how big it is. The roadrunner may provoke the snake into striking. Rattlesnakes can strike fast. But the roadrunner is even faster. It dodges, then darts in again, grabs the snake in its beak, and pounds it to death against a rock! The roadrunner swallows its prey whole. It seems able to take in the rattlesnake's venom with no problem.

The roadrunner can get the best of other desert animals too. If an animal is small enough to swallow, the roadrunner might chase it down. The roadrunner can even jump up and grab low-flying birds from the air.

The roadrunner may not look like a dangerous predator. Yet this quick and agile bird has some surprisingly clever tricks!



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## Quiz Questions

1. What is the main idea of this story?

- a. Roadrunners are agile and surprisingly dangerous predators.
- b. Roadrunners are able to take in a rattlesnake's venom with no problem.
- c. Roadrunners can jump up and grab low-flying birds from the air.

2. What body part does a roadrunner use to make quick turns?

- a. its wings
- b. its claws
- c. its tail

3. What does the word **agility** mean in this story?

- a. ability to kill others

\_\_\_ b. ability to move quickly

\_\_\_ c. ability to take in venom

4. How does the roadrunner provoke the rattlesnake to strike?

\_\_\_ a. by getting within the snake's striking distance

\_\_\_ b. by pounding the snake to death against a rock

\_\_\_ c. by swallowing the snake whole and taking in its venom

5. How does the roadrunner get the best of some desert animals?

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6. Select the best word for each definition.

threat

ability to move gracefully

strike

moves quickly

darts

a danger

venomous

to try to bite

agility

having a type of poison

7. Move the events into the correct order.

The roadrunner circles the snake to see how big it is.

The roadrunner grabs the snake in its beak.

The roadrunner pounds the snake to death against a rock.

The roadrunner provokes the snake to strike.

The roadrunner swallows the snake whole.



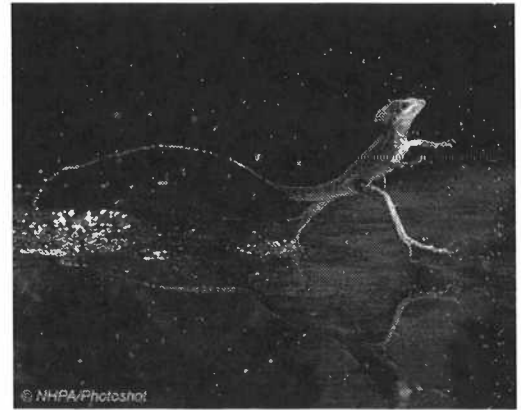
# Running on Water

Have you heard of an animal that can run across the surface of water? The basilisk lizard of Central America can! It sprints on its two back legs. Basilisks can grow to over two feet long and weigh almost half a pound. They're heavier than water, so how do they keep from sinking?

A basilisk slaps its foot against the water's surface with great force. This force pushes the water down and away, making a pocket of air around the foot. Water around the air pocket reacts by pushing back with equal force. This pushing back, or resistance, keeps the basilisk's foot from sinking.

You can see the effects of the basilisk's foot slap with a simple activity. First, slowly immerse your palm into a tub filled with water, and notice how easily the water lets your hand go in. Now, try slapping your palm down hard against the water's surface. The water didn't let your hand go in so easily, did it? The water resisted—at least for a short time.

The force of the basilisk's foot slap lasts only a split second. Immediately, the basilisk needs to create that force again. When running on water, a basilisk takes 10 to 20 steps a second. As soon as it stops stepping, it starts sinking. Fortunately, basilisks are great swimmers too!



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## Quiz Questions

1. What is the main idea of this story?

- a. You can see the effects of the basilisk's foot slap by slapping your palm against water.
- b. Basilisk lizards can grow to over two feet long and are heavier than water.
- c. Basilisk lizards can run across water because their feet slap the surface with great force and speed.

2. What happens when the basilisk lizard stops running?

- a. It slaps its foot down.
- b. It starts to sink.
- c. It makes an air pocket.

3. What does the word **force** mean in this story?

- a. the surface of the water
- b. power or strength

\_\_\_ c. a pocket of air

4. Why does the basilisk need to take so many steps each second?

\_\_\_ a. because the force of each foot slap lasts only a split second

\_\_\_ b. because the basilisk slaps its foot down with great force

\_\_\_ c. because resistance keeps the foot from sinking

5. How can you experience the effects of the basilisk's foot slap?

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6. Select the best word for each definition.

palm

pushed back

fortunately

luckily

immerse

inner part of the hand

resisted

results

effects

put into liquid

7. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

The basilisk lizard can run on the \_\_\_\_\_ of water. It \_\_\_\_\_ across the water on its two back legs. It keeps from sinking by slapping the water's surface with great \_\_\_\_\_.

The water \_\_\_\_\_ by pushing back against the lizard's foot with equal force. The force of each foot slap lasts only a \_\_\_\_\_.

force, fortunately, palm, reacts, split second, sprints, surface

## Servant or Spy?

Over dinner, President Davis talked about his war plans with other military leaders. A servant named Mary Bowser listened closely. Later, Davis studied top-secret papers at his desk. When Mary dusted the desk, she carefully memorized these papers. It was the 1860s. America was fighting the Civil War, and Mary Bowser was spying on the president of the Confederate States.

Mary grew up in the South. For many years, she was a slave. A woman named Elizabeth, who was the daughter of Mary's owner, freed Mary. Elizabeth also sent Mary to school. Few African Americans living in the South at that time were so lucky. Most were still slaves. Mary wanted to help these people.

All of the Confederate states permitted slavery. Mary became a spy for the Union Army, which was fighting against the Confederate Army. By working in President Davis's home, Mary could listen to secret conversations about the Confederate Army. She could memorize secret plans and maps. Mary fooled President Davis by acting unintelligent. In truth, Mary was smart and had a great memory. The information she gathered was very helpful to the Union Army.

