

Unique Animal Skills

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Many animals develop adaptations and different mechanisms to cope with their environment and to avoid predation.

Examples of convergent evolution occur across the globe. For example, think of how many animals have developed poisons to immobilize their prey.

Some animals have taken it a step further and developed something that is extremely unique.



The banner features the Explorable logo (a flask icon) and the text "EXPLORABLE Quiz Time!". Below the logo are three quiz cards:

-  Quiz: Psychology 101 Part 2
-  Quiz: Psychology 101 Part 2
-  Quiz: Flags in Europe

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The Pistol Shrimp

These small invertebrates look fairly innocuous. Like many crustaceans, they have one claw that is larger than the other and in most respects looks like typical shrimp. They are carnivores and eat other shrimp and planktonic animals.

That larger claw however is very unique. He can cock it like a pistol and when it goes off, it shoots a stream of water at his prey.

This stream of water travels at 60 mph and briefly reaches a temperature of over 8,000 F.

In its wake, is a stream of bubble which produces a sound of over 218 decibels when it collapses. This is as loud as a gunshot and they are less than an inch long.

The whole affair lasts fractions of a second but is more than enough to stun his prey so he can move in for the kill.

Komodo Dragon

The Komodo dragon is the world's largest lizard. They live on an island with no natural predators.

At over ten feet in length, they can easily bring down small animals but that just isn't enough for the Komodo dragon. He wants it all and that is exactly what he gets.

For reasons unknown, the Komodo dragon has an incredibly filthy, bacteria-laden mouth. Some samples have found up to 57 different species of bacteria including E. Coli, Staphylococcus, and Providencia in a single lizard's mouth.

Most amazing is the fact that the lizard does not get sick from all the bacteria and it disappears in captivity.

Just in case that isn't enough, Komodo dragons also have two large venom glands that inject a severely debilitating toxin into the bite created by the over 60 highly serrated teeth in the dragon's mouth.

The toxin affects the blood's ability to clot, leading to loss of blood pressure and severe bleeding and, ultimately, shock. The dragon just bites his victim and waits for it to drop before moving in for the kill.

Hippopotamus

The hippo is one of the deadliest African animals but he has sensitive skin and spends long periods of time submerged in mud to help protect it from the strong African sun and protect wounds from becoming infected in his natural environment.

To overcome this, the hippo has developed a special secretion that acts as both a sunscreen and antibacterial agent. It looks like blood, earning it the name "blood sweat" even though it is not blood or sweat at all.

Anglerfish

The male anglerfish is all about sex, literally.

The females are large fish. The males are small fish that attach to the female by biting her and fusing to her body. Once that occurs, they gradually devolve into nothing more than a pair of gonads that release sperm whenever she releases eggs.

In the absence of females, the male will actually grow and become a female himself (or is that herself?).

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