

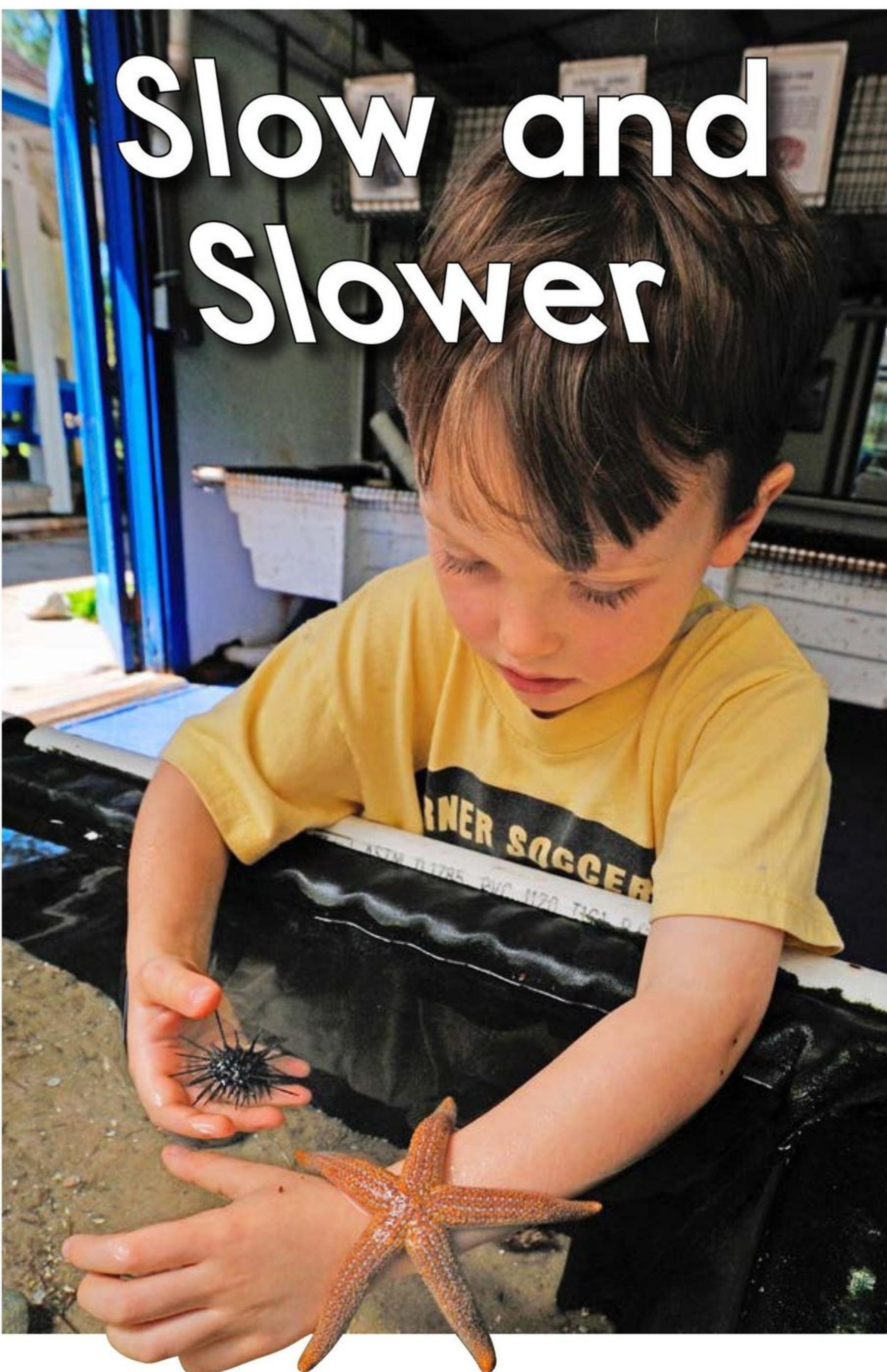
LEVELED Book • I

Slow and Slower



Written by Harriet Rosenbloom

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These racing snails have numbers stuck to their backs to make them easier to tell apart.