Few people knew about Mary's important work until many years after she died. In 1995, the U.S. Army honored Mary for helping the Union win the war.



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### Quiz Questions

1. What is the main idea of this story?

- a. Mary Bowser was smart and had a great memory.
- b. Few people knew about Mary Bowser's important work until after she died.
- c. Mary Bowser spied on President Davis to help the Union Army.

2. Why did Mary work in President Davis's home?

- a. to learn secret Union Army information
- b. to learn secret Confederate Army information
- c. so that she would be able to attend school

3. What does the word **unintelligent** mean in this story?

- a. able to memorize many facts

\_\_\_ b. not able to understand things

\_\_\_ c. very helpful around the house

4. Why didn't President Davis think that Mary was spying on him?

\_\_\_ a. He didn't think Mary could understand the papers and maps.

\_\_\_ b. He had memorized many secrets and plans.

\_\_\_ c. He knew that Mary had gone to school and had a great memory.

5. Why was Mary luckier than most African Americans living in the South in the 1860s?

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6. Select the antonym for each word.

permitted

insulted

servant

freedom

unintelligent

smart

honored

stopped

slavery

master

7. Move the events into the correct order.

Mary became a spy for the Union Army.

Mary died.

Mary was a slave.

Mary was freed.

Mary was honored for helping the Union win the war.

## Strength in Numbers

A single driver ant is not much of a threat. But as a group, driver ants are some of the most ferocious creatures in Africa. These ants work together as a colony of millions. Even an animal that is hundreds of times bigger than a single ant is no match for the colony. Driver ants swarm over their victim. They dig their strong jaws into its body. When they are finished feasting, nothing is left but bones.

These nomadic ants attack almost any animal they come across. When food runs out, they move on. So, driver ants do not build permanent nests. Instead, they use their own bodies to build temporary nests. The ants cling together and make a living, breathing shelter for the queen.

When traveling over difficult terrain, driver ants sometimes make bridges. But they do not build them out of wood. Again, they use their bodies. By clinging together, the ants make highways that help the rest of the colony travel with ease.

Driver ants may be deadly, but they also provide a nice service. They get rid of all the rodents, insects, and other pests that live in people's homes. There is just one catch. People need to leave their homes while the ants are feasting—or risk becoming victims themselves!



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### Quiz Questions

1. What is the main idea of this story?

- a. When driver ants swarm over a victim, they leave nothing behind but bones.
- b. Driver ants can do amazing things by working together as a colony.
- c. Driver ants use their own bodies to build temporary nests for the queen.

2. What do driver ants use to make their nests?

- a. pieces of wood
- b. their bodies
- c. bones of victims

3. What does the word **catch** mean in this story?

- a. a hidden problem
- b. a large rodent

\_\_\_ c. a nice service

4. Why don't driver ants build permanent nests?

\_\_\_ a. because they do not want to be discovered by larger animals

\_\_\_ b. because the queen ant prefers a living, breathing shelter

\_\_\_ c. because they move from place to place in search of food

5. How are driver ants able to consume an animal that is hundreds of times bigger than a single ant?

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6. Select the best word for each definition.

instead

eating a lot

feasting

lasting for a long time

permanent

a cover or protection

terrain

an area of ground

shelter

in place of something

7. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

Driver ants work together as a huge \_\_\_\_\_. They can \_\_\_\_\_ over an animal that is much bigger. Because driver ants are \_\_\_\_\_, they do not build permanent nests. They build \_\_\_\_\_ nests instead. When traveling over difficult \_\_\_\_\_, driver ants sometimes make bridges by clinging together.

colony, nomadic, permanent, single, swarm, temporary, terrain

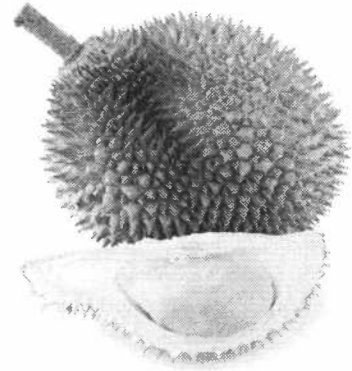
## The Smellier, the Better?

The durian is a large tropical fruit that sparks some strong opinions. In many countries in Southeast Asia, the durian is a popular food. Some people in these countries call it the "King of Fruits." Yet the durian has been banned from places in these same areas. Why?

The durian has a strong, unique smell. People have compared it to the smell of rotten eggs or stinky cheese. Some have even compared it to smelly socks! In Thailand, some hotel managers have banned durians from their buildings because of the fruit's odor.

However, many people think durians are delicious. They may eat the fruit raw or enjoy it in one of its many other forms. Durians can be used to make chips, shakes, and even ice cream. Thailand has even held a yearly celebration of durians—the World Durian Festival!

Different varieties of durians have different smells and tastes. So someone who dislikes one variety may like another. Interestingly, the varieties that smell the strongest are often quite popular. Many people believe that the smellier the durian is, the better it tastes!



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### Quiz Questions

1. What is the main idea of this story?

- a. People have strong feelings about the smell of durians.
- b. Different varieties of durians have different tastes.
- c. Durians can be used to make many kinds of food.

2. What food does the story say that durians can be used to make?

- a. eggs
- b. chips
- c. cheese

3. What does the word **raw** mean in this story?

- a. strong smelling
- b. not cooked
- c. very popular

4. Why have durians been banned in some places?

- a. because people have strong opinions about their unique taste
- b. because their strong smell may bother some people
- c. because many people find them delicious

5. Why might people change their minds about liking durians?

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6. Select the best word for each definition.

