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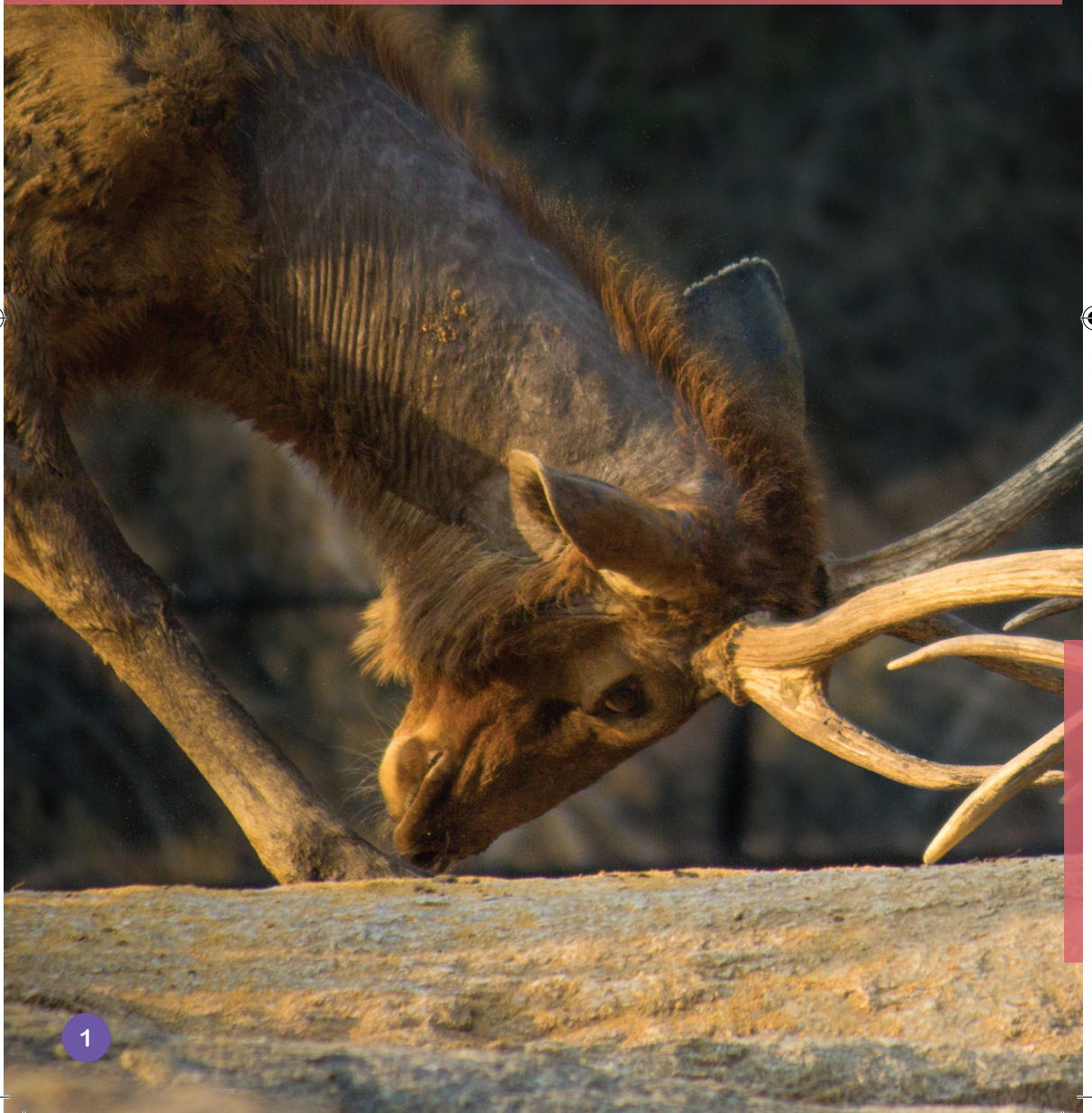
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Giant Animals Ahead

Some animals are small enough to hold in your hand, while others are so tall, you'd need a ladder just to pat their head! The animal kingdom is full of giant animals, living in thick forests, tall grasslands and deep oceans – some tall, some heavy, and all of them truly amazing. Some of them are gentle grazers, while others are hunters who need to chase their food – usually smaller animals.





The Thing About Being Large

Many large herbivores (plant-eating animals) such as elephants, rhinos and gaur spend most of their day eating grass, fruits and leaves to fuel their big bodies. Others, like the Himalayan brown bear are carnivores (meat-eating animals) and will eat just about anything – from wild berries to fish – depending on the season. Their large size can help them stay safe, find food or travel long distances.