Snail

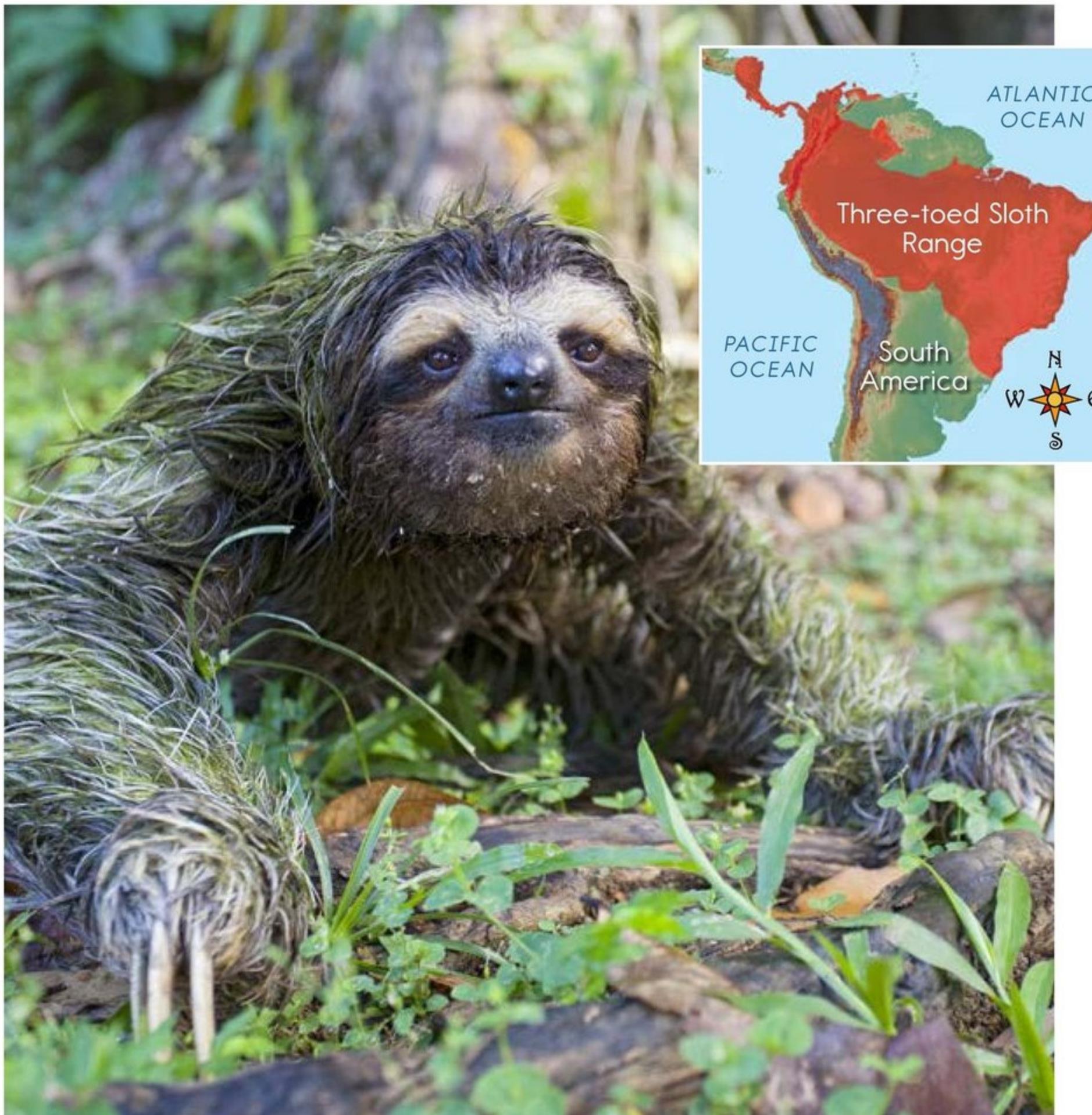
The animal world has some very slow animals in it. One of the very slowest is the snail. Even the fastest snails are pretty slow. In 1995, Archie the snail took two minutes and twenty seconds to crawl 13 inches (33 cm).