- |             |                          |
|-------------|--------------------------|
| opinions    | causes                   |
| celebration | feelings about something |
| managers    | people in charge         |
| banned      | a special event          |
| sparks      | did not allow            |

7. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

The durian is a large fruit that can be eaten \_\_\_\_\_ or in another form. Some people dislike the durian's strong \_\_\_\_\_. In Thailand, durians have even been \_\_\_\_\_ in some areas. Yet the same country has also held a yearly \_\_\_\_\_ of durians. This tropical fruit sparks many different \_\_\_\_\_.

banned, celebration, managers, odor, opinions, raw, varieties



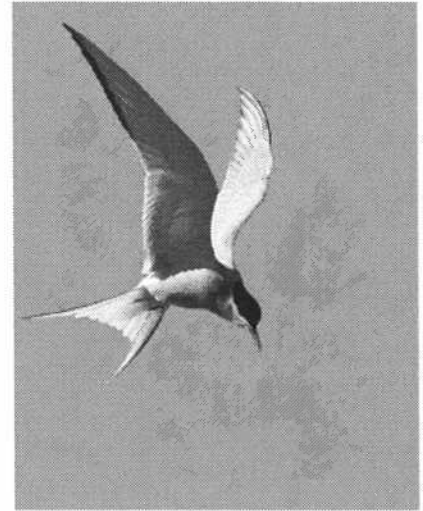
# Amazing Migration

Many birds migrate, but the Arctic tern takes it to the extreme. Each year, this bird flies from one end of the earth to the other—and back again!

The Arctic tern breeds in the northernmost part of the planet. An Arctic tern near the North Pole receives almost 24 hours of sunlight each day. But this bright summer is only temporary. When autumn approaches, the bird begins its amazing migration. By the time the harsh Arctic winter moves in, the tern is long gone.

The Arctic tern flies from above the Arctic Circle all the way down to the shores of Antarctica. If the tern went in a straight line, its journey would be about 10,000 miles. But because of the tern's zigzagging route, the trip is often twice that far. Young terns make the journey too, even though they are only a few months old.

The tern travels for about three months. At last, it reaches its destination. It arrives just in time for the Antarctic summer. The bird will now have several more months of near-constant sunlight. What happens when the seasons change again? The Arctic tern will be back on the move—this time heading north!



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## Quiz Questions

1. What is the main idea of this story?

- a. The Arctic tern's migration takes it from one extreme of the earth to the other.
- b. The Arctic tern breeds in the northernmost part of the planet.
- c. The Arctic tern receives almost 24 hours of sunlight each day.

2. When does a young Arctic tern make its first migration?

- a. when it is only a few months old
- b. when it is only a few days old
- c. when it is only a few years old

3. What does the word **zigzagging** mean in this story?

- a. back and forth
- b. hard to notice
- c. in a straight line

4. Where are the young Arctic terns born?

- \_\_\_ a. on the shores of Antarctica
- \_\_\_ b. near the North Pole
- \_\_\_ c. along the zigzagging route

5. Where will the Arctic tern fly when the Antarctic summer ends?

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6. Select the best word for each definition.

- |               |                          |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| temporary     | gets closer              |
| approaches    | almost all the time      |
| shores        | mates or has babies      |
| breeds        | the lands next to water  |
| near-constant | lasting for a short time |

7. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

The Arctic tern travels a very long distance to \_\_\_\_\_. It flies from the \_\_\_\_\_ part of the planet all the way to Antarctica. This bird \_\_\_\_\_ above the Arctic Circle in the summer, when there are almost 24 hours of sunlight each day. Then it flies south and arrives on the \_\_\_\_\_ of Antarctica in time to enjoy the summer there. In Antarctica, the tern will have several more months of \_\_\_\_\_ sunlight.

breeds, destination, migrate, near-constant, northernmost, shores, temporary

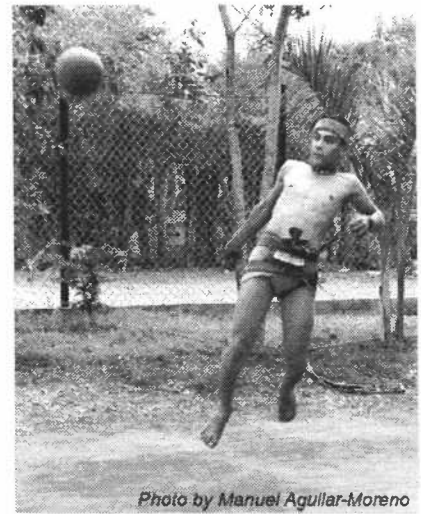
## An Ancient Ball Game

In a small town in western Mexico, two teams face off on a long, narrow stone court. They bounce a ball from player to player, using their hips and lower torsos. In this fast-paced game, players must keep the ball off the ground. And they can't use their hands, feet, or lower legs!

The game, called ulama, is played in only a few spots in modern Mexico. Yet it was once a central part of life in Mesoamerica. Some ancient Mexicans would bet property, children, and even their own freedom over the games! In most ancient Mesoamerican towns, the ball court stood next to a temple. Mesoamerican religious writings talk about the game. Indeed, the game was part of some religious ceremonies.

Players used a rubber ball about as big and heavy as a bowling ball. They risked fatal injuries to win. Winners earned great honor, while losers could pay a heavy price. Many researchers believe that, after religious games, players on the losing team were sacrificed in the temple!

Ulama is no longer the deadly sport it once was. Yet today's players still follow many of the old rules. They still use the same kind of ball and court too. Researchers believe ulama began at least 3,500 years ago. They think it's one of the oldest team sports in the world.



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### Quiz Questions

1. What is the main idea of this story?

- a. Ulama is an ancient team sport with a deadly past.
- b. Ulama may be the oldest team sport in the world.
- c. Ulama players today still follow many of the old rules.

