

LEVELED BOOK • J

Goliath Beetles: Giant Insects



Written by Danny Reif

www.readinga-z.com

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Focus Question

What makes the Goliath beetle a unique insect?



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The World's Biggest Beetle

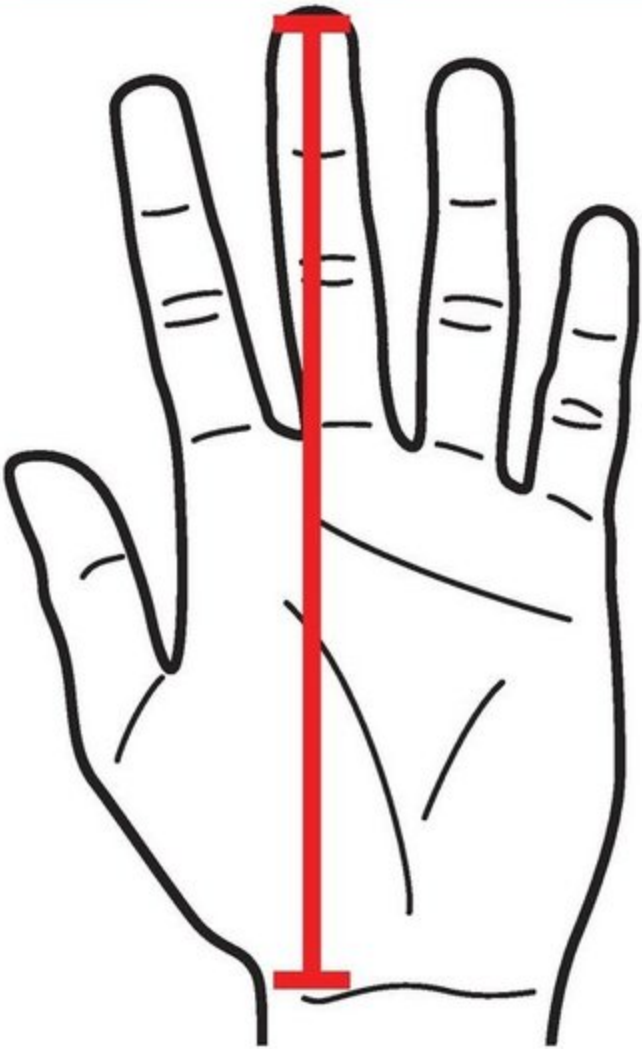
Goliath **beetles** are the giants of the insect world.

Adult Goliaths can be bigger than a songbird.

A young Goliath beetle is called a **larva**.

A larva can be even bigger than an adult beetle!

How Big Is It?



Human hand
length: 7.44 inches
(18.89 cm)
width: 3.3 inches (8.4 cm)



Goliath beetle
length: 4.33 inches
(10.99 cm)
weight: 1.7 ounces (48.2 g)



