

Animal Atlas: Meet the animals of Africa

By Rachel Williams and Emily Hawkins, "Atlas of Animal Adventures," adapted by Newsela staff on 07.31.17

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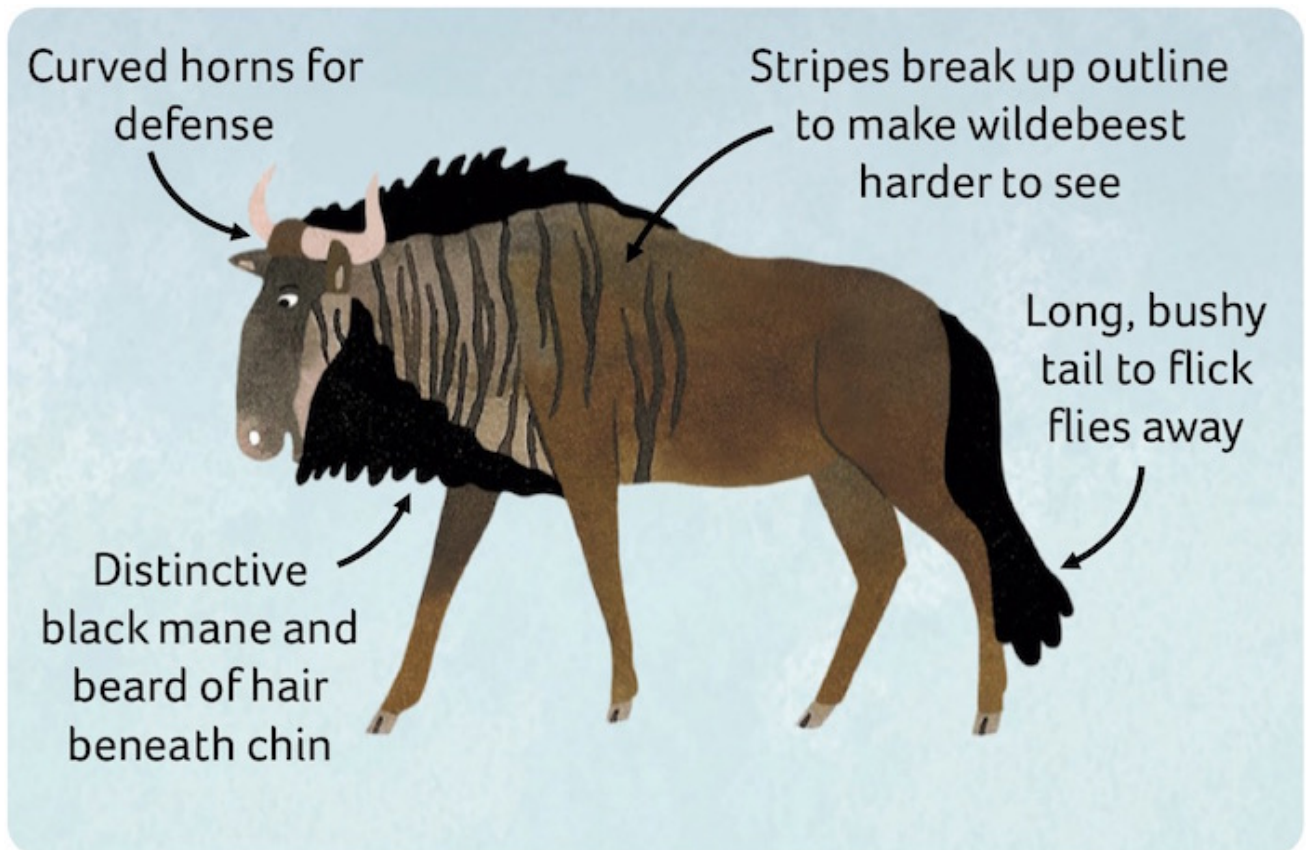
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The giraffe is one of many animals that live in Africa. Photo from: Pixabay. Illustrations: Lucy Letherland, "Atlas of Animal Adventures"/Newsela.