2. In ulama, which body part can touch the ball?

- a. hips
- b. hands
- c. feet

3. What does the word **property** mean in this story?

- a. children and relatives
- b. things someone owns

\_\_\_ c. freedom and rights

4. Why did winners of ulama earn great honor?

\_\_\_ a. because people bet many things on the games

\_\_\_ b. because ulama was very important to ancient Mexicans

\_\_\_ c. because losers of the game could be sacrificed

5. Why was ulama a deadly sport?

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6. Select the best word for each definition.

modern

having to do with religion

religious

how things are now

temple

special acts or events

ceremonies

a place people go to pray

fatal

causing death

7. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

The fast-paced game of ulama started in \_\_\_\_\_ Mesoamerican times. In ulama, players can't use their hands or feet, so they bounce the ball off their \_\_\_\_\_. Ulama was once a part of religious \_\_\_\_\_. Many \_\_\_\_\_ think losing teams were sacrificed. While ulama players today still follow many of the old rules, losing a game is no longer \_\_\_\_\_.

ancient, ceremonies, court, fatal, property, researchers, torsos

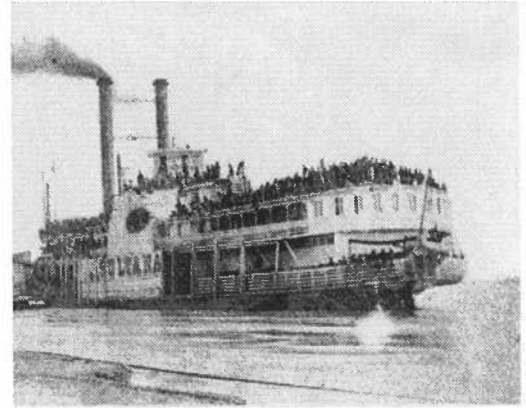
## An Untold Tragedy

Union soldiers boarded the Mississippi River steamboat Sultana. It was April 1865, and the American Civil War had just ended. The soldiers had survived terrifying battles and prison camps. They had gone for days on end with little food or medicine. Now, more than 2,000 of them crowded on a boat made to carry no more than 400 people. It was a tight fit to be sure. But after so much misery, the soldiers were just happy to be heading home.

Sadly, most of them would never make it. Two nights into the trip, around 2 a.m., disaster struck. The boat's boiler exploded, sending out a rush of hot steam. The explosion burned many people and started a fire. The passengers had no choice but to jump into the river. The water was dark and cold. The river's current was strong, and the shore was far away. Many of the passengers did not even know how to swim.

In the end, more than 1,500 people died in the sinking of the Sultana. It was the worst maritime disaster the United States had ever seen.

Unbelievably, this tragedy was not widely reported. President Lincoln had just been killed. Most of the country's newspapers were writing about his death. For many years, the sad story of the Sultana went largely untold.



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### Quiz Questions

1. What is the main idea of this story?

- a. After the Sultana caught on fire, the passengers had no choice but to jump into the Mississippi River.
- b. Soldiers on the Sultana had survived terrifying battles and prison camps during the American Civil War.
- c. The Sultana's sinking was a disaster that killed many people, but the tragedy was not widely reported.

2. How many soldiers crowded onto the Sultana?

- a. no more than 400
- b. about 1,500
- c. more than 2,000

3. What does the word **survived** mean in this story?

- a. stayed alive through a difficult time

\_\_\_ b. did not have very much room

\_\_\_ c. felt unhappy or miserable

4. Why did the story of the Sultana go untold for many years?

\_\_\_ a. The soldiers were just happy to be headed home.

\_\_\_ b. The newspapers did not write about the tragedy.

\_\_\_ c. The disaster struck in the middle of the night.

5. Why were many of the passengers unable to survive when they jumped into the Mississippi River?

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6. Select the best word for each definition.

misery

struck

largely

boiler

disaster

mostly

happened suddenly

tank that heats water

event that causes harm

great unhappiness

7. Move the events into the correct order.

Over 1,500 people died in the sinking of the Sultana.

Over 2,000 soldiers boarded the Sultana to return home.

The boat's boiler exploded.

The Civil War ended.

The Sultana caught on fire.

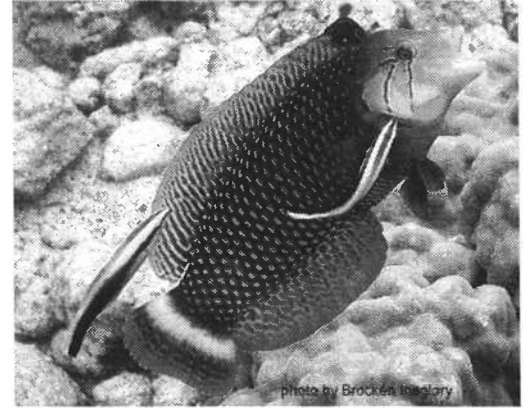
## At Your Service

When people's cars are covered in mud or dirt, they often visit a car wash. In the sea, small fish called cleaner wrasses offer a similar service for other fish.

Over time, a fish may become covered in parasites. The parasites are tiny animals. They latch onto the body and gills of the fish and suck its blood. Cleaner wrasses can remove these parasites from the fish.

Cleaner wrasses set up their cleaning stations in coral reefs. Their bright, boldly striped bodies are easy to see. The wrasses make dance-like movements to attract fish. When a fish arrives at the cleaning station, it poses in a way that tells the wrasses it's ready to be cleaned. The wrasses go to work. First, they examine their client's body and gills. Then, they bite off and eat the parasites. If their client is a predator, it may have bits of fish stuck in its teeth from past meals. The client holds its mouth open, and the wrasses dart inside to pick the teeth clean.

Why do cleaner wrasses provide such a service? By cleaning other fish, they're getting an easy meal. But the wrasses must do a good job and not bite their client while cleaning. Then the client might visit their station again.



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### Quiz Questions

1. What is the main idea of this story?

- a. Cleaner wrasses have bright, boldly striped bodies that make them easy to see.
- b. Cleaner wrasses are small fish that set up stations where they remove parasites from other fish.
- c. Parasites are tiny animals that latch onto the bodies of fish and suck their blood.

2. How does a fish tell the wrasses that it is ready to be cleaned?

- a. It latches on to the wrasses.
- b. It moves its boldly striped body.
- c. It poses in a certain way.