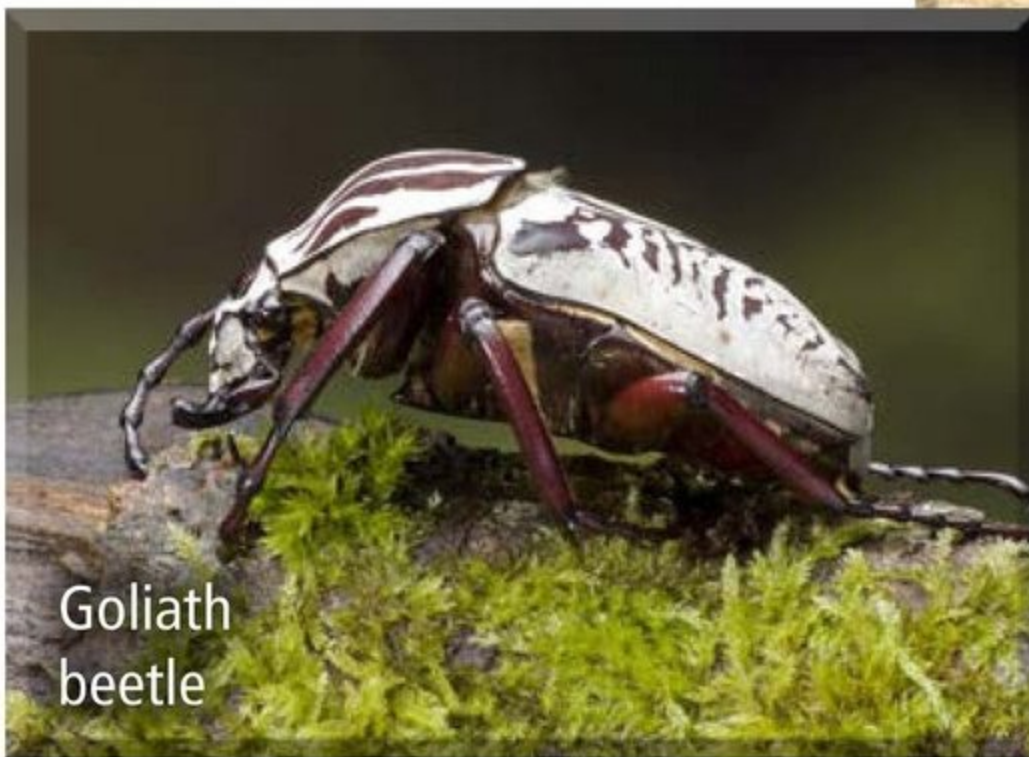
Goliath beetle larva
length: 5 inches
(12.7 cm)
weight: 3.5 ounces (99.2 g)



Rhinoceros
beetle



Hercules
beetle



Goliath
beetle