The many varieties of starfish, or sea stars, live in oceans around the world.

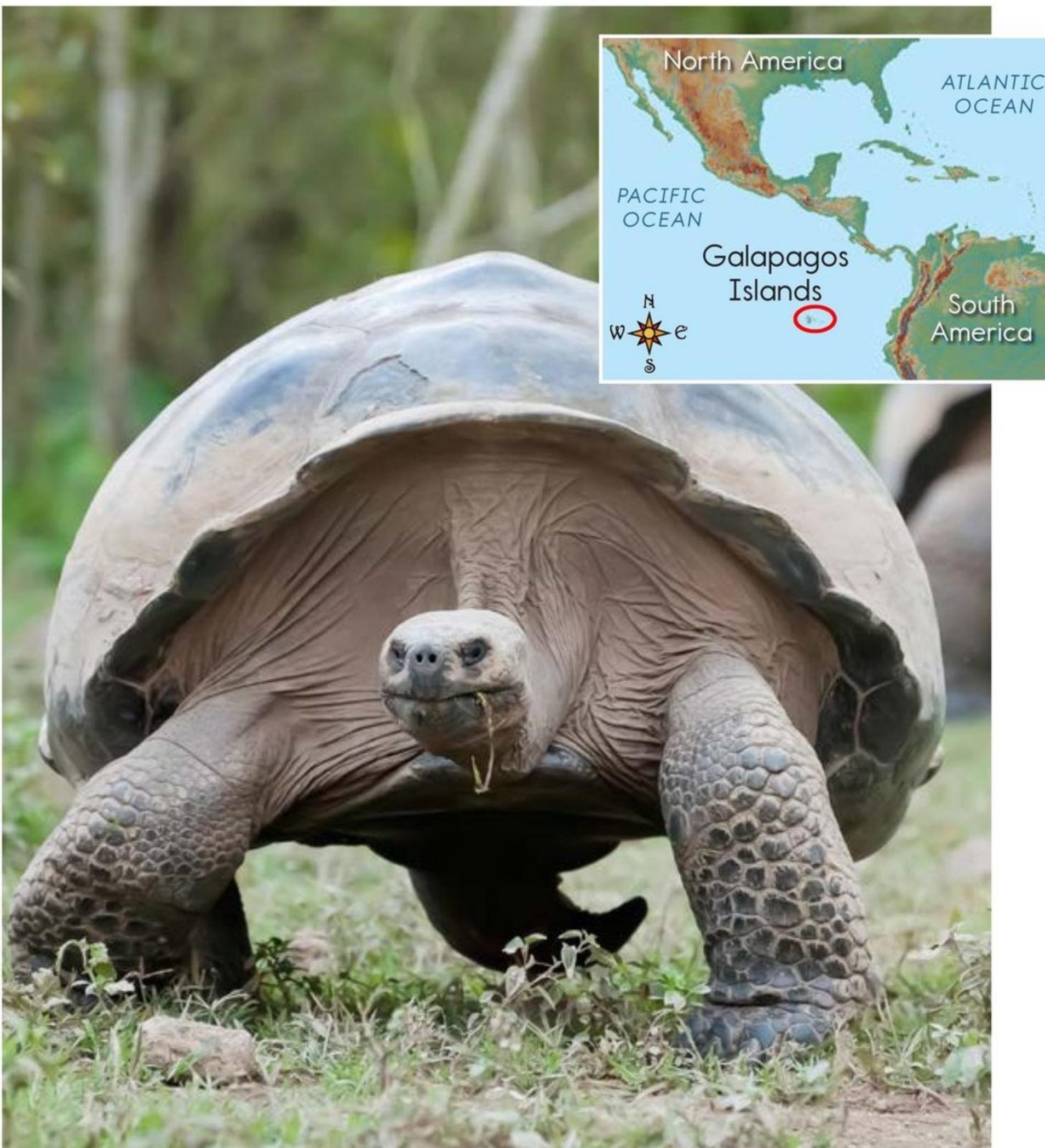
Starfish

Snails aren't the only slow animals.
Starfish don't seem to move at all.
At top speed, they just **creep** along.
A starfish needs four minutes to
move the length of a man's arm.



Three-toed Sloth

The three-toed sloth hangs around in trees most of the time. Because it **seldom** moves, little plants often grow on its fur. A sloth needs about three minutes to crawl the length of two cars.



Galapagos Tortoise

Humans can walk about eighteen times faster than this giant tortoise. The Galapagos tortoise isn't fast but it does live a long time. A tortoise can live 150 years or more.



Gila Monster

The desert gila (HEE-luh) monster is about as slow as the Galapagos tortoise. It tries to **avoid** humans and other animals. If scared, it will hiss loudly then bite quickly.

How Long Would It Take Each Animal to Travel the Length of a School Bus?



Woodcock
6 seconds

Slow...



**Swallowtail
butterfly**
8 seconds



Slow Loris
25 seconds



Tortoise 3 minutes

... and Slower

Three-toed Sloth
3 minutes, 15 seconds



Gila Monster
3 minutes, 15 seconds



Snail 45 minutes



Seahorses are found in shallow, warm areas of the ocean that have lots of plants.

Seahorse

The boney little seahorse has four small fins but it can't swim fast. It can't escape an enemy—so it hides. It wraps its tail around a branch to look like it's a part of the plant.

