

世界猎奇

Fascinating FACTS

孙丕普 丛光 主编

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主 编 孙丕普 丛 光
副主编 郭衍珠 张仲平

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编译委 尹汝昭 丛 光 孙丕普
刘玉萍 陈心富 张仲平
张松涛 张 翔 赵化学
姚锡贞 郭衍珠

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孙丕普 丛 光主编

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编译说明

在美国工作学习之余，我们编译了《世界猎奇》一书。

一九八七年八月底，我们去美国宾夕法尼亚州爱丁堡罗大学讲学、进修。不久，我们发现当地电视台的晚间新闻节目中总是以“你知道吗？”(Do You Know?) 插播一条令人赏心悦目的事实。这些事实涉猎范围广，知识性强，其内容远非几本普通教科书所能覆盖。因此，我们就产生了收集这方面的材料、将其编译成册以飨我国读者的愿望。在美国爱丁堡罗大学里德博士和当地电视台的大力协助下，我们终于完成了《世界猎奇》一书的编译工作。

我们以丰富的知识性和浓厚的趣味性作为本书的选材原则，以翔实的资料、地道的语言作为本书的风格，在内容上不仅力求广泛、新颖，而且尽量包括那些读者关心并渴望了解的事实、见闻。

本书分五个专题：一、动物与植物；二、自然与科学；三、人与社会；四、美国；五、语言、风俗与其它。前半部分为英文，后半部分为相应的译文。

由于水平有限，编译不当之处在所难免，敬望读者指正。

编者

1991年10月

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（以下页码因模糊无法识别，推测为五位数）

I . Animals and Plants

1. The white shark (*Carcharodon* sp):

has teeth that rank on a scale of hardness with steel.

is the only creature in the sea with no natural enemies; even killer whales normally avoid it.

can survive brain damage better than any animal in the world.

never gets sick. It has mysterious antibodies that give it immunity to practically every known bacterial invader. It is also one of the few animals known to be completely immune to cancer.

can hear sounds a mile away.

is always hungry; no matter how much it eats, its appetite is never satisfied — it lives in a state of continual hunger.

Despite their ferocity and reputation, however, sharks rarely attack man. Three times as many people are killed each year by lightning as are killed by sharks. A hundred more people die from bee stings each year than from shark bites.

2. The teeth of the tiger shark rest on a spring. When the shark's mouth is closed, the teeth are pressed back firmly against the gums. When the mouth is opened, the teeth spring out, ready for action.

Lemon sharks grow a new set of teeth every two weeks.

They grow more than 24,000 new teeth every year.

3. The hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*):

is, next to the elephant, the heaviest of all land mammals, larger even than the rhinoceros. It may weigh as much as 8,000 pounds.

is a close relative of the pig.

can open its mouth wide enough to accommodate a 4-foot-tall child.

has skin an inch and a half thick, so solid that most bullets cannot penetrate it.

has a stomach 10 feet long, capable of holding 6 bushels of grass.

The hippopotamus is born underwater.

A hippopotamus can run faster than a man.

When a hippopotamus exerts itself, gets angry, or stays out of the water for too long, it exudes red sweatlike mucus through its skin.

4. The crocodile (*Crocodylus* sp):

is a cannibal; it will occasionally eat other crocodiles.

does not chew its food, but swallows it whole. It carries several pounds of small stones in its stomach to aid in grinding up and digesting its nourishment.

does cry tears, but they are crocodile tears — not real tears at all, but glandular excretions that serve to expel excess salt from the eyes.

continually grows new sets of teeth to replace old teeth.

cannot move its tongue (a crocodile's tongue is rooted to the base of its mouth).

is surprisingly fast on land. If pursued by a crocodile, a person should run in a zigzag motion, for the crocodile has little or no ability to make sudden changes of direction.

A crocodile weighing 120 pounds exerts a force of about 1,540 pounds between its jaws. A human being's jaws exert a force of only 40 to 80 pounds.

Every year more people are killed in Africa by crocodiles than by lions.

5. The starfish is the only animal capable of turning its stomach inside-out. As it approaches its prey (usually a member of the mollusk family), the starfish reverses its viscera, protrudes them through its mouth, and projects them under the shell of its victim. Then it slowly devours the fleshy underparts of the helpless mollusk by a process of absorption.

6. The largest living species of kangaroo has a head the size of a sheep's and may stand 7 feet tall. An extinct species of kangaroo had a head the size of a Shetland pony's and reached a height of more than 10 feet. There are miniature kangaroos, such as the musk kangaroo, that are no bigger than a jackrabbit.

