

Here are some surprising facts about animals: Elephants can recognize themselves in mirrors. Flamingos eat upside down. Kangaroos cannot walk backwards. Octopuses have three hearts. Sloths only poop once a week. Butterflies taste with their feet. Otters hold hands while sleeping to avoid drifting apart. Polar bears have black skin. A group of owls is called a parliament. Some frogs make their homes in elephant poop. Vultures cool themselves by pooping on their own feet. Bees dance to communicate. Dolphins have names for each other. Koalas have fingerprints remarkably similar to humans. Male rabbits are called bucks, and females are does.

Anatomy & Senses

- Octopuses have three hearts, nine brains, and blue blood.
- Whales sleep with only one-half of their brain at a time.
- The Blue Whale's tongue can weigh as much as an adult elephant, and its heart is about the size of a small car.
- Giraffes were thought to be silent but actually hum at night.
- Elephants are the only land mammals that cannot jump.
- Polar Bears have black skin under their white fur to absorb heat.
- Sloths can take up to a month to digest a leaf and only defecate about once a week.
- Butterflies taste with their feet using chemoreceptors.
- Reindeer eyeballs change color seasonally.
- Owls can twist their heads up to 270 degrees.
- Sharks have existed for approximately 400 million years.
- Platypuses are one of the few venomous mammals.

Behaviors and adaptations

- Dolphins may use toxic pufferfish to get intoxicated.
- Some Frogs can freeze solid and thaw.
- Sea Otters hold hands while sleeping to avoid drifting apart.
- Kangaroos cannot walk backward.
- Pigs are highly intelligent and can learn tricks.
- Squirrels help forests by forgetting where they buried nuts.
- Pigeons can do math and recognize themselves in mirrors.
- Ravens and Crows are intelligent.
- The Mimic Octopus imitates other sea creatures.
- Bees can recognize human faces.
- Wolverines are known for their strength.
- Immortal Jellyfish can revert to their juvenile form.

Other interesting facts include:

- Panda cubs are born smaller than a mouse.
- Gorillas can catch human illnesses.
- The world's smallest bird is the Bee Hummingbird.
- Koalas have fingerprints similar to humans.
- Horses can sleep standing up.
- Clownfish are born male and can change sex to become the dominant female.
- The Dung Beetle is considered the strongest animal on Earth relative to its body weight.
- Alpine Ibexes can walk on steep walls.

Survival and adaptation

- Some Frogs Freeze and Thaw: Wood frogs and some other species can freeze themselves solid, [surviving frosty temperatures according to Greenwood High](#). Their hearts stop, and ice crystals form in their bodies, but they can thaw out and resume normal life when it warms up.
- The Immortal Jellyfish: The jellyfish species *Turritopsis dohrnii* can revert to its juvenile form after reaching maturity, potentially allowing it to live indefinitely.
- Tardigrades: Nature's Tough Guys: These microscopic "water bears" can survive extreme conditions, including temperatures from 300°F (149°C) to -458°F (-272°C), the vacuum of space, high pressure, and over a decade without food.
- Chameleons Are Masters of Camouflage: Their ability to change color and texture helps them blend seamlessly into their surroundings, aiding both in hunting and avoiding predators.
- The Thorny Devil Drinks with its Skin: This lizard collects dew and channels it to its mouth through scales.
- African Pyxie Frogs Hibernate in Mucus Sacs: These frogs can seal themselves in a mucus membrane and "hibernate" for up to seven years, waiting for rain.

Senses and perception

- Reindeer Eyes Change Color: Their eyeballs turn blue in winter to improve vision in low-light conditions.
- Butterflies Taste with Their Feet: They use chemoreceptors on their feet to identify plants for laying eggs or feeding.
- Owls Don't Have Eyeballs: They possess eye tubes.
- Elephants "Hear" with Their Feet: They can detect sounds and vibrations through the ground, which can travel for miles.
- Sharks Use Electoreception: Ampullae of Lorenzini, jelly-filled pores on their snouts, help them sense electromagnetic fields and locate prey.
- Snakes Use Infrared Vision: Some species have pit organs that allow them to detect infrared radiation, sensing the heat emitted by warm-blooded animals, [says Discover Magazine](#).

- Honeybees See Ultraviolet Light: Flowers often display ultraviolet patterns, like landing strips, that guide bees to nectar.
- Bees Can Recognize Human Faces: They do this by piecing together patterns.
- Mantis Shrimp Have Complex Vision: Their eyes can detect polarized light and an expanded spectrum, including ultraviolet and infrared.

Anatomy and physiology

- Blue Whales' Tongues are Enormous: Their tongues can weigh as much as a small car.
- Octopuses Have Three Hearts: Two pump blood to their gills, and one circulates it through the body. Their blood is also blue.
- Giraffes Have Short Sleep Requirements: They may only need 30 minutes of sleep per day, [according to Gwahumbe Game & Spa](#).
- Male Seahorses Give Birth: Females transfer eggs to a male's brood pouch for fertilization and incubation.
- Crocodiles Cannot Stick Their Tongues Out: Their tongues are attached to the roof of their mouths by a membrane.
- Pufferfish Are Toxic: They contain enough toxin to kill multiple humans, and there is no known antidote.

Behavior and communication

- Dolphins Have Names for Each Other: They use unique whistles for self-identification and to call to each other.
- Gorillas Burp When Happy: This indicates contentment in their social interactions.
- Cows Have Best Friends: They form strong bonds and can get stressed when separated.
- Sea Otters Hold Hands While Sleeping: They hold hands to avoid drifting apart in the water.
- Penguins Propose with Pebbles: Male Gentoo and Adelie penguins offer pebbles to females as a courtship ritual.
- Kangaroos Cannot Walk Backwards: Their anatomy restricts them to hopping forward.
- Rats Laugh When Tickled: They emit high-pitched sounds indicating playfulness.
- Wild Chimps Like to Drink: They've been observed consuming fermented palm sap and becoming intoxicated.
- Giraffes Can Hum at Night: This was previously believed to be impossible.
- Squirrels Plant Trees by Accident: They often forget where they buried nuts, which then sprout into new trees.
- Ants Never Sleep and Don't Have Lungs: Instead, they breathe through tiny holes in their bodies called spiracles.
- Honeybees Use a Waggle Dance: They use a complex dance to communicate the location and quality of food sources to the hive.

Other intriguing facts

- A Group of Flamingos is Called a "Flamboyance".
- A Group of Parrots is Known as a "Pandemonium".
- Hippos Produce Their Own Sunblock: A red, oily substance secreted by their skin acts as a UV protector.
- Some Scorpions Sting Themselves to Death with Alcohol: A small amount of alcohol can induce self-stinging behavior.
- The Mosquito is the Deadliest Animal: It is responsible for more human deaths than any other creature due to disease transmission.
- Cows Can Walk Up Stairs But Not Down: Their anatomy makes it difficult for them to descend.
- Dalmatians are Born Without Spots: Their spots appear as they grow older.
- Crocodiles Use "Death Roll" Maneuver: This technique, involving rolling their bodies while biting prey, is deadly.