

LEVELED BOOK • I

# *Fast and Faster*

Written by Katherine Follett

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## How Fast?

How fast can you run?

How fast can you swim?

Humans are slow **compared**  
to some animals.

Which animals are the fastest?



Cheetahs are built to go fast. They are thin. Long tails help them to steer as they run.

## Running

The fastest runner is the cheetah.

It can go as fast as a car on  
a highway!

Cheetahs can only run that **speed**  
for a short time, though.

They **sprint** to catch **prey**.






Gazelles usually live in wide-open spaces. This makes them easy to spot, but they can often outrun predators.

Cheetahs eat gazelles, which are not quite as fast as cheetahs.

Gazelles can run fast for a longer time, though.


## Who's Fastest on Land?



**Human:**  
20 mph (32 kph)



**Gazelle:**  
50 mph (80 kph)



**Cheetah:**  
70 mph (112 kph)



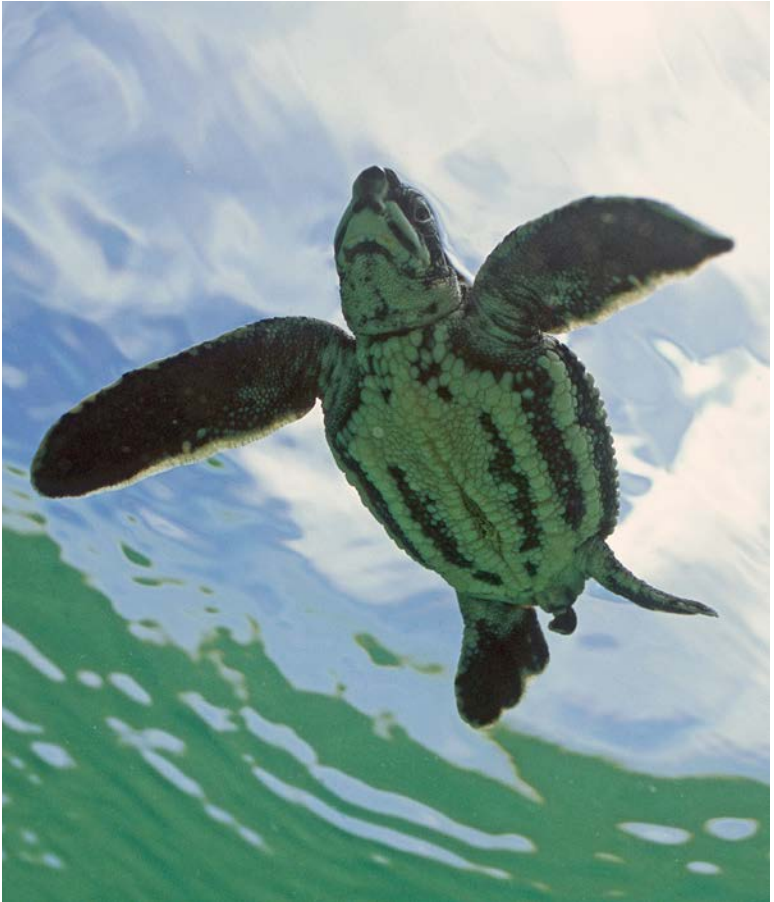
This tiger beetle lives in Australia. It can run so fast that its eyes and brain can't do their jobs. The result? It becomes blind until it stops running.

Small animals are slower than big animals, but some go fast for their size.

The tiger beetle runs 170 times the length of its body in one second.

If humans could do that, they could race jet planes!





Sea turtles are fast swimmers—and strong swimmers. Some migrate thousands of miles each year.

## Swimming

Turtles are slow on land, yet the world's fastest reptile is a turtle! It can swim four times as fast as a human.



Sailfish and swordfish catch and eat smaller fish.

The fastest animal in the sea is  
the sailfish.


In a race, it can easily beat most  
motorboats.

Its cousin the swordfish is almost  
as fast.


## Who's Speedy in the Sea?



**Human:**  
5 mph (8 kph)



**Turtle:**  
22 mph (35 kph)



**Sailfish:**  
68 mph (110 kph)



Bats are the only mammals capable of true flight.

## Flying

Flying is the fastest way to get around.

Some of the fastest animals are birds, bats, and insects.

Dragonflies are the fastest insects.

They catch and eat other flying insects.

They can even fly backwards!



A dragonfly's wings allow it to move sideways, backwards, or just to hover in place.



Falcons hunt using sharp eyesight.

The fastest animal on Earth is the peregrine falcon.

It hunts other birds by diving on them from above.

During a dive, it tucks in its wings and **sails** straight down.



## Who's Awesome in the Air?



**Dragonfly:**  
60 mph (96 kph)



**Mexican  
free-tailed bat:**  
60 mph (96 kph)

**Peregrine falcon:**  
242 mph (389 kph)





The ostrich is too big to fly, but it can run 45 mph (72 kph). That makes it the fastest runner on two legs!

## So Fast

Cheetahs run as fast as a car.

Sailfish swim faster than  
a motorboat.

Falcons dive as fast as an airplane.

Animals can reach **amazing** speeds!

## Glossary

- amazing** (*adj.*) causing great wonder or surprise (p. 15)
- compared** (*v.*) looked at something to see how it is the same or different from something else (p. 4)
- prey** (*n.*) an animal that is hunted and eaten by a predator (p. 5)
- sails** (*v.*) moves through the air; moves in a smooth, easy, or graceful manner (p. 13)
- speed** (*n.*) the rate at which something moves or happens (p. 5)
- sprint** (*v.*) to run or go as fast as possible, usually for a short distance (p. 5)

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Title page: The quarter horse has been clocked at speeds up to 55 mph (86kph).

Back cover: Africa is home to many fast runners, but not all of them. The pronghorn antelope can reach 61 mph (98 kph). It lives in the Western United States.

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