The continent of Africa is home to many amazing animals. There are lions and leopards. There are elephants and giraffes. Africa's grasslands, jungles and oceans are full of creatures. Each animal has its own secrets to help it survive.

Running With The Wildebeest In Kenya

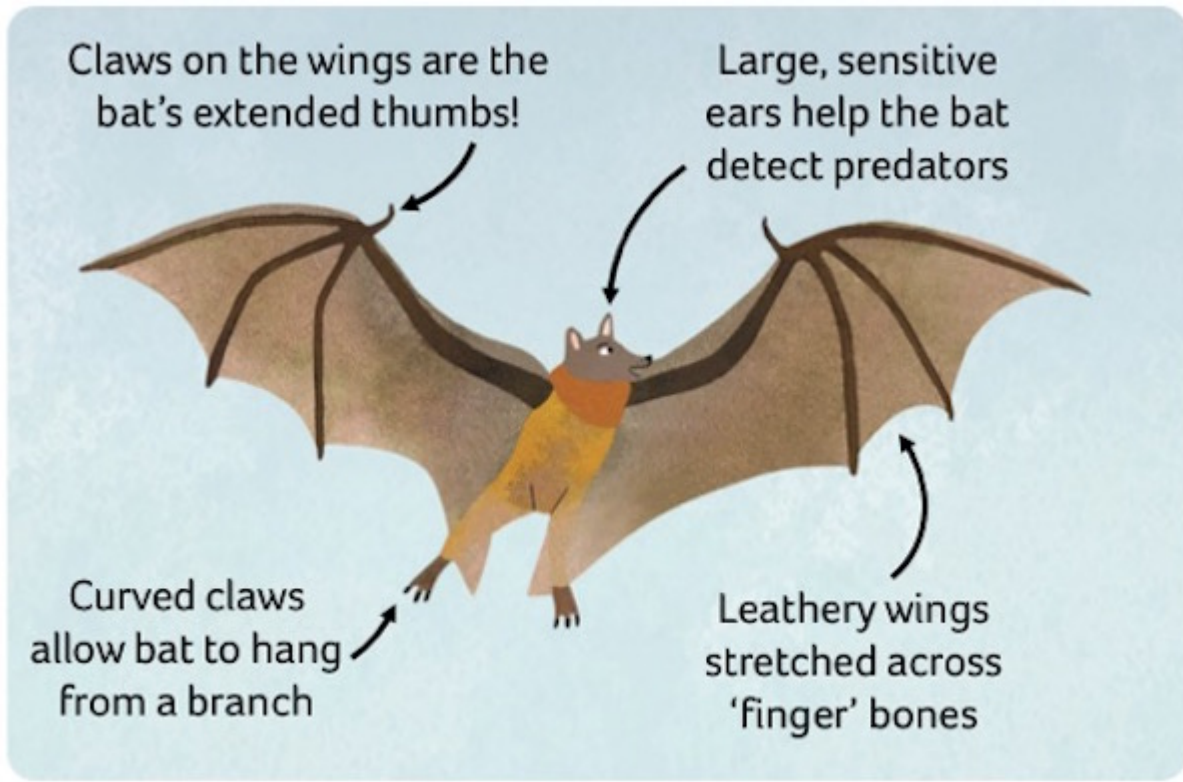


Every year, an amazing event takes place in East Africa. It happens between July and September. Thousands of animals are on the move. Wildebeests, zebras and gazelles all head north. They follow the rain in this direction. The animals are on their way to the green lands of the Masai Mara.

There is only one problem. The Mara River blocks their way.

Every animal must swim across this river. It is the only way to reach the green grazing land on the other side. The rushing water is very dangerous. And there are other threats, too. The animals must be careful to avoid crocodiles in the water. On the other side, hungry lions wait. In this fight for life, only the strong or the very lucky will live.