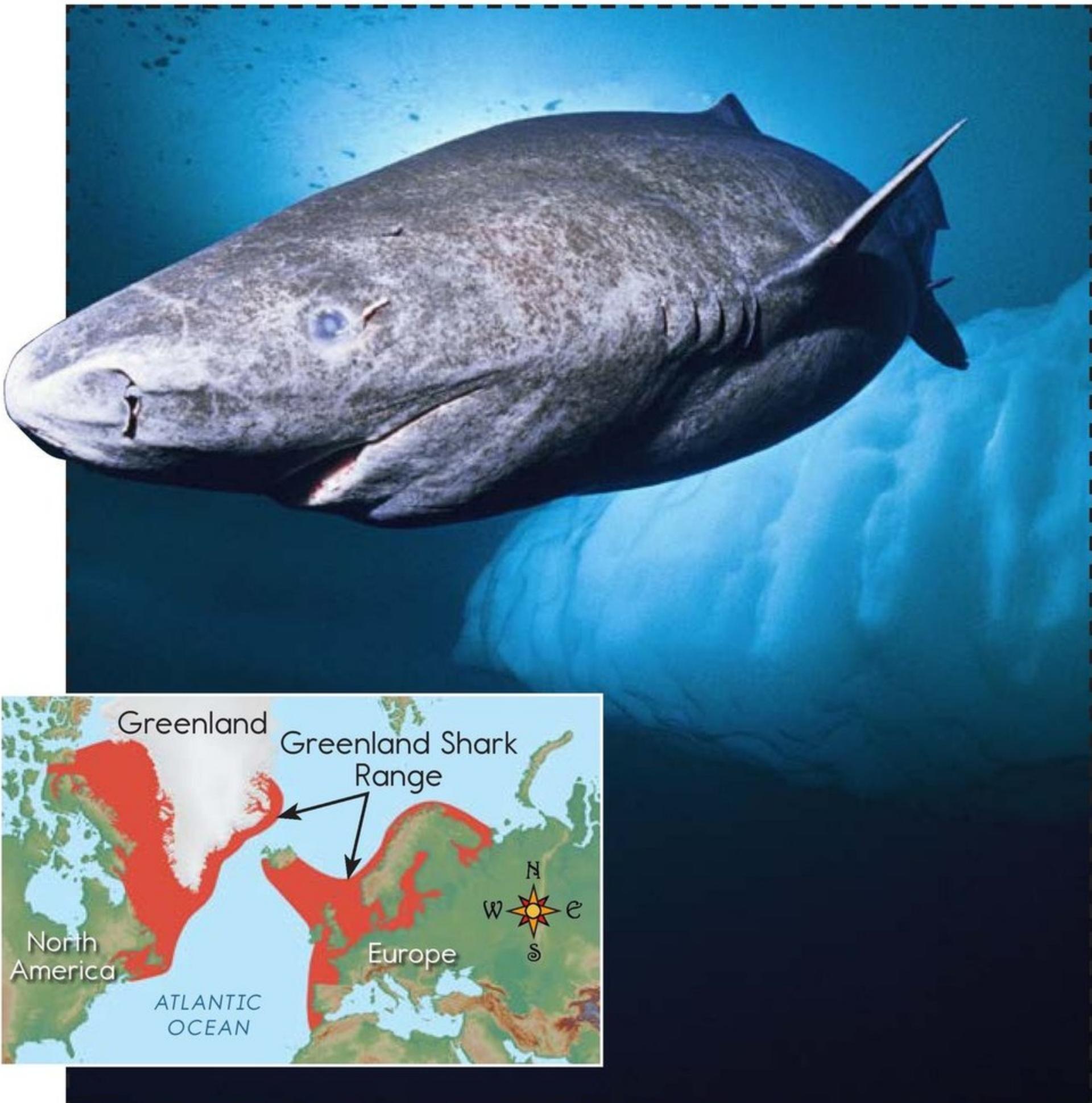


The giant yellow and black swallowtail is the largest butterfly in North America.



Swallowtail Butterfly

The large swallowtail butterfly flaps its big wings very slowly. It flaps, glides, then flaps again. It only flaps its wings about 300 times a minute. A swallowtail flies about twice as fast as a six-year-old child can walk.



The Greenland shark is so slow that it looks for sleeping seals and dead whales to eat.

Greenland Shark

We think of sharks as fast hunters. However, the Greenland shark is the slowest fish in the ocean. It lives in very cold water so it must use its energy to stay warm.

Slow Loris

The loris is a careful little animal with big eyes. It **sneaks** up on its food at night. The sneaky loris moves so slowly through tree branches that it doesn't make a sound.



The endangered slow loris lives in rainforest areas of Southeast Asia. It usually sleeps during the day and hunts at night.



There are four types of Manatees living in coastal waters around the world, and all are endangered.

Manatee

Manatees are large, gentle ocean mammals that just float around.