Beetles come in all shapes and sizes, but Goliath beetles are the biggest!

What Is a Beetle?

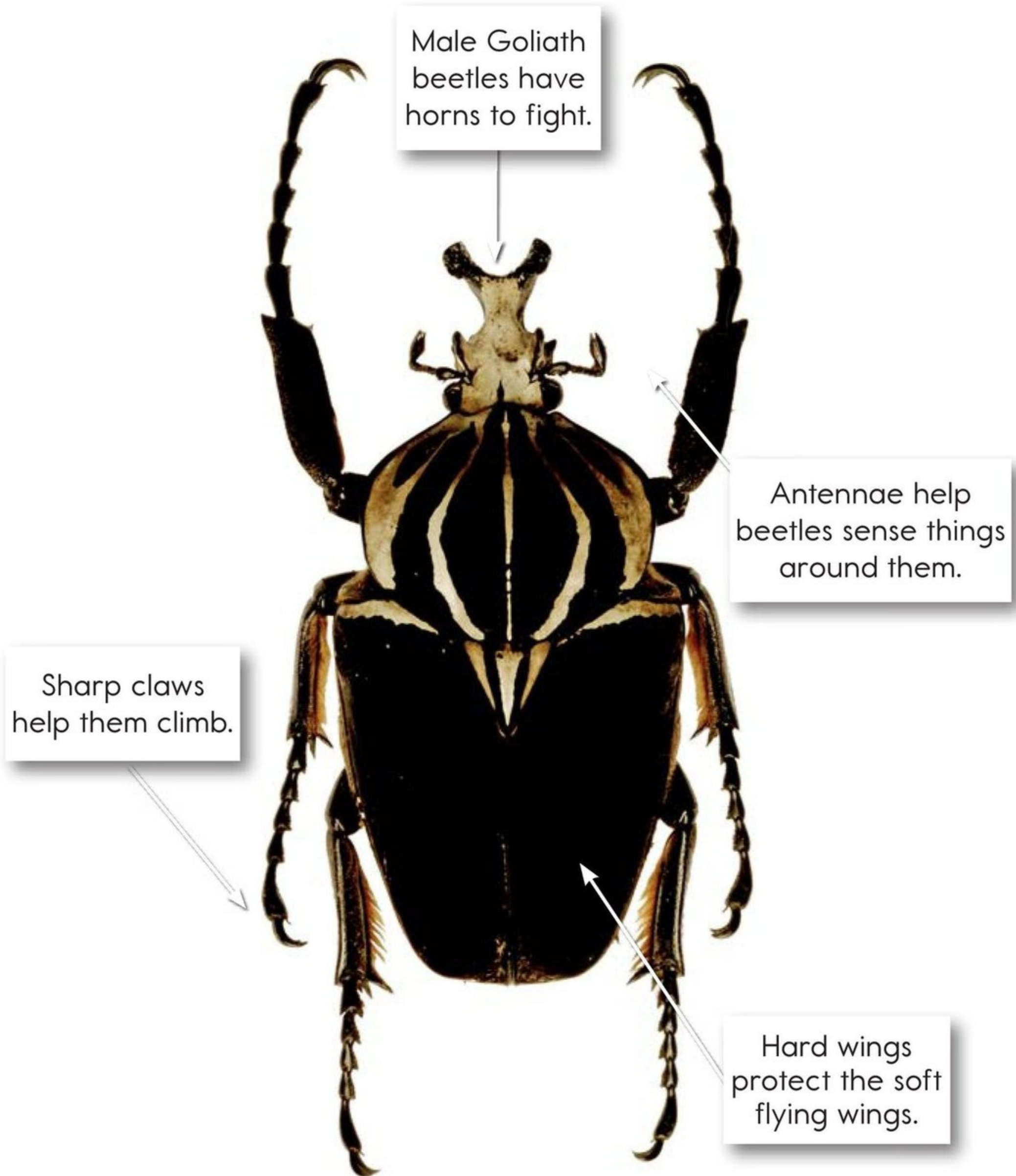
All beetles have two sets of wings.