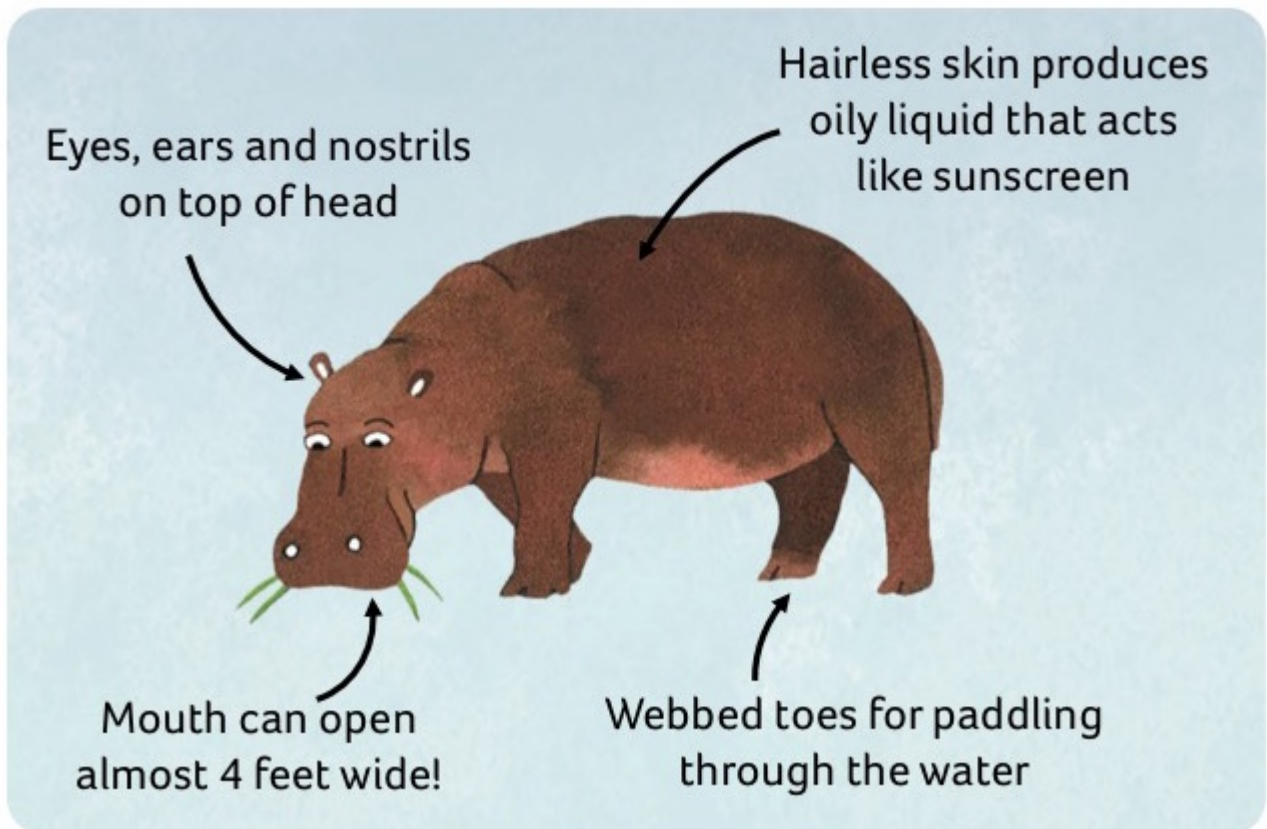
Hanging Out With The Fruit Bats Of Zambia



In November and December, a special event takes place in Zambia. It happens every year. Fruit bats gather in Kasanka National Park. They settle in the trees. The forest is filled with tasty fruits. The bats have flocked here to eat them.

During the day, the bats sleep. But as night falls, they head out to feast. The skies fill with fluttering wings. Millions of bats take flight!