Male sambar deer use their antlers to spar during mating season

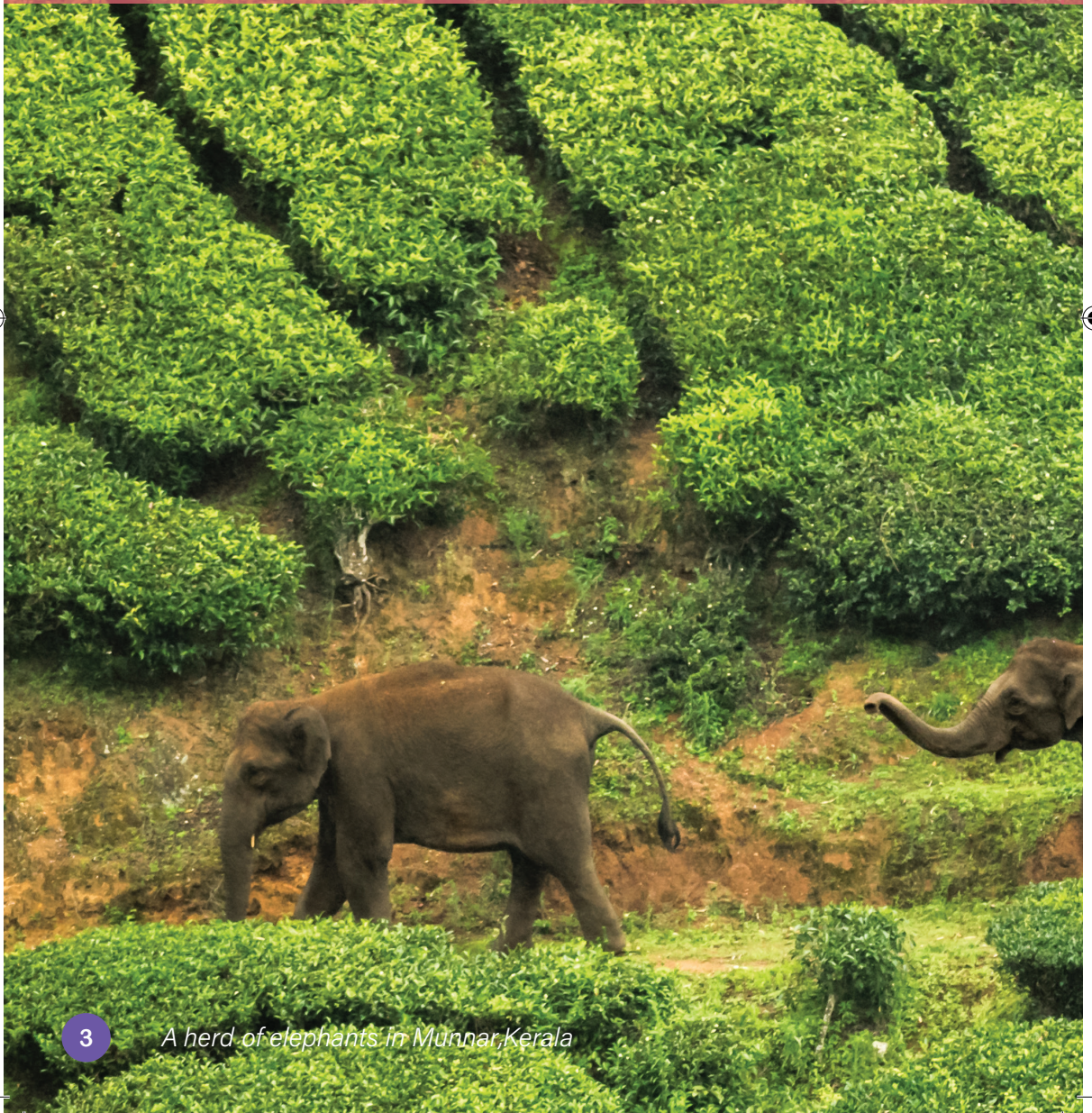
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How Do They Grow So Big?

Growing big takes time, space and a lot of food! Some animals are born large, while others grow slowly over time. Plant-eating animals often eat for hours each day to keep up their strength. On the other hand, meat-eating animals usually don't eat as often – but when they do, they need a big meal to keep them full! Being large in size also helps animals reach food others cannot, like leaves of tall trees or river plants.