3. What does the word **dart** mean in this story?

- a. move quickly
- b. a small arrow

\_\_\_ c. reach safety

4. Why might cleaner wrasses be safe in a predator's mouth?

\_\_\_ a. The wrasses have boldly striped bodies that are easy to see.

\_\_\_ b. The predator needs the wrasses to clean its teeth.

\_\_\_ c. The wrasses latch onto the predator and suck its blood.

5. How are wrasses' cleaning stations like car washes?

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6. Select the best word for each definition.

boldly

attach onto something

latch

in a way that's easy to notice

poses

holds in a certain position

gills

body parts for breathing

striped

marked with bands of color

7. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

Cleaning \_\_\_\_\_ set up by cleaner wrasses are like car washes for fish. Cleaner wrasses attract a \_\_\_\_\_ with dance-like movements. A fish \_\_\_\_\_ in a way that tells the wrasses it's ready to be cleaned. First the wrasses \_\_\_\_\_ the fish's body and gills. Then they bite off and eat any \_\_\_\_\_ that they find.

client, examine, parasites, poses, predator, stations, striped



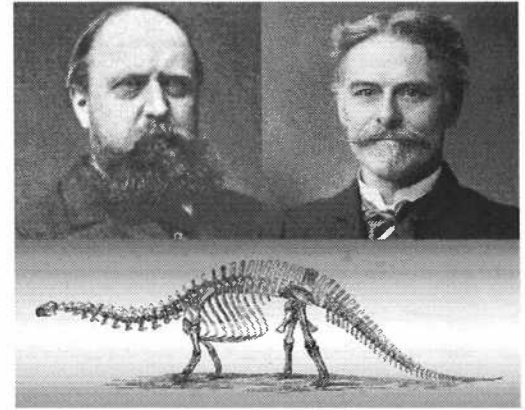
# Fossil War

In the 1860s, two ambitious men shared a goal. At that time, scientists knew about fewer than 20 dinosaur species. But the discovery of big fossil beds in the United States gave scientists hope of finding new species. Edward Cope and Othniel Marsh both wanted to identify new species. At first, they respected and helped each other. This cooperation didn't last. Before long, Cope and Marsh became enemies!

Their feud began when Marsh noted a mistake Cope had made in putting together a fossil skeleton. Soon after, Cope found out that some of his workers were secretly sending fossils to Marsh. Mistrust between the two men grew.

As their mistrust grew, so did their competition with each other. Each man wanted to be known as the better scientist. They traveled far, faced dangers, and spent lots of money. They also interfered with each other's work. They hired spies, bribed each other's workers, and insulted each other in print. Cope and Marsh fought for the rest of their lives.

In the end, each man made important discoveries. Between them, Cope and Marsh identified 130 new dinosaur species and many other extinct animals. Many of these species are now well-known to people all over the world. Cope and Marsh are remembered for these discoveries, but they are remembered more for their feud!



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## Quiz Questions

1. What is the main idea of this story?

- a. Cope and Marsh were scientists in competition with each other to discover new species.
- b. People remember Cope and Marsh for their discoveries of new dinosaur species.
- c. Many of the species Cope and Marsh discovered are now extinct.

2. How did Marsh and Cope's feud begin?

- a. Marsh insulted Cope in print.
- b. Marsh noted a mistake Cope had made.
- c. Cope interfered with Marsh's work.

3. What do the words **in print** mean in this story?

- a. a mark made on the ground by a foot
- b. in magazines, books, or newspapers

\_\_\_ c. a picture made by painting on paper

4. Why were Cope and Marsh important scientists?

\_\_\_ a. They faced dangers and spent lots of money.

\_\_\_ b. They identified 130 new dinosaur species.

\_\_\_ c. People remember them for their feud.

5. What did Cope and Marsh do in their competition with each other?

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6. Select the best word for each definition.

respected

said things to hurt someone

cooperation

working together

bribed

thought someone was important

interfered

got in the way of

insulted

paid someone for unfair help

7. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

Edward Cope and Othniel Marsh were scientists who tried to \_\_\_\_\_ new dinosaur species.

They searched in big \_\_\_\_\_. Both men discovered many \_\_\_\_\_ animals. But

Cope and Marsh also \_\_\_\_\_ with each other's work. They even \_\_\_\_\_ each

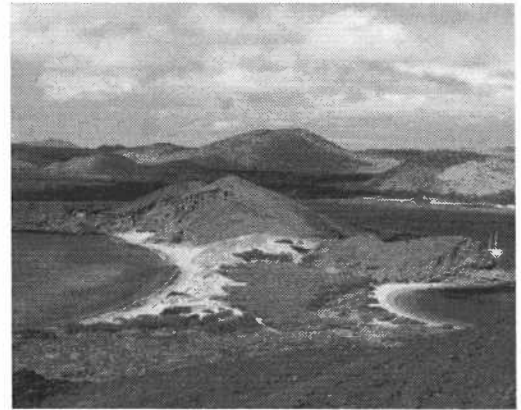
other's workers.

ambitious, bribed, cooperation, extinct, fossil beds, identify, interfered

# Galápagos

Six hundred miles off the coast of Ecuador, you can find one of the most active places on Earth for volcanoes. Eruptions have been happening there for millions of years. These eruptions start on the sea floor. They blow out a lot of lava. The lava piles up and forms a cone, which gets taller with each eruption. Eventually, the cone emerges from the sea, forming an island. Over time, this process has formed an archipelago, or chain of islands, called Galápagos.

The oldest islands are in the eastern part of the Galápagos chain. Eruptions there stopped long ago. Some of these islands have already eroded and sunk back under the water. But in the western part of the archipelago, many volcanoes are still active. The western islands are still forming!



With its changing landscape, Galápagos is a work in progress. Today, a few large islands and many tiny ones make up Galápagos. Even as old islands erode and sink, new ones emerge and grow. Many scientists visit Galápagos each year to study this fascinating process in action.