The large wings in the back are for flying.

The front wings are smaller and harder.

They **protect** the flying wings.

What Makes a Goliath Beetle an Insect?



All insects have

- wings
- legs with joints (most have six legs)
- three main body parts
- an outside skeleton



Beetles, butterflies, and mosquitoes all get their food in different ways.

Beetles have mouths that help them chew.

Some insects, like butterflies, have mouths like straws.

Other insects have mouths like needles.

Little Zebras

Most Goliath beetles have black stripes.

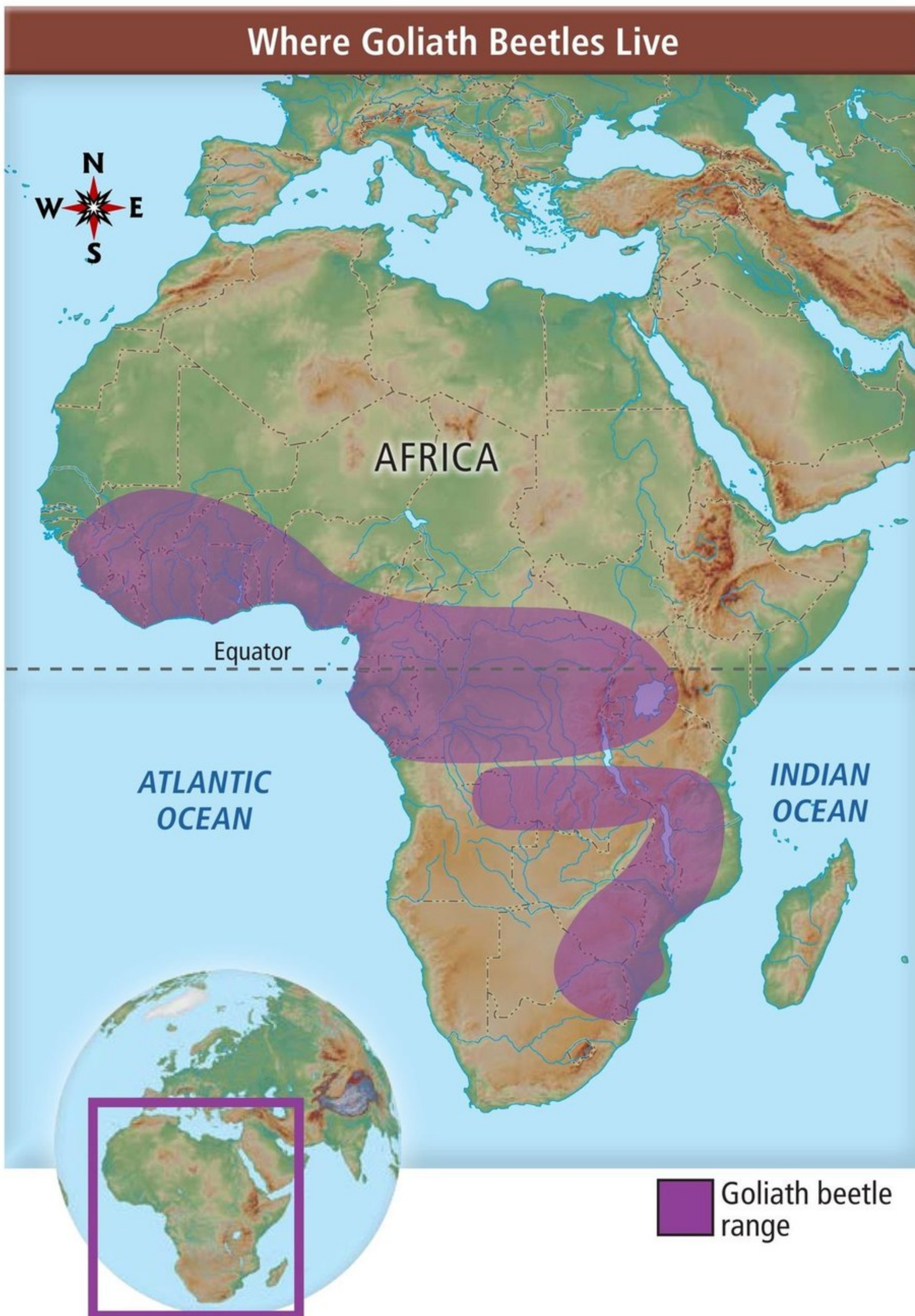
Some beetles are plain brown.

No two beetles are the same.

People once called Goliath beetles “zebra beetles” because of their stripes.

