

LEVELED BOOK • 0

# Wonders of Nature

**Multi  
level  
J•O•R**

Written by Cheryl Ryan

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## Introduction

The world is full of strange and interesting animals. Some animals look unusual or have special abilities. Let's look at some of these wonders of nature.



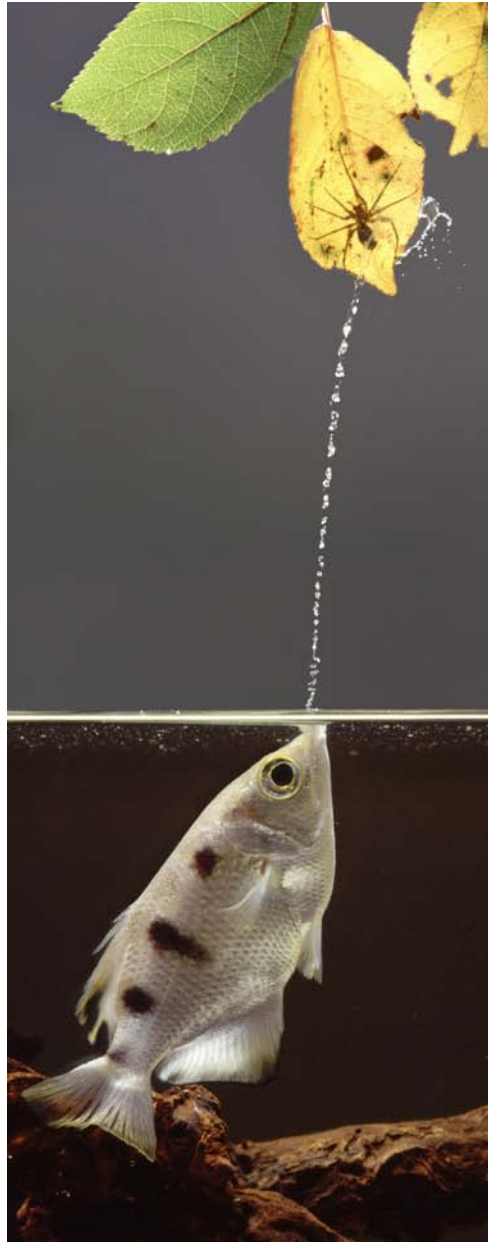
A male bower bird collects colorful objects for its home.

## Archerfish

Archerfish spit drops of water at insects and spiders to knock them off leaves and branches near the water.

Archerfish have very good aim and can squirt water over long distances. When the bugs fall into the water, the archerfish eat them.

Archerfish may also leap all the way out of the water to catch bugs.



## Trap-Door Spider

A trap-door spider lives in a sticky **underground** tunnel with a hidden door made of **silk** and dirt. The silk in the door helps keep water out of the spider's tunnel when it rains. When an insect passes close to the door, the trap-door spider senses its movements and jumps out to grab it.







## Beaver

Beavers chew through tree trunks with their sharp teeth. They build large dams in rivers and streams using the tree trunks, branches, mud, clay, and stones. Beavers build their homes, which are called lodges, in the ponds formed by the dams. By creating ponds, beavers change the landscapes of the areas they live in. The **wetlands** that beavers create with their dams become home to many other animals.

## Chameleon

Chameleons are lizards that can change color to hide. When the air gets warmer or colder, their skin changes color. They even change color to show how they

feel. Chameleons catch insects with their long tongues, which can be twice as long as their bodies.

Chameleons can point each of their eyes in a different direction at the same time to help them see all around them.