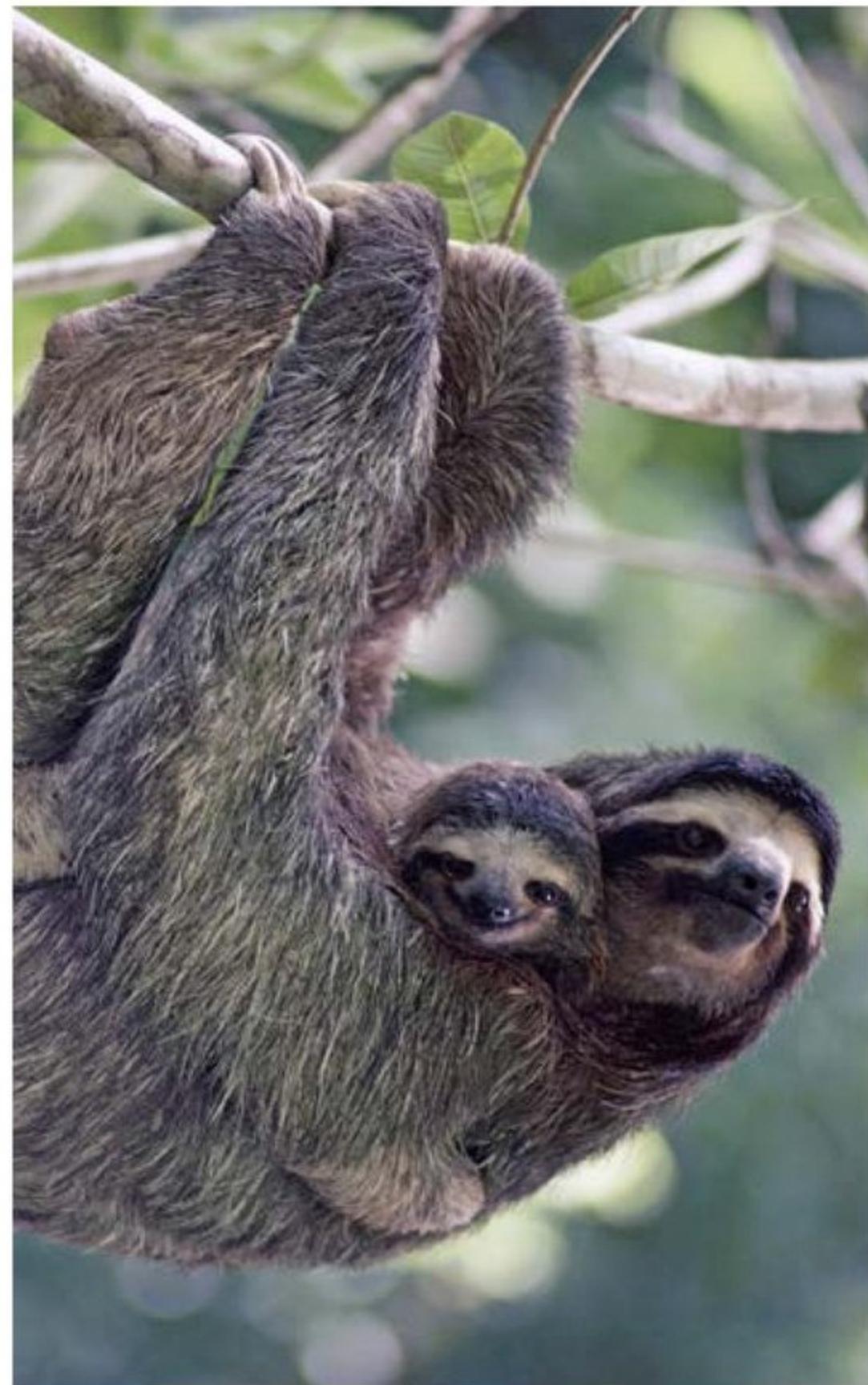
Sometimes they are called “sea cows.” They like to take their time and munch on sea grass. In an hour of munching and floating, a manatee can go about three miles.

Conclusion

Some of these animals can speed up when they need to. Some of them are just trying to save their energy. Sometimes they need that energy to heat their bodies. Sometimes what they eat doesn't give them much energy to begin with.

It's true that slow animals don't win many races. Still, they have found a way to live that works for them.

A three-toed sloth holds her baby as she hangs from a branch.



Glossary

avoid (v.)	to keep away from someone or something (p. 8)
creep (v.)	to move slowly, often close to the ground, especially to avoid being noticed (p. 5)
energy (n.)	the power to do work, make a change, or move objects (p. 12)
mammals (n.)	warm-blooded animals with a backbone and hair or fur that nurse their young and have babies that are born live (p. 14)
seldom (adv.)	not often (p. 6)
sneaks (v.)	moves while trying not to be noticed (p. 13)

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Front cover: A Galapagos Tortoise

Back cover: Crowds wait for a winner at the World Snail Racing Championships in Congham, Great Britain.

Title page: A starfish crawls on a boy's arm at a touch tank in Florida.

Table of Contents: A greenland shark

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Level I Leveled Book
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