Animaps

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Painted Atlas

albatros

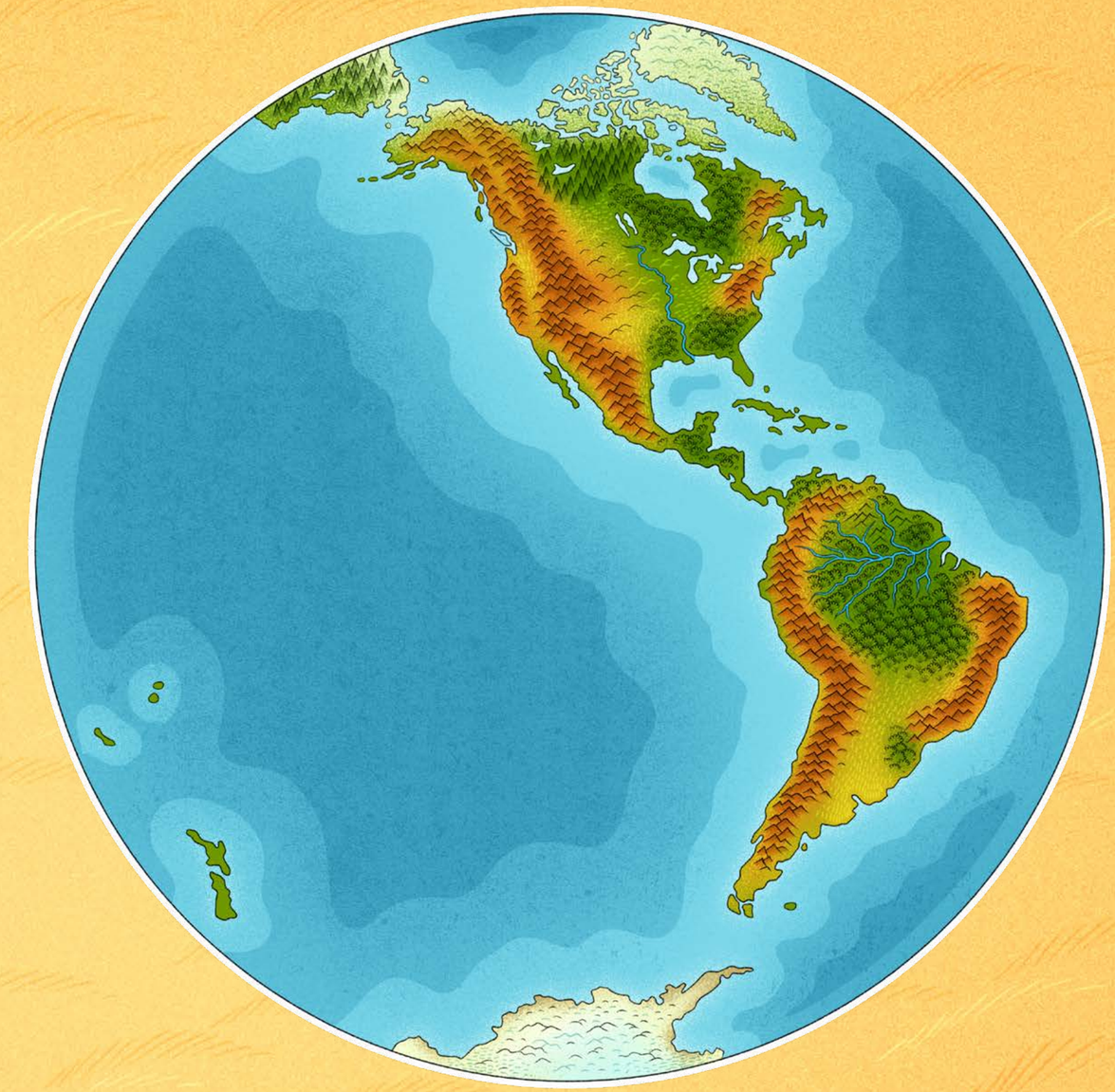
Animaps

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An estimated eight to ten million animal species live on planet Earth. It would be near impossible to introduce the entire animal kingdom in one book (imagine how huge that book would have to be!), but in the pages that follow, you will meet some of the world's most charismatic creatures. These animals are all vertebrates—that is, they all have a bony skeleton inside their bodies. There are hundreds of thousands of invertebrates—animals that don't have a backbone, such as insects and crustaceans. They are no less fascinating, but they will have to wait for another time.