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## Quiz Questions

1. What is the main idea of this story?

- a. Emerging and eroding volcanoes make up the changing landscape of the Galápagos Islands.
- b. The oldest islands are in the eastern part of the Galápagos archipelago.
- c. Islands can erode and sink back into the sea.

2. What is an archipelago?

- a. a country near Ecuador
- b. a chain of islands
- c. an eruption from a volcano

3. What do the words **work in progress** mean in this story?

- a. something that is not finished
- b. trying to help out a cause
- c. the steps to do something

4. What has happened to some of the oldest islands in the archipelago?

- a. They have continued to grow.
- b. They have sunk under the water.
- c. Volcanoes there are still erupting.

5. Why do scientists want to visit Galápagos each year?

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6. Select the best word for each definition.

- |           |                   |
|-----------|-------------------|
| landscape | a series of steps |
| eroded    | wore away         |
| process   | comes out         |
| cone      | top of a volcano  |
| emerges   | an area of land   |

7. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

The \_\_\_\_\_ of Galápagos is always changing. It is an archipelago, or chain of islands, formed from volcanic \_\_\_\_\_ that take place on the sea floor. Volcanoes produce \_\_\_\_\_, which piles up under the water. Finally, a \_\_\_\_\_ rises from the sea as an island. While new islands have formed over time, old ones have \_\_\_\_\_ and sunk back into the sea.

cone, emerges, eroded, eruptions, landscape, lava

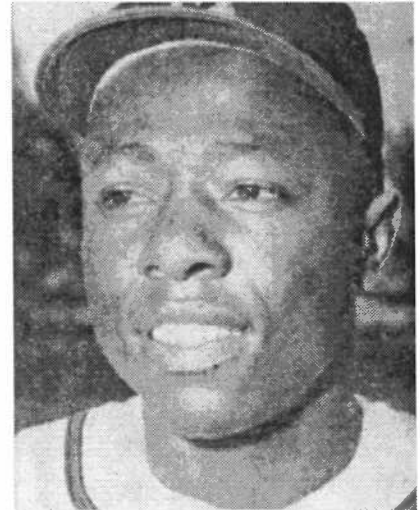
# Hank Aaron

During the 1973 baseball season, Hank Aaron was closing in on the Major League home run record. Babe Ruth, a beloved baseball hero, had held this record for 38 years. Many people cheered for Hank as he approached the record. But some people did not want to see a black man surpass Babe. Throughout the season, Hank received many threatening messages. His team even hired a bodyguard to keep him safe. Still, Hank remained calm and tried to focus on baseball.

When the season ended, Hank had a career total of 713 home runs. He was just one short of Babe's mark. Hank would have to wait until next season to break the record. He would also have to endure several more months of threatening messages.

When the 1974 season started, Hank got right to work. In the first game, he tied Babe's record. Then, four days later, he surpassed Babe by hitting the 715th home run of his career. Hank was baseball's new home run king! He was proud of his accomplishment. But he was also glad that the ordeal had finally ended.

Despite the challenges he faced, Hank Aaron was one of the greatest hitters in Major League history.



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## Quiz Questions

1. What is the main idea of this story?

- a. Hank Aaron surpassed Babe Ruth's home run record despite receiving threatening messages.
- b. At the end of the 1973 season, Hank Aaron was just one home run short of Babe Ruth's record.
- c. Babe Ruth was a beloved baseball hero who held the Major League home run record for 38 years.

2. How many home runs did Hank have when the 1973 season ended?

- a. 38
- b. 713
- c. 715

3. What does the word **focus** mean in this story?

- a. pay close attention
- b. try to forget
- c. stay safe

4. Why did Hank receive threatening messages?

- a. because some people didn't want a black man to surpass Babe's record
- b. because Hank was glad that the home run ordeal had ended
- c. because Hank finished the 1973 season one home run short of Babe's record

5. Explain why Hank was glad that the ordeal had finally ended.

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6. Select the best word for each definition.

- |            |                               |
|------------|-------------------------------|
| hero       | a difficult time              |
| ordeal     | person who does a great thing |
| tied       | had the same score            |
| endure     | put up with                   |
| throughout | during                        |

7. Move the events into the correct order.

- Babe Ruth hit his 714th home run.
- Hank Aaron started closing in on Babe's home run record.
- Hank became the new home run king.
- Hank finished the 1973 season with 713 home runs.
- Hank started the 1974 season by tying Babe's record.

## Moko to the Rescue!

When you think of a local hero, who do you think of? People living near Mahia Beach in New Zealand might think of a dolphin named Moko. Beachgoers knew Moko for his playful behavior, such as playing ball with swimmers and pushing kayakers through the waves. But one day in March 2008, Moko did more than just make people laugh. He saved the day.

A mother whale and her calf got stranded in the water between the beach and a sandbar. If the whales didn't get back into open water soon, they would die. Trained rescuers tried to get these huge animals to move, but nothing worked. The rescuers were losing hope—until Moko arrived on the scene.



Moko seemed to communicate with the whales, as if to say, "Follow me!" He led the whales alongside the beach to a channel entrance. Then he guided the whales through the narrow channel and back out to sea. Finally, the whales were safe. Moko was a hero!

The rescuers were amazed that Moko had saved the whales when they could not. News of the rescue spread. Before long, Moko was something of a celebrity. When Moko died in July 2010, hundreds of people attended his funeral. They would never forget their heroic friend.

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### Quiz Questions

1. What is the main idea of this story?

- a. Hundreds of people attended Moko's funeral.
- b. Beachgoers knew Moko for his playful behavior.
- c. Moko became a local hero by saving two whales.

2. Who got stranded between the beach and a sandbar?

- a. two whales
- b. a dolphin
- c. rescuers

3. What does the word **calf** mean in this story?

- a. a young whale
- b. a young dolphin

\_\_\_ c. a young cow

4. Why did Moko become a celebrity?

\_\_\_ a. He lived near Mahia Beach in New Zealand.

