



Look inside, if you dare!



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Peacock mite shown on a tea stem.
Magnified 260X.

Creepiest Animals

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Cymothoa exigua

The *Cymothoa exigua* is an isopod (like crabs or lobsters). Not only is it an isopod, it is a parasite for fish! This, not so nice fella, makes its way through the gills of fish and replaces an entire organ: the fish's tongue! To replace the tongue, it first severs the tongue's blood. Without a blood supply, the tongue falls off. This little parasite then attaches to the stub. Although gross, it is quite smart—as the “new tongue” it can easily steal food right before the fish swallows.



Fun Facts:

- It is the only known organism to replace an entire organ in its host.
- *Cymothoa exigua* doesn't cause the fish to die, but they probably can't figure out why they are eating so much and still feel hungry.

Jellyfish

Jellyfish have been around for more than 650 million years and there are thousands of different species. While jellyfish live in the ocean, they are not fish, they are actually plankton. Plankton can be either a plant or an animal and move by floating in the water or following the current. They don't have bones, a brain, or a heart! **Strange fact: their mouths also serve as their anus. This means what goes in, also comes out the same place!** Jellyfish are carnivores—they eat other animals. They use their sting to capture their prey and to defend. So the last thing you want to do is scare a jellyfish!



Fun Facts:

- Some Jellyfish are 7 feet long with tentacles up to 100 feet long
- Giant sea monster jellyfish known as “Echizen kurage” are so large that they actually shut down a nuclear power plant after being sucked up into the cooling system!

Vampire Bats

Vampire bats reveal themselves on dark nights while everyone sleeps. During the day, they live in dark caves, mines or abandoned buildings in Mexico and Central South America. These tiny creatures are the masters of drinking blood. They are light and agile and can eat from their host for more than 30 minutes without being noticed! They creep through the night, feeding on animals like cows, pigs, horses and even the occasional human! Don't be frightened—human bites are rare!

Fun Facts:

- Female bats are generous and will regurgitate blood to share with others in exchange for grooming
- Vampire bats are not like other bats. They can walk, run, and jump as well as fly!



Photo: Wikimedia Commons / Sandstein



Photo: www.flickr.com/photos/oceanexplorergov/26688961426



Mike the Headless Chicken

That's right, Mike the chicken was headless! Over seventy years ago, a farmer named Lloyd Olsen was getting ready for chicken dinner, but Mike the chicken wasn't ready to be dinner. After chopping off his head, Mike refused to die. Mike ran around like a chicken with its head cut off. While this may seem impossible, there is a simple explanation. Lloyd, the farmer, missed the jugular vein, one ear and most of the brain stem. The brain stem is what regulates the majority of the bodily functions (breathing, heat rate, etc.).

Fun Facts:

- Mike made over \$4,500 dollars per month for his owners as a side show display.
- There is an annual "Mike the Headless Chicken Day" in Fruita, Colorado.



Microscopic Mites

Little did you know, these unseen animals live on your face! Microscopic mites are eight legged creatures, and spend their entire lives on your face. They eat, mate and die on your face! We don't know if they are eating bacteria, dead skin or oil; however, they do know that they don't eat each other! Don't worry though, they are harmless!

Fun Facts:

- These mites only come out from your pores at night to mate.
- There could be millions of these mites on your face right now!



Photo: Wikimedia Commons / Erbe, Pooley: USDA, ARS, EMU

Horned Lizard

This lizard has a very unique defense mechanism that works really well to frighten its predator. The horned lizard shoots blood out of its eye sockets! How? When they feel threatened, the blood supply that should go back to their heart, is cut off flooding their sinuses with blood, increasing pressure. Eventually, shooting a jet stream of blood from their eye socket. They also use this mechanism to remove particles from their eyes. This is probably very useful because they call the desert of North America home. There is definitely a lot of dust in the desert!

Fun Facts:

- The horned lizard can shoot blood from its eye as far as 4 feet!
- The blood tastes nasty and helps keep predators from wanting them as a snack.



Photo: www.flickr.com / J. Dullum: USFWS



Lamprey Fish

Lamprey fish are known to be the most primitive of all vertebrate species and are often called lamprey eels. They are actually more closely related to sharks than eels! The lamprey has a large suction cup for a mouth, which includes lots of teeth! For movement, they use their large mouths to latch themselves to larger animals. They are carnivores, meaning they like meat! The lamprey fish are found swimming in the coastal fresh waters. Where do you swim?

Fun Facts:

- The lamprey only feed during their larval stage. The adults don't actually eat because they use the reserves from being babies.
- Lamprey use a system called filter feeding. They basically strain matter and food particles from the water.