Six Types of Goliath Beetles





An African Home

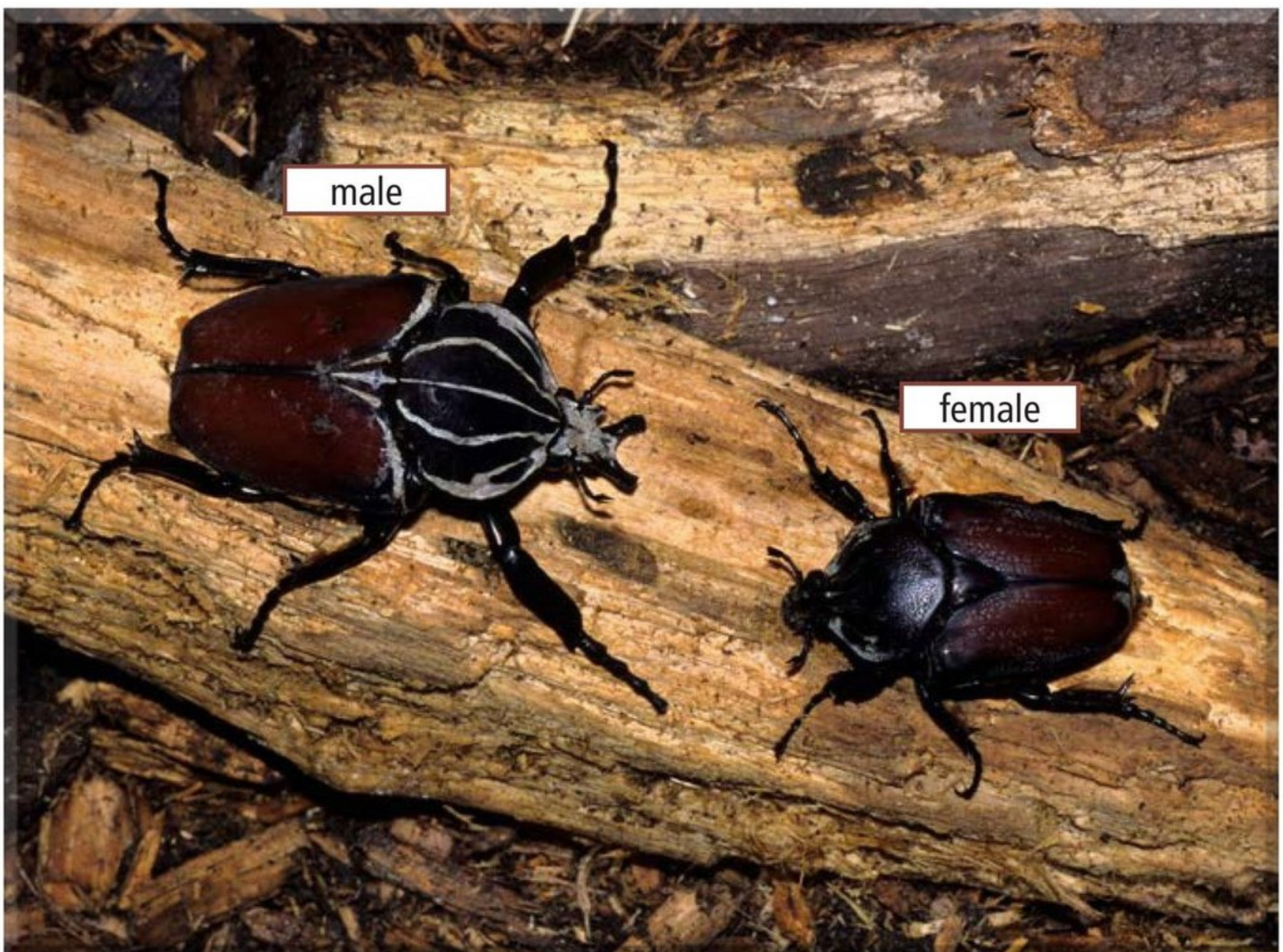
Goliath beetles live in forests and grassy parts of Africa.

They are only seen during the rainy time of year.