\_\_\_ b. He saved two whales that people couldn't save.

\_\_\_ c. He pushed kayakers through the waves.

5. What did Moko do to save the day?

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6. Select the best word for each definition.

rescuers

place where an event happens

communicate

those who save others

local

a famous person or animal

scene

tell or share information

celebrity

near or in the neighborhood

7. Move the events into the correct order.

A mother whale and her calf got stranded.

Moko arrived on the scene.

Moko became a celebrity.

Moko led the whales safely back out to sea.

Trained rescuers spent hours trying to help the whales.



## Planting Hope

Wangari Maathai grew up in a village in Kenya. She left around age 20 to study abroad. When she returned a few years later, she barely recognized her country. Trees were gone, and streams had dried up; people were suffering too. They didn't have enough food or clean water, and they had to walk far every day just to find wood for cooking. "What has happened?" she wondered.

When Wangari was young, Kenya's land had supplied enough food and clean water for its people. Since then, however, many trees and plants had been cleared to build farms so people could grow cash crops. The people worked hard, but they couldn't earn enough to buy what they needed. Many people felt hopeless.

It was a huge problem, yet Wangari believed she had a simple solution: plant trees. Trees would provide food and wood; trees would preserve soil and help restore streams. She recruited women to help her plant and care for trees. Over time, many women joined the campaign, and it spread to other countries. In 30 years, people planted over 40 million trees across Africa.

Wangari Maathai received many awards for her work, including the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004. "For me," she said, "my greatest activity is to plant a tree. . . . when we plant a tree we plant hope."



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### Quiz Questions

1. What is the main idea of this story?

- a. Wangari Maathai helped restore the land by planting trees.
- b. Wangari Maathai recruited women for her campaign.
- c. Wangari Maathai received the Nobel Peace Prize for her work.

2. Why were so many trees gone when Wangari returned home?

- a. The soil was bad and the streams had dried up.
- b. People had cleared trees in order to plant cash crops.
- c. People cut them down for food and clean water.

3. What does the word **abroad** mean in this story?

- a. for a long time
- b. in another country

\_\_\_ c. in a hopeful way

4. Why did Wangari Maathai receive the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004?

\_\_\_ a. Her campaign to plant trees helped many people.

\_\_\_ b. She studied abroad for a few years before returning to Kenya.

\_\_\_ c. She saw that the trees were gone and the streams had dried up.

5. How did planting trees help people in Kenya?

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6. Select the antonym for each word.

recruited

problem

restore

planted

cleared

home

solution

fired

abroad

damage

7. Move the events into the correct order.

People planted over 40 million trees.

Wangari hardly recognized Kenya when she returned home.

Wangari received the Nobel Peace Prize.

Wangari recruited women to help her plant trees.

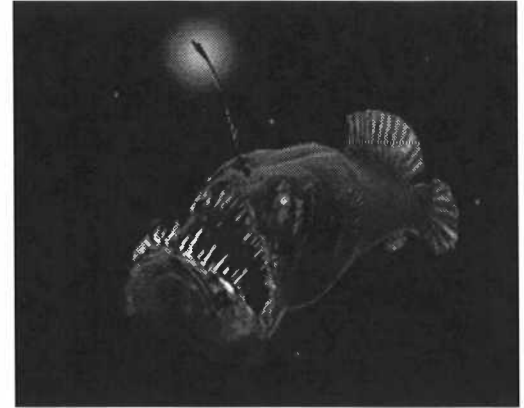
Wangari thought of planting trees as a solution.

# Predator Becomes Prey

A mile below the surface of the ocean, a small fish is looking for a meal. Food is hard to come by in this cold, almost pitch-black environment. Ahead, a bluish light darts back and forth. Could it be a meal?

The small fish swims toward the dancing light and prepares to consume its meal. Suddenly, gaping jaws with long, sharp teeth snap shut around the fish. Gulp—the fish is gone! What just happened? Behind the dancing light lurked a camouflaged ocean predator known as the black seadevil.

The black seadevil is a type of anglerfish. The word angler means someone who fishes with a rod and line, which is exactly what the black seadevil does. A long spine grows out of its face, like a rod. At the end of the rod is a glowing, rounded piece: the bait. The black seadevil catches its prey by lying very still in the water and dangling this glowing bait. As soon as a small fish goes for the glowing lure—snap! The black seadevil's jaws close over the fish like a trap. The fish, a would-be predator, has now become the prey!



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## Quiz Questions

1. What is the main idea of this story?

- a. The black seadevil fishes with its own rod and bait.
- b. Food is hard to come by a mile below the surface of the ocean.
- c. The black seadevil has gaping jaws with long, sharp teeth.

2. How does the black seadevil use the spine that grows out of its face?

- a. as a spear
- b. as a rod
- c. as camouflage

3. What does the word **gaping** mean in this story?

- a. swinging loosely
- b. hidden
- c. wide open

4. Why does the small fish swim towards the bluish light?

- \_\_\_ a. It is trying to get warm.
- \_\_\_ b. It is looking for food.
- \_\_\_ c. It knows the light is a trap.

5. How is the black seadevil like an angler?

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6. Select the best word for each definition.

- |          |                               |
|----------|-------------------------------|
| predator | an animal hunted for food     |
| bait     | food used to catch animals    |
| lurked   | the top part of something     |
| surface  | an animal that kills for food |
| prey     | stayed hidden                 |

7. Fill in the blanks with words from the list below.

The black seadevil lives a mile below the \_\_\_\_\_ of the ocean. It lives in a cold and dark \_\_\_\_\_ . A long \_\_\_\_\_ grows out of the seadevil's face. At the end is a glowing piece that this \_\_\_\_\_ uses as bait. The small fish doesn't see the gaping jaws of the \_\_\_\_\_ seadevil until it is too late.