Battling With The Hippos Of Botswana

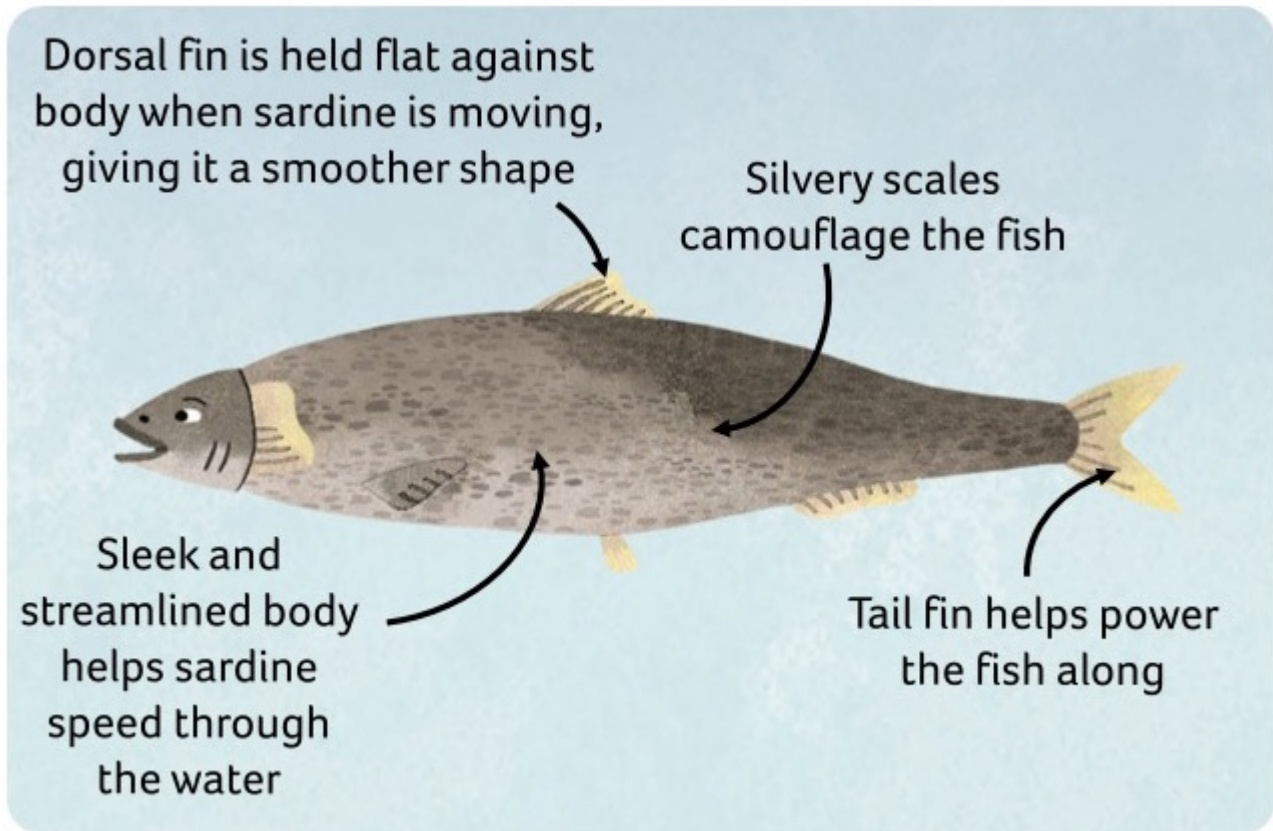


The Kalahari Desert is in Southern Africa. Once a year, a river floods part of the desert. It turns the dry land into a happy, watery home for many animals.

One very famous water animal lives here: the hippo. When the river floods, groups of female hippos gather around a single male hippo. The male is ready to fight off other males. He wants to keep his mates for himself.

If another male hippo shows up, the two will fight. The hippos wrestle in the water. They push each other back and forth. There can only be one winner. If he wants to keep his territory, he will face many more battles yet.