At birth, baby kangaroos are only about an inch long — no bigger than a large waterbug or a queen bee.

A kangaroo cannot jump if its tail is lifted off the

ground. It needs its tail for pushing off.

7. According to tests made at the Institute for the Study of Animal problems in Washington, D. C., dogs and cats, like people, are either right-handed or left-handed — that is, these animals favor either their right or left paws.

8. Contary to popular belief, dogs do not sweat by salivating. They sweat through the pads of their feet.

Nose prints are used to identify dogs in the same way fingerprints are used to identify human beings. Breeders and trainers keep a dog's nose prints on file as part of its permanent record, and insurance companies require them whenever a dog is to be bonded. At one time paw prints were used as a means of canine identification, but these proved less accurate than noses.

The chow is the only dog that has a black tongue. The tongues of all other dogs are pink.

Greyhounds have the best eyesight of any breed of dog.

9. More than 99.9 percent of all the animal species that have ever lived on earth were extinct before the coming of man.

10. There are approximately 1 million species of animals on the earth. Of these, approximately 800,000 are insects. If the name of every species of insect were printed in an averagesize book, it would take about 6,000 pages to list them all.

11. Every 9.6 years there is peak in Canada's wildlife

population, especially among muskrats, red fox, skunks, mink, lynx, and rabbits. The population of grasshoppers in the world tends to rise and fall rhythmically in 9.2-year cycles.

12. A rodent's teeth never stop growing. They are worn down by the animal's constant gnawing on bark, leaves, and other vegetable matter.

13. A good milking cow will give nearly 6,000 quarts of milk every year.

A herd of sixty cows is capable of producing a ton of milk in less than a day.

14. An elephant may consume 500 pounds of hay and 60 gallons of water in a single day.

Elephants are covered with hair. Although it is not apparent from a distance, at close range one can discern a thin coat of light hairs covering practically every part of an elephant's body.

Elephant herds post their own sentries. When danger threatens, the sentry raises its trunk and thought it may be as far as a half-mile away, the rest of the herd is instantly alerted. How this communication takes place is not understood.

No one has ever been able to domesticate the African elephant. Only the Indian elephant can be trained by man.

15. From 1890 to 1900, 20 tons of ivory were shipped every year from Siberia to London. All of this ivory was taken

from the remains of woolly mammoths, which have been extinct since the Ice Age.

The woolly mammoth, extinct since the Ice Age, had tusks almost 16 feet long.

Genuine ivory does not come only from elephants. It can come from the tusks of a boar or a walrus.

16. The now-extinct ancestor of the horse, *cohippus*, had a short neck, a pug muzzle, and stood no higher than a medium-sized dog.

A horse focuses its eye by changing the angle of its head, not by changing the shape of the lens of the eye, as humans do.

17. A female mouse may spawn as many as ten litters of eight to ten young during her lifetime — which generally is less than a year. The gestation period is three weeks, and the young mice reach maturity in only ten weeks.

A rat can fall from a five-story building without injury. Two rats can become the progenitors of 15,000 rats in less than a year.

A rat can go without water longer than a camel can.

18. A cat uses its whiskers to determine if a space is too small to squeeze through. The whiskers act as feelers or antennae, helping the animal to judge the precise width of any narrow passage.

Cats have no ability to taste sweet things.

19. A whale's heart beats only nine times a minute.

The whale has the slowest metabolism of all animals. Despite its great size, it lives on one of the smallest of all creatures, the microscopic plankton found throughout the sea.

The blue whale weighs as much as thirty elephants and is as long as three Greyhound buses.

The bottle-nosed whale can dive to a depth of 3,000 feet in two minutes.

20. Every day of the year 100 whales are killed by whale fishermen.

There is a rare variety of ivory that comes from the male narwhal (*Monodon monoceros*), a whale that inhabits Arctic waters. In infancy, this formidable creature loses all its teeth but two upper incisors. One of these continues to grow forward through the narwhal's upper lip, twisting corkscrew-fashion, until it develops into a spiral tusk that may reach 9 feet, almost two-thirds the length of the whale's body. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century whale hunters stalked the creature for its precious ivory, and there are many tales of men being impaled on narwhal tusks and carried into the sea.

21. Though the giraffe's neck is about 7 feet long, it contains the same number of vertebrae as a mouse's—seven. The giraffe's tongue is 18 inches long. It can open and close its nostrils at will, can run faster than a horse, and makes almost no sound whatsoever. The first giraffe ever seen in the West was brought to Rome about 46 B.C., by no less a person-

age than Julius Caesar.