Humans, too, are among these animal species, and over the course of civilization, we have affected great change on our planet. Sometimes nature itself affects animal populations. Therefore, some of the animals included here are endangered or extinct. Other animals have become domesticated and no longer exist in the wild. Some can be found only in certain parts of the world, while others are great travelers and roam across entire continents. A similar journey awaits you in the pages of this book. Are you ready to begin?





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Africa



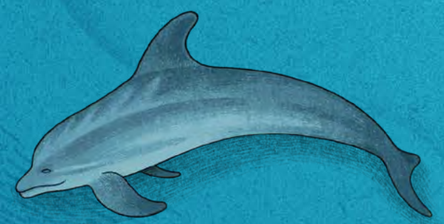


Swordfish



Cod

Bottlenose dolphin



An incredible number of diverse animal species call Africa home. About 1,100 different mammals live here, which is more than on any other continent. And they exist in vast quantities, too—just the large animals, such as elephants, giraffes, and antelope, number in the tens of millions! Birds are equally impressive, with around 2,600 species, about twice as many as neighboring Europe. Africa also hosts the greatest land migrations each year, largely because of frequent droughts. Millions of hoofed animals travel thousands of miles in search of water and food.



Mackerel

Africa

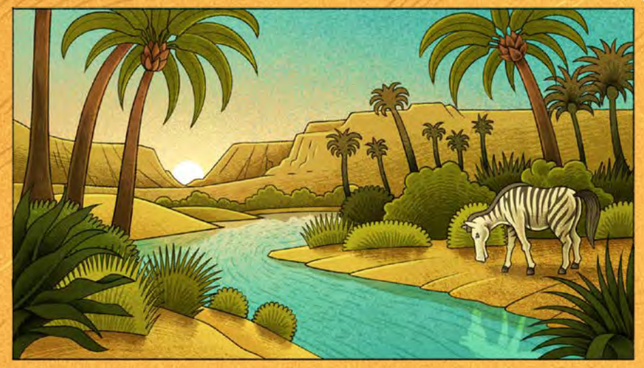


Savannas

Life on the savanna, including Serengeti National Park ❶, is pretty tough. Packs of hungry predators are always looking for their next meal. The giraffe has long legs to help protect itself, the elephant is hefty and strong, while the buffalo bravely defends its calf with its own body.

Bodies of water

Africa's rivers and lakes may look beautiful and inviting, but be careful if you plan to take a swim. Crocodiles in the Nile River ❷ are fierce and lightning fast, and hippos in Lake Victoria ❸ are territorial, unpredictable, and can be aggressive. So always stay alert!





Mountains

As well as having high temperatures, Africa has some pretty high mountains! Kilimanjaro ❹, the tallest, has a peak that is often covered in snow, despite its equatorial location.

Deserts

The desert is a harsh climate, scorching hot by day and freezing cold at night. Some animals are perfectly adapted to life here. They can survive for days without water under the blazing sun, hiding under rocks or lying in wait for prey while buried in the sand.



LONGEST RIVER:
Nile ❷ 4,130 miles

HIGHEST MOUNTAIN:
Kilimanjaro ❹
19,340 feet above sea level

Europe

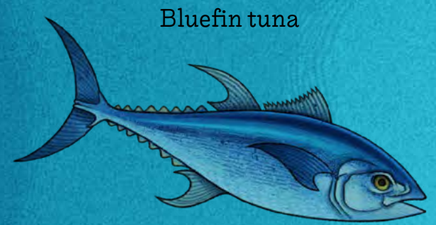






Salmon

Bluefin tuna



Europe has about 270 mammal species, 800 species of birds, 170 kinds of reptiles, and 75 amphibian species. While this is not as many animals as most other continents, it's still an impressive variety. In an average European forest, you might find about 8 to 24 roe deer per square mile, for example, 5 to 16 wild boars, 2 or 3 foxes, and 160 to 320 birds. In addition, every spring and fall, tens of millions of birds travel between Africa and Europe, one of the greatest migrations in the sky.



Long-snouted seahorse

Europe



Mountains

Animals that live in the mountains have adapted to harsh conditions, icy peaks, and more temperate valleys. You might spot chamois, small goatlike mountain antelope, jumping nimbly over rocks, or marmots resting in their burrows. Europe's highest peak, the magnificent Mount Elbrus ❶, is in Russia.



Forests

Europe's forests are remarkably diverse—there are coniferous forests in the high mountains and freezing north, mixed forests in the highlands, and deciduous groves in the lowlands and warm southern regions. Walk quietly through these areas, and you're sure to spot many animals, including birds of prey, hares, wolves, and foxes.