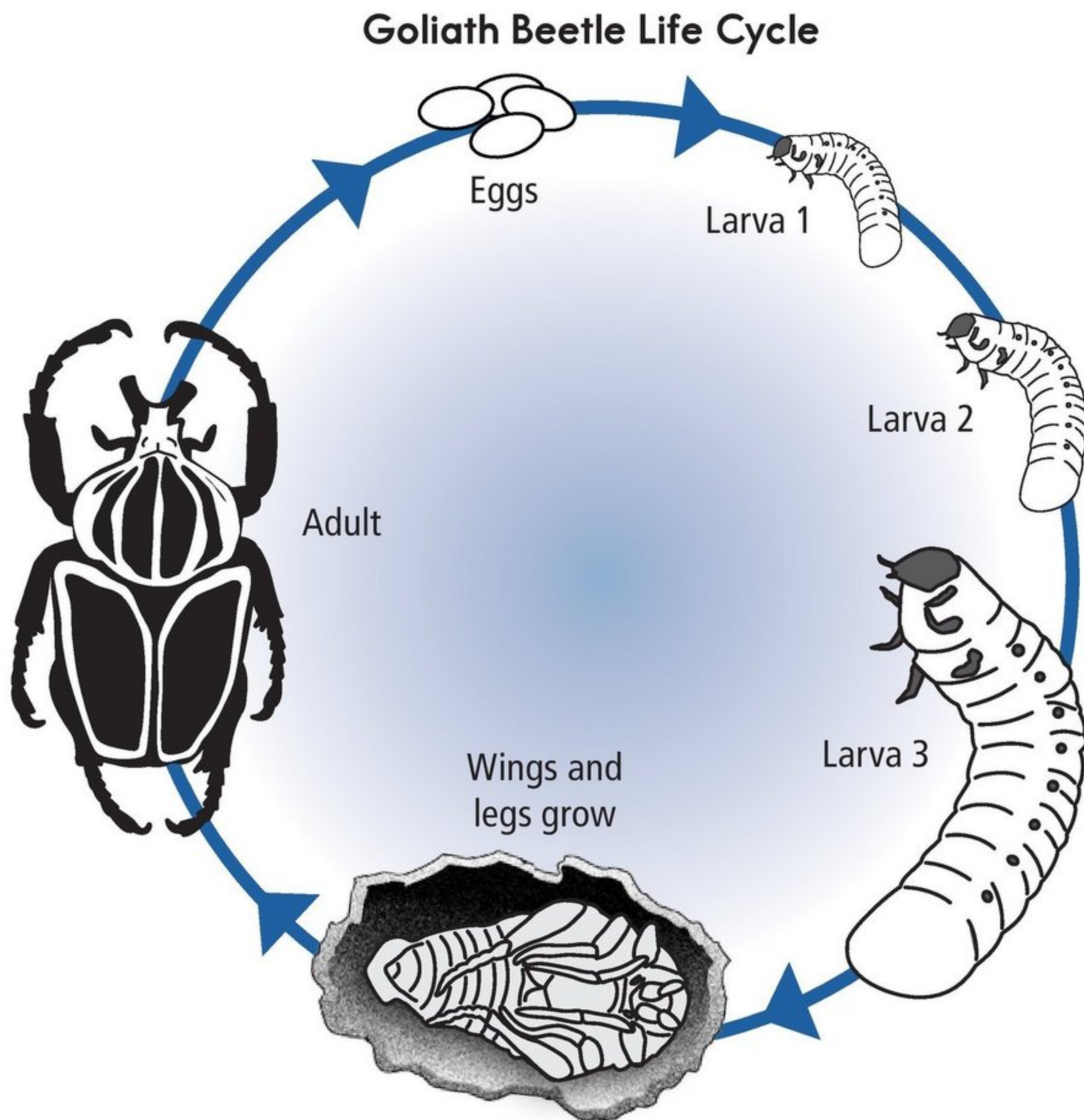
That's when there is plenty of fruit for them to eat.

Male Goliath beetles fight other males over feeding places.

Male beetles may get mates by having good feeding places.



Female Goliath beetles do not have horns. Only males have horns.



Beetles go through many changes to become an adult.

Big Changes

Female Goliath beetles put their eggs in a deep hole.

Larvae hatch about two weeks later.

The larvae eat dead plants in the **soil** and grow fast.

Larvae can be as long
as your hand.

They are as heavy as five mice!

As soon as the rain ends, the
larvae go deep into the ground.

They cover themselves with
a thin coat of sand.



This Goliath larva
eats as much as it
can under a tree
stump. (top left) This
is what a beetle
looks like just before
it becomes an adult.
(top right) This is an
adult Goliath beetle.
(right)





A Goliath beetle climbs a tree in a rainforest.

Larvae change into adult beetles
inside the coat of sand.

Adults come out when the rain
begins again.