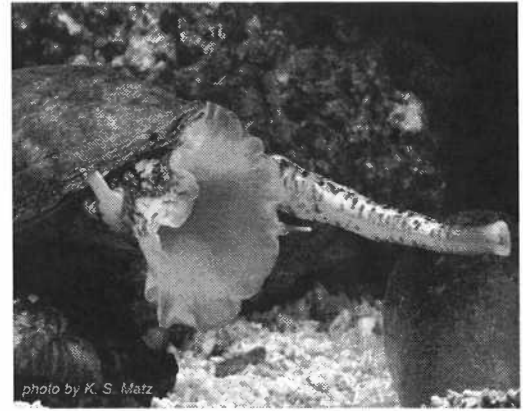
camouflaged, environment, lure, predator, prey, spine, surface

# Slow-Moving Killer

Night has fallen. A killer hunts fish at the bottom of the sea. Is it a shark or a stingray? No, it's a snail!

The magician's cone snail hunts fish. This slow mover is able to stay in one spot and still capture a fish swimming nearby. How?

First the snail searches for prey using its nose. It sniffs the water with what looks like a miniature elephant's trunk. Once it senses a small fish, it extends a long, thin tube from under its shell. This tube is a part of the snail's mouth. The snail touches the tube to the fish and fires out a venom-filled tooth. The tooth works like a tiny harpoon, holding the fish to the snail and injecting deadly venom.



At first the fish thrashes frantically in the water, trying to escape. But the powerful venom acts quickly, and soon the fish is paralyzed. Now the snail pulls the fish in. The snail's mouth expands to suck the fish in whole. In a few hours, the snail will vomit out any undigested parts of the fish, such as bones and scales.

The snail's venom is made up of over a hundred different kinds of poison. With such a deadly weapon, it's no wonder the magician's cone snail is a successful hunter.

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## Quiz Questions

1. What is the main idea of this story?

- a. The magician's cone snail uses its nose to search for prey at night at the bottom of the sea.
- b. The magician's cone snail hunts fish using its nose, a harpoon-like body part, and powerful venom.
- c. The magician's cone snail's venom is made up of over a hundred different kinds of poison.

2. What does the magician's cone snail use to search for its prey?

- a. a tooth like a tiny harpoon
- b. a nose like an elephant's trunk
- c. a part of its mouth shaped like a tube

3. What does the word **injecting** mean in this story?

- a. holding in place
- b. taking out

\_\_\_ c. putting in

4. What is one way that the magician's cone snail uses its tooth?

\_\_\_ a. to sniff the water for prey

\_\_\_ b. to hold the fish so it can't get away

\_\_\_ c. to vomit out undigested parts

5. Why is the magician's cone snail a successful hunter?

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6. Select the best word for each definition.

frantically

paralyzed

scales

fallen

undigested

happened

unable to move

wildly

not used by the body

flat, thin plates

7. Move the events into the correct order.

The fish is paralyzed.

The snail extends a long, thin tube from under its shell.

The snail fires out a venom-filled tooth.

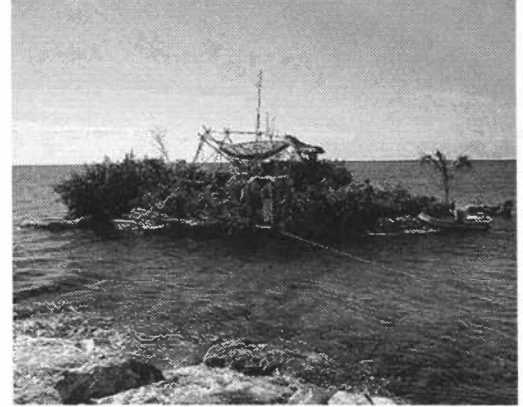
The snail pulls the fish in.

The snail's mouth expands to swallow the fish whole.

# Spiral Island

Many people dream of living on a tropical island. Richart Sowa made this dream a reality—by constructing his own island!

Sowa wanted to live in a way that did not hurt the environment. In the 1990s, he began collecting plastic bottles along the coast of Mexico. Over time, he gathered more than 250,000 of them. Using nets to hold the bottles together, Sowa made the base of a floating artificial island. He placed wood on top of this base and then covered it with sand. Sowa also planted trees for shade, plus fruits and vegetables for food. The plants' roots grew around the underwater bottles and made the island's base more stable.



Sowa called his creation Spiral Island. The island was about the size of a tennis court, and it was located just off Mexico's coast. Sowa built a small house in the middle of his island. He made an oven that got its power from the sun. He even made a washing machine that got its power from the ocean's waves.

Sadly, a hurricane destroyed Spiral Island in 2005. But Sowa did not give up the dream of living on his own tropical island. By 2008, he had finished building Spiral Island II.

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## Quiz Questions

1. What is the main idea of this story?

- a. Richart Sowa created two tropical islands that did not hurt the environment.
- b. Richart Sowa built Spiral Island II after a hurricane destroyed the first Spiral Island.
- c. Richart Sowa used 250,000 plastic bottles as part of the base for an island.

2. Where did Sowa's washing machine get its power?

- a. from wood
- b. from ocean waves
- c. from the sun

3. What does the word **base** mean in this story?

- a. the bottom part of something
- b. a place where supplies are kept
- c. wood covered with sand

4. Why did Sowa use power from the sun and waves?

- a. so he wouldn't hurt the environment
- b. because he didn't have wood to burn
- c. because the island was so small

5. How did plants help Sowa?

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6. Select the antonym for each word.

- |              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| reality      | destroying |
| constructing | shaky      |
| artificial   | dream      |
| stable       | natural    |
| base         | top        |

7. Move the events into the correct order.

Plant roots made the island's base more stable.

Sowa gathered bottles from the coast.

Sowa had a dream of living on an island.

Sowa planted fruits and vegetables.

Sowa put nets around plastic bottles.