HIGHEST MOUNTAIN:
Elbrus ❶
18,510 feet above sea level

LONGEST RIVER:
Volga ❷ 2,193 miles

Bodies of water

European rivers such as the Rhine, the Danube, and the continent's longest river, the Volga ❷, are home to many kinds of fish, frogs, newts, birds, and mammals, including beavers and otters. These and other aquatic residents also can be found in Europe's lakes, such as Hungary's Lake Balaton ❸, the largest lake in Central Europe.

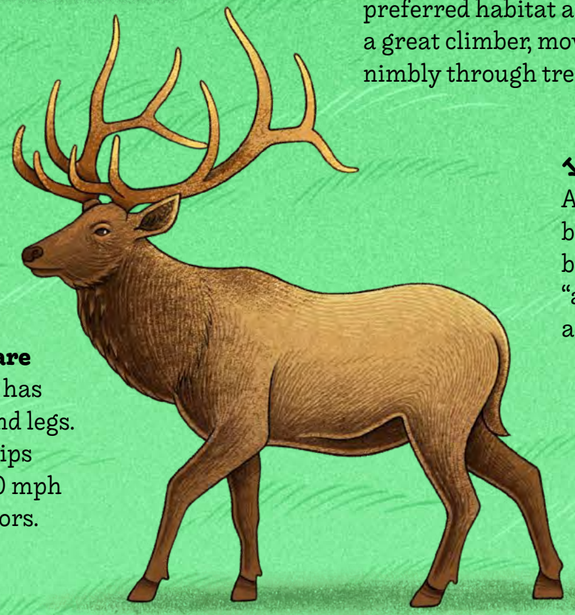


Europe

↦ Eurasian lynx
The largest of the lynx species. This apex predator makes such low sounds that humans often don't hear them.



↘ Red deer
Only the male has antlers, which shed every spring then regrow. During mating season, the male's roars and bellows carry as far as two miles.



↦ European pine marten
A nocturnal omnivore that gets its name from its preferred habitat and is a great climber, moving nimbly through trees.



↓ Western barn owl
It can turn its head 270 degrees, almost all the way around!





↤ Eurasian wren
Its whistles and trills are very loud for its small size. This wren primarily lives in low bushes.

↘ Yellowhammer
A mainly seed-eating bird whose song has been described as "a little bit of bread and no cheese."



↓ European robin
This robin is not closely related to the American robin, but they share similar diets that include insects, fruit, and worms.



↤ European hare
This large hare has notably long hind legs. It zigzags and zips at more than 40 mph to evade predators.



↘ Chamois
With hooves that have hard edges and smooth leathery centers, this mountainous herbivore can grip steep slopes while climbing and jumping.



↓ Edible frog
Seen as a culinary delicacy in parts of Europe, hence its name. Also known as the common water frog and green frog.



↦ Eurasian otter
Has a sleek build, webbed paws, and can hold its breath underwater for several minutes. It catches fish and sometimes water birds.



↗ Eurasian wolf
A subspecies of gray wolf that lives in at least 23 European countries. Typically lives in family groups, hunting and raising young cooperatively.



↦ Eurasian peregrine falcon
The fastest bird in the world! A peregrine falcon can dive, midflight, at up to 200 mph. Different subspecies exist on every continent except Antarctica.



↓ European polecat
This small carnivore secretes a strong-smelling odor when threatened, hence its old name "foulmart." It is the ancestor of the domestic ferret.





↤ Eurasian beaver
A beaver can close its lips behind its front teeth, allowing it to gnaw and drag wood underwater while keeping its throat clear.

↦ Eurasian badger
Lives in a large burrow with a family group. These tidy housekeepers drag old grass and "bedding" from their sleeping areas to prevent fleas and lice.



Asia





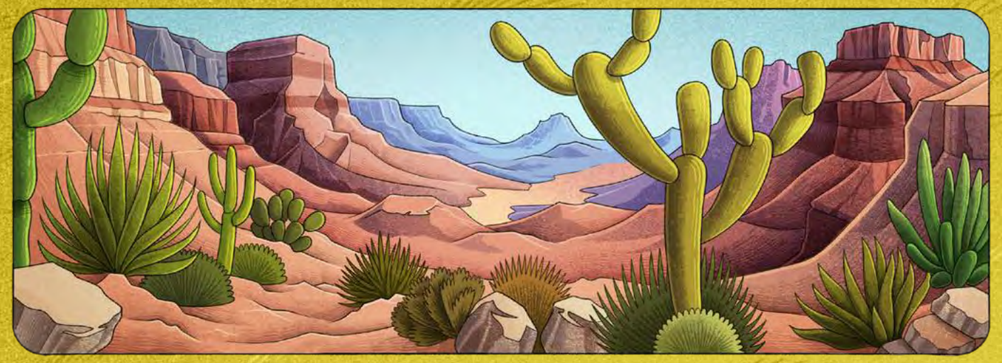
Ganges river dolphin



Pilchard

Asia, Earth's largest continent, boasts an extraordinary array of animal life. There are about 1,800 species of mammals, along with 2,500 kinds of birds, 800 species of reptiles, and around 350 kinds of amphibians. The greatest biodiversity is found in the tropical and subtropical regions of Southeast Asia. In the Mekong River alone, there are at least 1,200 species of fish. This region has the highest concentration of vertebrates anywhere in the world.