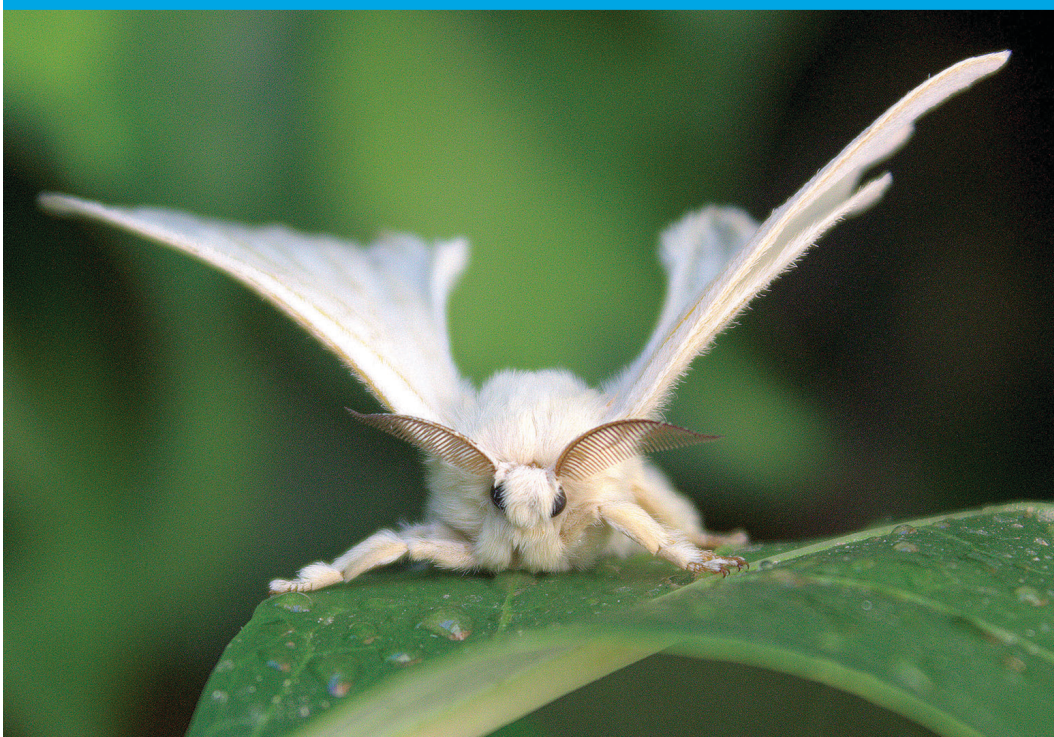


Photo: Wikimedia Commons / Zivya

Venezuelan Poodle Moth

The Poodle Moth has a bit of an odd image, and looks like both a moth and a fluffy white poodle. It was first discovered in 2009. This cute little animal gives the appearance of being a sweet, cuddly friend. But beware—because scientists believe they have a potent defense mechanism—but no one knows for sure!

Rice Krispie Treat Monsters

INGREDIENTS

For the Rice Krispie Treats:

- ¼ cup Butter
- 1 Bag Large Marshmallows (approximately 40 marshmallows)
- ½ teaspoon Vanilla Extract
- 6 cups Rice Krispies

For the Monster Coating:

- Candy Melts (Pink, Orange, Blue and Vibrant Green)
- Candy Eyes (Small, Medium and Large)
- Cooking Oil



From: <https://onelittleproject.com/rice-krispie-treat-monsters>

INSTRUCTIONS

For the Rice Krispie Treats:

**Remember* don't use the stove or oven without a parent*

1. Spray a 9" x 13" baking pan with cooking spray.
2. In a large pot, have a parent melt the butter over low heat until melted.
3. Add the marshmallows and stir until completely melted and combined with the butter.
4. Remove from the heat and add the vanilla extract and the Rice Krispies. Stir to combine.
5. Pour the mixture into the baking pan. Using a spatula sprayed with cooking spray gently press down until the pan is evenly coated.
6. Allow to cool until firm.

For the Monster Coating:

1. Melt approximately 1 cup of candy melts in a small bowl in the microwave at 50% power for 1 minute. Stir and then continue microwaving at 50% power for 30 seconds at a time until completely melted.
2. Add approximately ½ teaspoon to 2 teaspoons cooking oil (the more you add the smoother the finish, but go slowly) to the melted candy melts and stir to combine.
3. Dip the Rice Krispie Treats in the candy melts and set on parchment paper.
4. Gently press the candy eyes into the candy melt coating to create your monster faces. Gently push the eyes slightly up towards the top of the monster's "head" to create upper eye lids.
5. Allow to cool at room temperature for approximately 40 minutes or until candy melts have completely hardened

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Green Moray Eel (*Gymnothorax prasinus*)

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Photo: Wikipedia / Richard Ling



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