A giraffe can go without water longer than a camel can.

22. A full-grown moose may be 8 feet high at the shoulder and weigh almost a ton. The male moose sheds its antlers every winter and grows a new set the following summer.

Male moose have antlers 7 feet across. The antlers often weigh 60 pounds.

23. A mole can dig a tunnel 300 feet long in one night.

The lesser mole rat not only digs an entire subterranean house for itself, complete with storerooms, halls, bedrooms, and a "wedding chamber" where all mating takes place, but actually constructs a separate bathroom which, when filled, is sealed off from the rest of the house.

24. The average porcupine has more than 30,000 quills. Porcupines are excellent swimmers because their quills are hollow and serve as pontoons to keep them afloat.

25. The kinkajou's tail is twice as long as its body. Every night it wraps itself in its tail and uses it as a pillow.

26. The ring-tailed lemur, a primate found only on the island of Madagascar, meows like a cat.

27. The frigate bird can fly at a speed of 260 miles per hour. The snail moves at a rate of 0.000362005 miles per hour. The fastest animal on four legs is the cheetah, which races 70 miles per hour over short distances and can accelerate to 45 miles per hour in two seconds. An elephant, despite its peinderous appearance, can do 25 miles per hour on an

open stretch, and a charging rhino has been clocked at 30. The fastest of all fish in the sea is the swordfish, streaming forward at 68 miles per hour; Man's best speed in the water is 4.1 miles per hour; the maximum speed at which a human being can run on land is 24 miles per hour.

28. The Mojave ground squirrel, found mainly in the American West, hibernates for two-thirds of every year.

29. The sea lion (*Eumetopias jubata*):

can swim 6,000 miles, stopping only to sleep.

is susceptible to sunburn, and if put on board a ship will get as seasick as man.

Male sea lions may have more than 100 wives and sometimes go three months without eating.

There once were more sea lions on earth than people.

30. The venom of the king cobra is so deadly that one gram of it can kill 150 people. Just to handle the substance can put one in a coma.

31. Most varieties of snake can go an entire year without eating a single morsel of food.

A snake has no ears. However, its tongue is extremely sensitive to sound vibrations, and by constantly flicking its tongue the snake picks up these sound waves. In this sense a snake "hears" with its tongue.

32. Garter snakes, though reptiles, do not lay eggs. They bear live young, just as mammals do.

The flying snake of Java and Malaysia (*Chrysopelea*

ornata) is able to flatten itself out like a ribbon and sail like a glider from tree to tree.

A python can swallow a rabbit whole and may eat as many as 150 mice in a six-month period.

33. The chameleon, a small lizard generally measuring 6 or 7 inches, has a tongue several inches longer than its body. With a thrust of this remarkable appendage it can catch insects some 10 inches away.

A completely blind chameleon will still take on the colors of its environment.

34. The fur of the vicuna, a small member of the camel family which lives only in the Andes Mountains of Peru, is so fine that each hair is less than two-thousandths of an inch thick. The animal was considered sacred by the Incas, and only royalty could wear its fleece.

35. Male monkeys lose the hair on their heads in the same way men do.

36. Contrary to popular belief, the mongoose is not immune to the venom of the cobra. If bitten it will die as quickly as any other animal. The mongoose is able to defeat its archenemy in battle simply because it is faster and has better reflexes.

37. The weasel and the ermine are the same animal. This mammal's coat changes with the seasons — in its white winter coat it is known as an ermine, in its brown coat it is a weasel.

38. The smell of a skunk can be detected by a human a mile away.

A skunk will not bite and throw its scent at the same time.

39. The bat is the only mammal that can fly

A male baboon can kill a leopard.

40. Cows have four stomachs. Often when a calf is born the farmer will make it swallow a magnet. This is to attract the various nails, staples, tacks, bits of wire, and so on that the cow may ingest while grazing. (This odd hunger is known to farmers as "hardware disease".) When the animal is slaughtered, the butcher will remove the magnet along with the metallic debris and sell the mass of iron and steel for scrap.

41. At birth barnacles look like waterfleas. In the next stage of their development they have three eyes and twelve legs. In their third stage they have twenty-four legs and no eyes. Barnacles stay fastened to the same object for their entire lives.

A hundred tons of barnacles collect on the bottom of a steamship every year.

42. Snails have teeth. They are arranged in rows along the snail's tongue and are used like a file to saw or slice through the snail's food.

The giant African snail *Achatina achatina* grows to a foot long and reaches weights greater than a pound.

The snail mates only once in its entire life. When it does