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Opening extract from
**Deadly Factbook:
Mammals**

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Published by
Orion Children's Books

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First published in Great Britain in 2012
by Orion Children's Books
a division of the Orion Publishing Group Ltd
Orion House
5 Upper St Martin's Lane
London WC2H 9EA
An Hachette UK Company

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

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Derived from and based on the BBC TV series *Deadly 60*.

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Compiled by Jinny Johnson Designed by Sue Michniewicz

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A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978 1 4440 0634 6

Printed and bound in Italy by Printer Trento




www.orionbooks.co.uk

BIGGEST and **SMALLEST**



Chapter 1



The **BLUE WHALE** is the biggest animal in the world today. It is also believed to be the biggest animal known to have lived on our planet.

It is even heavier than the most enormous dinosaurs, such as *Diplodocus* and *Argentinosaurus*.

A full-grown blue whale weighs up to 180 tonnes. Females can be up to 30 metres long – that's about the same as 2 huge articulated lorries parked end to end.

One reason that whales can grow so huge is that they live in the sea and the water supports their weight.

The blue whale's heart is the size of a small car and can you believe that its tongue weighs as much as an elephant?



As you might guess, the blue whale gives birth to the world's biggest baby. A baby blue whale is 7–8 metres long when it is born – that's twice the length of an average car.



The blue whale baby drinks more than a bathtub of its mother's milk a day. It puts on an amazing 90 kilograms or so in weight every day – that's the same as 90 big bags of sugar.


There are two types of

AFRICAN ELEPHANT

– the bush or savannah elephant and the forest elephant. The bush elephant is the largest living land mammal. The biggest male ever weighed about 10 tonnes and stood 4 metres tall at the shoulder, but most are a little smaller.

The African elephant has bigger ears than any other animal. They help the elephant lose heat and keep cool in the African sun.



A photograph of two elephants, one African and one Asian, facing each other. The African elephant on the left has large, curved tusks, while the Asian elephant on the right has a smaller tusk. They are standing on a green field with a yellow and black striped fence in the foreground.

The most obvious difference between African and Asian elephants – and an easy way to tell one from another – is the size of their ears. Those of the Asian elephant are much smaller.


The ears of every elephant are slightly different in shape.

An elephant's tusks are actually huge teeth. The largest-ever tusks were about 3.5 metres long. Elephants use their tusks for many tasks, such as digging up food, ripping bark from trees and fighting off attackers.

BLUE WHALES and elephants

need to eat vast amounts of food to keep themselves going. You might think the blue whale would eat giant prey, but it feeds by straining tiny shrimp-like creatures called krill from the water.

Each krill is only 6 centimetres long, but the blue whale can eat as many as 5 million of them a day. Fortunately there are billions of these little creatures living in the world's oceans. There are probably more krill than any other animal on earth and together they weigh more than all the humans in the world.



The polar bear lives in the Arctic
and can survive in icy temperatures
of -37°C or less – that's much colder
than your freezer.

It has a sublime sense of smell and can sniff out
seal pups hidden in lairs beneath the snow from
as much as 2 kilometres away.

The bear also uses smell to find the holes
in the ice where seals pop up to breathe.
It watches patiently until a seal appears, then
leaps forward to drag it from the water.



The bear kills its prey
with a mighty bite to
the head.

TIGER

The **TIGER** is the biggest big cat and an incredibly powerful beast.

It's so strong that it can bring down prey twice its size and is truly a deadly hunter.

A tiger doesn't need to eat every day but does need to make a large kill every week or so. It can consume as much as 27 kilograms of meat in a night – that's like eating more than 200 hamburgers!



Tigers are stealthy hunters and creep as close to their prey as possible before making a final leap.

A tiger kills large prey by seizing its victim by the throat, causing it to suffocate.

With smaller prey, the tiger may bite the back of the neck, damaging the animal's spinal cord.

The largest tigers live in Siberia in the north of Russia. They can be up to 3.3 metres long and weigh a massive 300 kilograms. Even their claws are 10 centimetres long – longer than an adult human's fingers.

AWESOME!



One of the smallest of all mammals is a bat called the

BUMBLEBEE BAT and as its name suggests, it's not much bigger than a bumblebee.



This tiny creature is about 3 centimetres long and weighs only 2 grams – less than a raspberry. It lives in caves in Thailand and is also known as

- Kitti's hog-nosed bat.

Despite its size, the bumblebee bat is a hunter. It eats insects, which it catches in mid-air or snatches from leaves. Like lots of bats, it finds its way in the dark and locates prey by using echolocation. The bat emits ultrasonic squeaks that bounce off objects in their path. The time it takes for the echo to return tells the bat how far away the object is and allows it to build a 'picture' of its surroundings and pinpoint prey. It can even tell whether an insect has a hard or soft body.