A Short Life

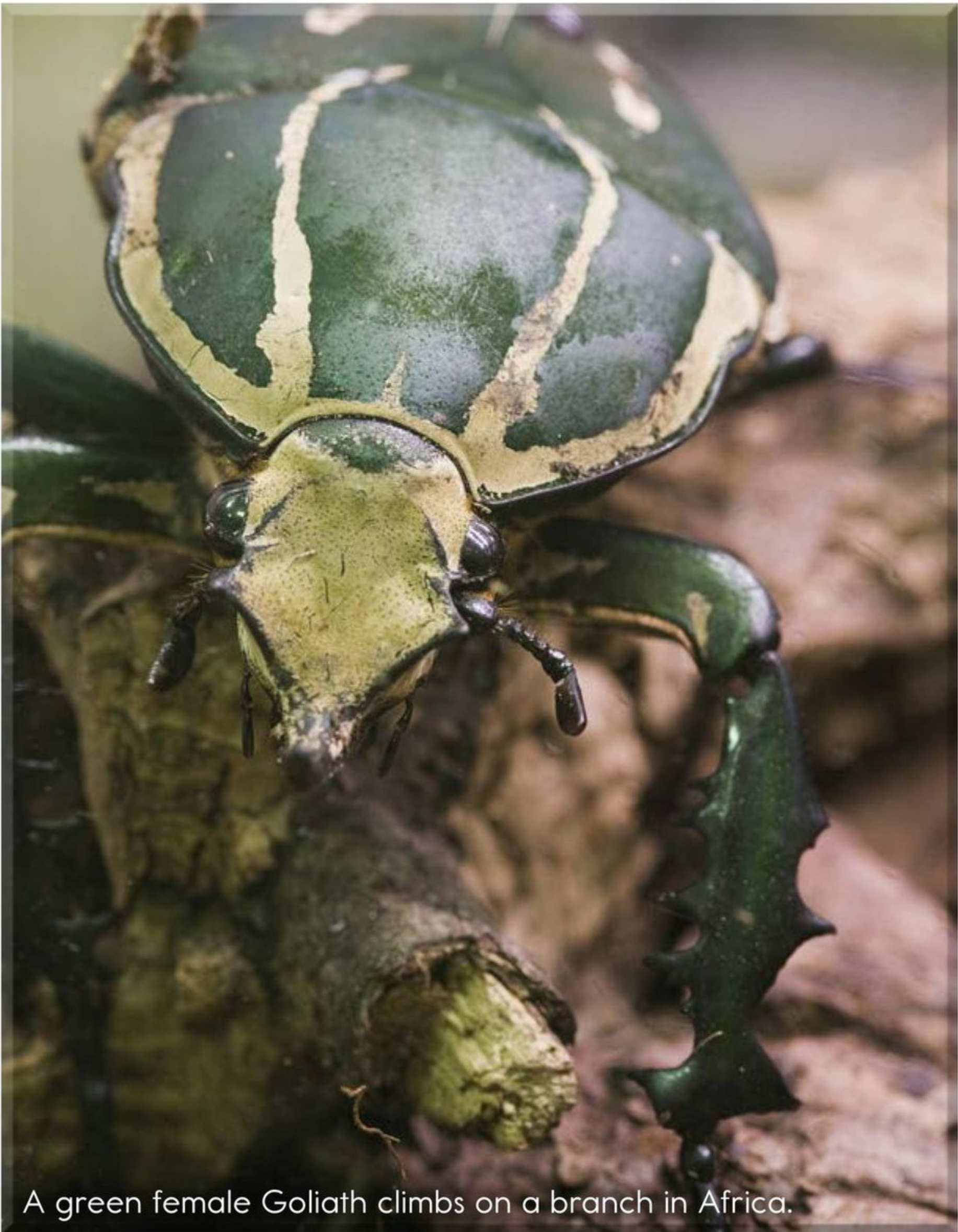
In zoos, Goliath beetles live to be about eight months old.

In the wild, Goliath beetles must find food and escape **enemies**.

They may only live for a few months.



Beetles fly quickly and can be hard to catch.



A green female Goliath climbs on a branch in Africa.

Conclusion

People have been studying Goliath beetles for hundreds of years.

They are rare and interesting to see.
Goliath beetles are amazing insects!

Glossary

adult (<i>n.</i>)	the stage in which a person or other animal is fully grown (p. 4)
beetles (<i>n.</i>)	kinds of insects with hard shells (p. 4)
enemies (<i>n.</i>)	living things that hate or hurt other living things (p. 14)
larva (<i>n.</i>)	the young form of an animal that goes through major body changes before it looks like an adult of its kind (p. 4)
protect (<i>v.</i>)	to guard or defend from harm or danger (p. 5)
soil (<i>n.</i>)	the top layer of the ground in which plants grow; dirt (p. 11)

Words to Know

adult

beetles

enemies

larva

protect

soil

Front cover: Goliath beetles are too big to climb on flowers. They climb on trees and other bigger plants instead.

Title page: An adult Goliath beetle is almost as big as a human hand.

Page 3: Goliath beetles have soft wings for flying.

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