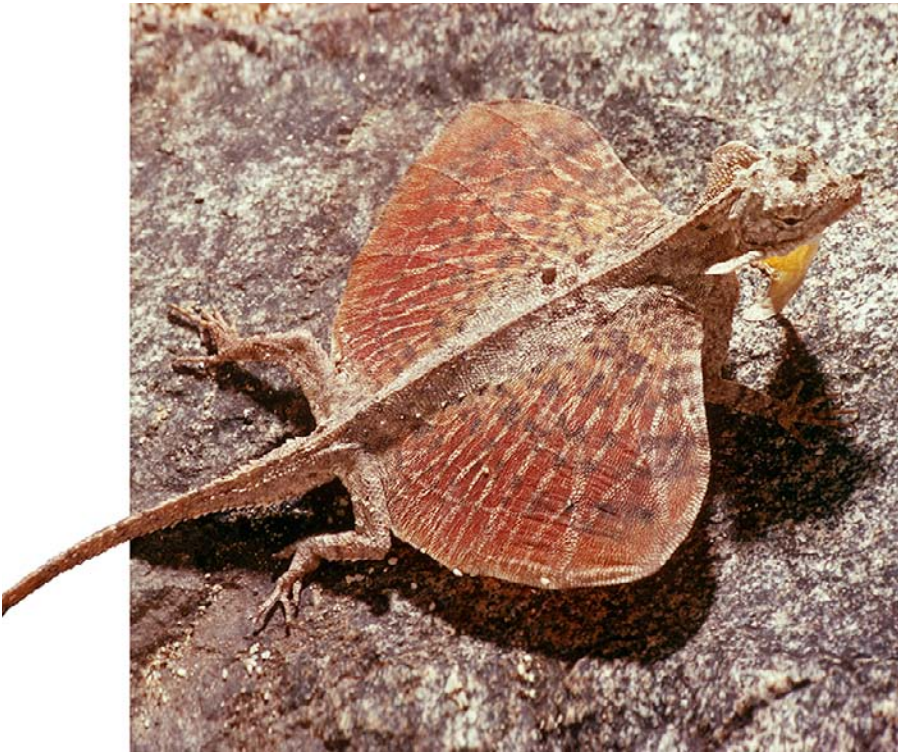
When they spot an insect they want to eat, chameleons focus both of their eyes forward to help them aim their tongues.





## Flying Dragon

Flying dragons are small lizards that can **glide** through the air from tree to tree. They have folds of skin on the sides of their bodies that open like wings. The wings are brightly colored and have spots and stripes on them. Flying dragons use their sticky tongues to catch and eat insects, mainly ants and termites.



## Leaf Insect

Leaf insects are usually found in the **tropical** areas of Asia. Their bodies, wings, and legs look like leaves, which allows them to blend in with real leaves on trees. Their eggs look like seeds. The eggs can take more than a year to hatch. Baby leaf insects are red, but when they start eating leaves, they turn green.



## Leaf-Rolling Weevil

In the summer, the female leaf-rolling weevil rolls a leaf into a cone shape. She can take up to two hours getting the leaf just right. She lays her eggs inside the cone and then closes the open end. When the leaf falls to the ground in autumn, it carries the eggs with it. The leaf hides and protects the eggs until they hatch. When the **larvae** hatch, they eat the dead leaf.





## Praying Mantis

The praying mantis often holds its front legs in a praying position. Mantises hide on plants to catch their food.

Some mantises are green to blend in with leaves, and some that live in the desert are the color of sand. The praying mantis eats many types of insects as well as small frogs, lizards, and mice. Praying mantises can even catch and eat small birds such as hummingbirds.



## Mole

Moles **burrow** underground to find and eat earthworms. They also eat beetles, slugs, and snails. A mole digs many connected tunnels, creating a maze. It builds its nest deep in these tunnels. Because its fur points up, a mole can move backward and forward in a tunnel



without getting dirt trapped in its coat. Moles have tiny eyes, but they are not blind.



Side view of a mole's nest and tunnels

## Sea Dragon

Sea dragons are small fish that are related to sea horses. Their bodies have many parts that look like the stems and leaves of seaweed. They blend in with ocean plants, which helps them catch food and hide from enemies. Sea dragons use small, clear fins on their necks and backs to swim. The female lays eggs on the male sea dragon's tail, and the male carries the eggs until they hatch.





## Conclusion

Interesting animals come in many shapes and sizes. Their special looks and abilities help them to survive. All these animals are wonders of nature.



The three-wattled bell bird makes a strange sound.

## Glossary

<b>burrow</b> ( <i>v.</i> )	to dig a tunnel (p. 13)
<b>glide</b> ( <i>v.</i> )	to move smoothly and without effort through air or water (p. 9)
<b>larvae</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	baby insects that will change before they become adults (p. 11)
<b>silk</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	strong threads made by a spider or silkworm (p. 6)
<b>tropical</b> ( <i>adj.</i> )	of or happening in the tropics (p. 10)
<b>underground</b> ( <i>adj.</i> )	below the ground (p. 6)
<b>wetlands</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	areas of land that are marshy or swampy (p. 7)

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