North and Central America



Canyons

Canyons exist throughout the continent, though Arizona's Grand Canyon ❶ is the most well-known. Tremendous changes in elevation and temperature create vertical microclimates where many resilient species live, ranging from apex predators to desert foragers.





Wetlands

These fresh- or saltwater wetlands are made up of dense vegetation and slow-moving or still waters. Some of the most significant swamps and marshes are in the south-eastern US, including Florida's Everglades ❷. They are highly diverse ecosystems supporting a rich array of wildlife.

Forests

Some of North America's forests, such as the Boreal Forest, are impressively vast. Others are particularly known for their height. The redwood trees that stretch along the US Pacific coast, for example, can grow to be over 330 feet tall! In the forests' shade we find various animal species, including deer, bears, raccoons, cougars, and many birds.



HIGHEST MOUNTAIN:
Denali/Mount McKinley ❸
20,310 feet above sea level

LONGEST RIVER:
Missouri ❹
2,341 miles



North and Central America



↦ North American cougar
It can leap up to about 45 feet in distance and nearly 20 feet into the air.





↙ California sea lion
This playful, vocal "eared seal" lives all along the west coast from southern Canada to Baja, Mexico.



↥ American bullfrog
This freshwater amphibian will eat just about anything it can fit in its mouth, including snakes!



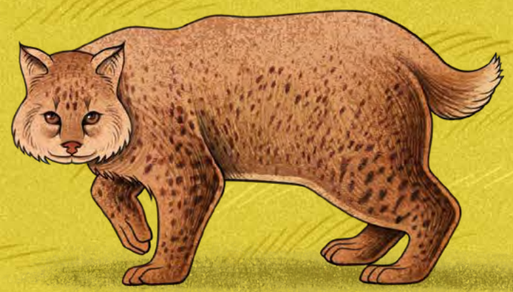
↤ Virginia opossum
Despite its name, this marsupial—the only one found north of Mexico—lives throughout Central and North America.

↥ Grizzly bear
This huge and powerful bear can run as fast as 35 mph for short sprints.

↦ Red-tailed hawk
North America's most common large hawk. It flies at speeds of 20–40 mph and can reach 120 mph when diving!



↘ Bobcat
Has the widest range of any native North American wild cat, likely due to its habitat adaptability.



↧ North American beaver
The largest rodent in North America has teeth that continue to grow throughout its life.





↤ Blue poison dart frog
The frog's bright color warns predators that it is poisonous. These toxins are absorbed into the frog's skin from the ants it eats.



↦ White-tailed deer
Flips up its tail to show the white underside when it is alarmed or senses danger. Only males grow antlers.



↤ California condor
From wing tip to wing tip, this large raptor measures 9.5 feet - just a little shorter than the height of a standard basketball hoop!



↤ American alligator
In short bursts, this excellent swimmer is also surprisingly speedy on land.

↦ Mantled howler monkey
This monkey lives in groups of 10–20 and mainly eats fruit and leaves. Its characteristic howls are heard at dawn and dusk, and when it senses a disturbance.





↤ American robin
While this bird is often thought to be one of the first signs of spring, many robins spend the winter in their breeding area.



↥ American kestrel
The smallest North American falcon. Its weight is equivalent to a small apple!

Australia



Deserts

Australia is Earth's driest inhabited continent (only Antarctica is drier), with most of its land classified as arid or semi-arid. Its red-sand deserts are dotted with occasional tufts of grass and bushes. The wildlife that thrives in this environment has evolved to survive harsh conditions. South Australia's Great Victoria Desert ❶, for example, is home to kangaroos and emus as well as a great many lizards and snakes.



The Bush

Australia is often called the land of parrots because of its nearly 60 unique and endemic species. Many of them live in the bush, a lightly wooded landscape where the trees, plants, and animals are adapted to long and frequent droughts. One example is the area around Kakadu National Park ❷.



