

# EXTREME ANIMALS

by JANE BUXTON



# STRATEGIES & SKILLS

## Comprehension

**Strategy:** Summarize

**Skill:** Main Idea and Key  
Details

## Content Standards Science

Life Science

## Vocabulary

camouflaged, dribbled,  
extraordinary, poisonous,  
pounces, predators, prey,  
vibrations

Word Count: 1,037\*\*

**Photography Credit:** Nature/UiG/Universal Images Group/Getty Images

\*\*The total word count is based on words in the running text and headings only. Numerals and words in captions, labels, diagrams, charts, and sidebars are not included.

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## Essential Question

What helps an animal survive?

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# INTRODUCTION

There are many kinds of **environments** on Earth. There are hot deserts and oceans, rivers, and lakes. There are grassy plains and rain forests.

Animals can live in all of these environments because they have adaptations. An adaptation is a special feature that helps an animal survive.

Some adaptations help animals find food. Some help them stay safe from **predators** that hunt them.

Animals can have physical adaptations. Some animals have thick fur to keep them warm. Other animals have large ears to listen for **prey**, or the animals they hunt for food. They can also hear an enemy before it pounces.

Some adaptations are so extraordinary you would never think of them!

The big ears of the fennec fox help it stay cool in the desert.



## CHAPTER 1 **SURVIVING IN THE DESERT AND THE RAIN FOREST**

A desert is a tough place for animals to live. Some have strange ways of surviving.

The Texas horned lizard squirts blood from its eyes when a predator gets too close. It also puffs up its body. This makes it look too big for its enemy to eat.

A horned lizard's sharp spines protect it from being eaten.



The Texas horned lizard is hard to see in the desert.



Javelinas live in groups to stay safe.

The javelina (*hah-ve-LEE-nah*) also lives in the desert. This small, smelly animal looks like a pig.

If it sees a predator, the javelina makes a clattering noise. It raises the hairs on its back so it looks bigger. It also has a strong odor, or smell, to warn other javelinas of danger.



In the rain forest, it is useful for animals to be able to climb trees. This lets an animal get away from predators.


The sloth lives mostly in the treetops. It has strong, curved claws. It uses them to climb and hang upside down from trees.

The sloth moves slowly so that predators don't see it. Green algae grows in its fur. This helps the sloth hide.



Sloths hang upside down 24 hours a day.



A close-up photograph of an aye-aye, a nocturnal primate from Madagascar. It has large, round, yellow eyes and long, thin, spiky fur. It is perched on a green leaf, with its long, thin fingers visible. The background is dark and out of focus.

The aye-aye sees well at night with its big, round eyes.

The aye-aye lives in Madagascar, near Africa. It hunts beetle larvae, which live inside rotting wood. The aye-aye makes a hole in the wood with its sharp teeth. Then it pulls out the larvae with a long finger.

The aye-aye is **endangered**. It may become **extinct**. People have hunted it. A lot of the forest where it lives has been cut down. There are laws now to keep people from hunting aye-ayes.

#### STOP AND CHECK

What adaptations help animals live in the desert and the rain forest?

## CHAPTER 2

# WATERY ENVIRONMENTS

Some **mammals** have adaptations for living in water. The Florida manatee has a smooth body. It has a strong tail and two front flippers to help it swim. A layer of fat under its skin keeps it warm.

A manatee has a special top lip. It can use its lip to grab onto the plants it eats.

Manatees eat seagrass.

Jim Reid/USFWS