Swimming With The Sardines Of South Africa

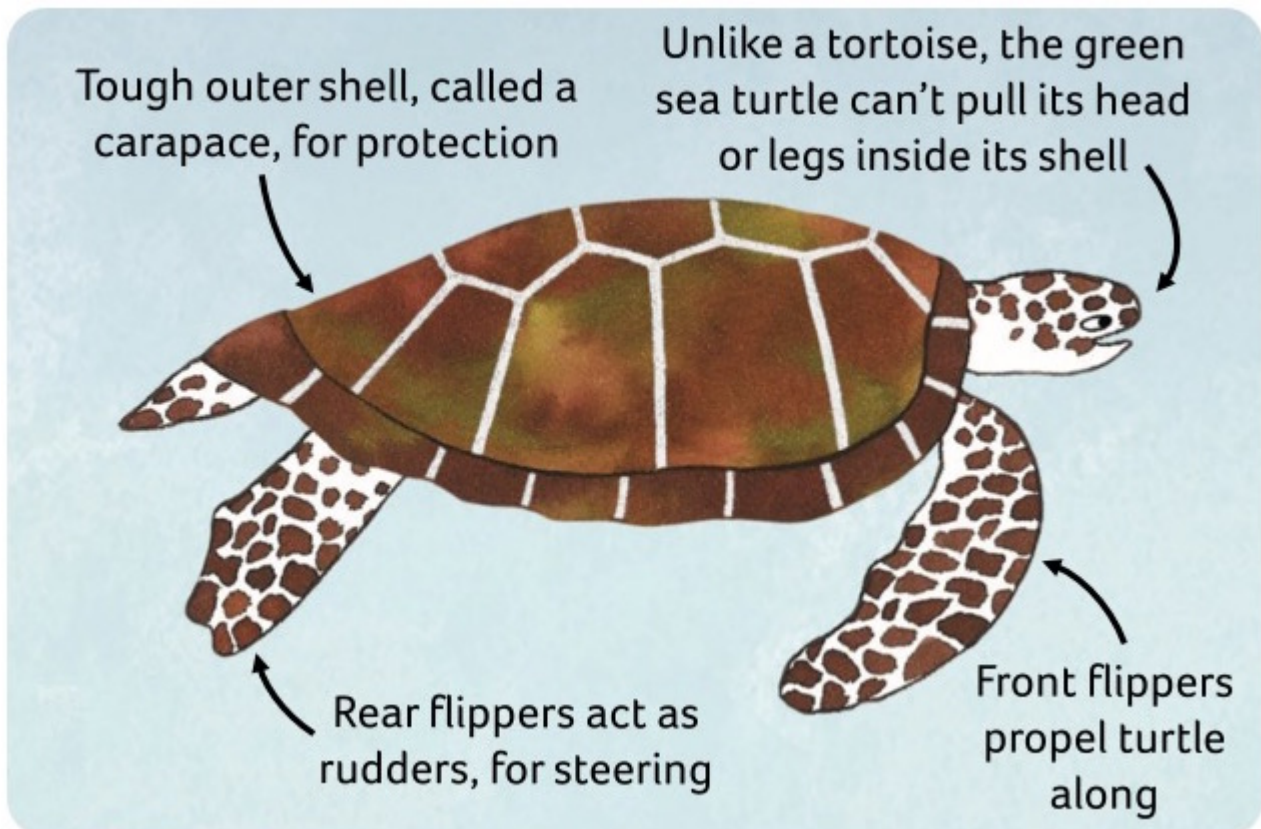


Each year, an amazing event takes place in the ocean. It happens along the coast of South Africa. The event is called the Great Sardine Run.

Sardines are very small fish. For a few weeks each year, big groups of sardines are swept along the coast. The fish group together to stay safe. Some groups are up to nine miles long. Each group can contain millions of fish.

The sardines do not swim alone. They are followed by many predators. Dolphins, whales and sharks chase the sardines, trying to snap up a snack.

Hatching With The Green Sea Turtles Of West Africa



Life is not easy for baby sea turtles. As soon as they are born, they must begin an important journey. The baby turtles are born in the sand. They must quickly run from their nests. These turtles are trying to reach the safety of the ocean.

First, the turtles have to escape from their shells. Once they get out, they turn to face the sea. Getting to the sea is not easy. There are many predators around looking for a meal. It is a dangerous race to the ocean. Every baby sea turtle that makes it to the water is a winner.