Beaches and coastline

Every continent has beaches, but Australia has more than 10,500 of them. Its thousands of coastline miles offer diverse habitats including dunes, rocky shores, mudflats, and sandbars, which are homes to many animals and seabirds. The Great Barrier Reef ❸, off the northeast coast, is the world's largest coral reef system, where thousands of fish and coral species live along with other marine life.



HIGHEST MOUNTAIN:
Mount Kosciuszko ❹
7,310 feet above sea level

LONGEST RIVER:
Murray ❺
1,558 miles

Polar regions



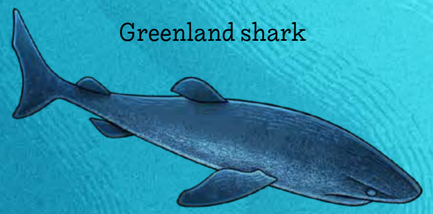


Orca

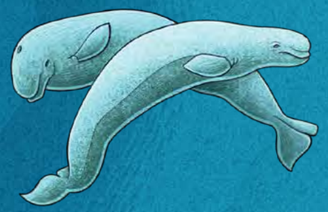


Fin whale

Greenland shark



Beluga whale





Humpback whale

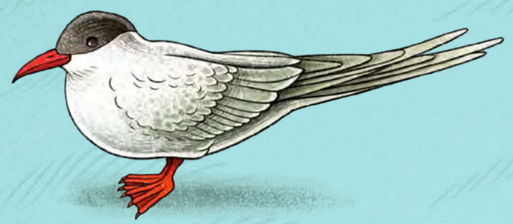
Narwhal

The Arctic, a region of ocean covered by sea ice, extends around the North Pole. It is not a continent, but it encompasses parts of eight different countries. If you wish to see polar bears or walruses, along with many other animals, this is the place to go.

Arctic and Greenland



↑ Red-legged kittiwake
This seabird builds its nest on very narrow cliffs and keeps its chicks safe high above the ocean.



↦ Norway lemming
Despite their small stature (less than 7 inches and about 4.5 ounces), these rodents charge at threats of any size, jumping, screaming, and baring teeth.



↤ Arctic tern
This small bird has the longest known migration in the world, flying from the Arctic to the Antarctic every year.



↑ Ermine
A highly adaptable species also known as the short-tailed weasel or stoat. Its fur is brown in the summer and white in the winter.



↓ Hooded seal
Named for a loose skin patch on the male's face. To impress females and intimidate rivals, he inflates this air sac like a balloon, along with a red membrane out of his nostril!



↤ Walrus
A male walrus can grow up to 12 feet long and weigh more than 3,300 pounds.



↓ Polar bear
One of the world's most dangerous predators. However, while it spends about half of its life hunting for food, less than 2 percent of the hunts are successful.



↤ Arctic wolf
This carnivore is a subspecies of gray wolf that keeps its white coat year-round in an almost permanently snowy habitat. It sheds its thick underfur layer in the spring.



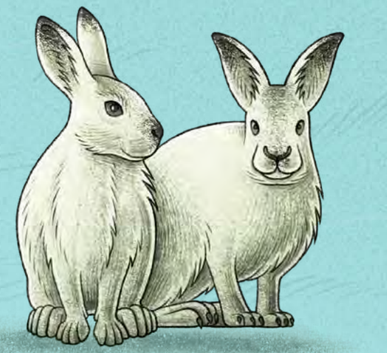
↑ Thick-billed murre
This bird is much better at swimming than flying. It uses its short, stubby wings to "fly" through the water and can dive down about 600 feet to pursue prey.



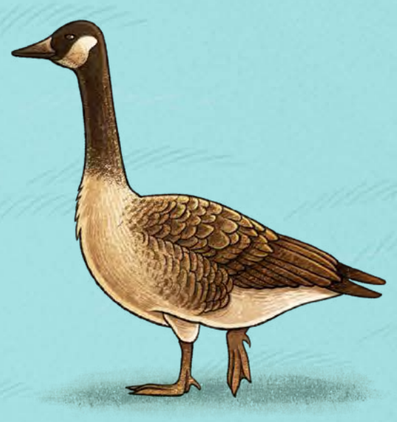
↦ Arctic fox
In winter, thick white fur provides insulation and camouflage. For summer, the foxes shed to a shorter, thinner coat that ranges in color from gray to brown.



↤ Ringed seal
The smallest, most common Arctic seal is also one of the smallest of all the seal species.



↑ Arctic hare
Almost a quarter of this hare's body is made up of fat. Shortened ears and limbs, and seasonal, color-changing fur help it survive the harsh environment.



↑ Canada goose
Some populations of this bird migrate to the Arctic for their summer breeding season. The flock flies in a V-shape to conserve energy.