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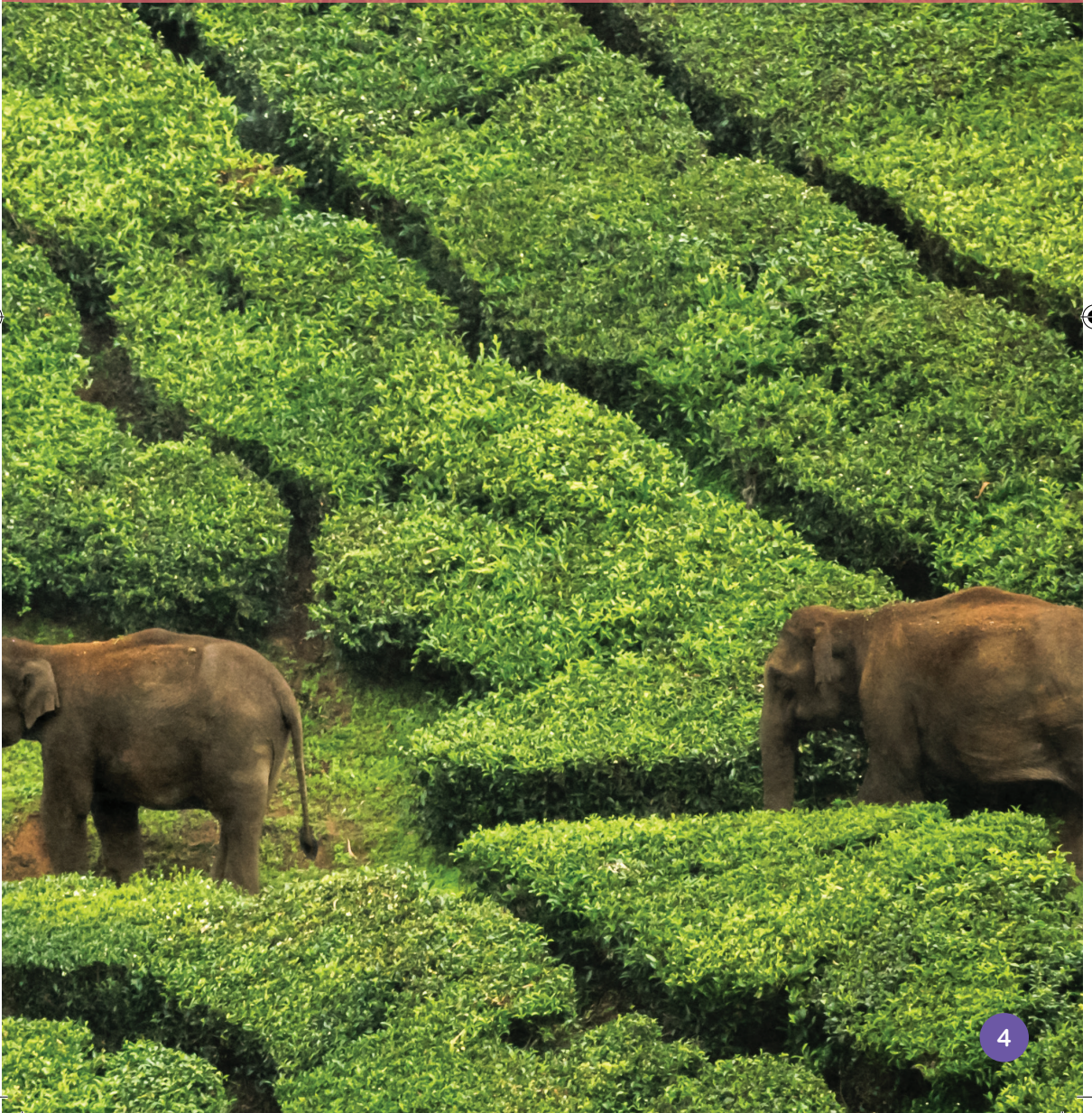
A herd of elephants in Munnar, Kerala





Is It Better to Be to Big in the Wild?

Being huge can come with lots of advantages. Big animals often have strong muscles and special abilities to help them survive in the wild. Larger animals can scare off enemies and protect their young ones. It also makes solo survival easier for animals like rhinos and bears. But some large animals, such as gaur and elephants, like to stay in groups to find food and stay safe.





What Role Do They Play in Nature?

Their size isn't just for show – it is part of how they survive. Every big animal has a specific role to play in nature. These giants create paths through forests for smaller creatures or dig up the ground as they move. Whether it's clearing space for new plants or a big meat-eater keeping the animal numbers in check, their size is part of what makes them so important.





Blue Whale

Find Me Here!

In the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal as well as off the Lakshadweep Islands, but you have to be very patient.

CRITTER STATS

Scientific name: *Balaenoptera musculus*

Size: 20–24 m – as long as two school buses!

Weight: 90,000 kg

Lifespan: 80–90 years

Habitat: off the Indian coast

Conservation status: endangered



Meet the blue whale, the largest animal on the planet! One special kind of blue whale lives in the Indian Ocean, which is slightly smaller than the one that lives in Antarctica. But despite their size, they are peaceful creatures, gliding quietly through the sea.



When blue whales swim near the surface and sunlight hits their skin, they shimmer with a blue glow – that's how they get their name!

Even though it's so big, the blue whale eats some of the smallest creatures in the sea, such as the tiny shrimp-like animal called krill.





The way a blue whale catches its food is also unique. It slurps in a mouthful of seawater and then pushes it out, trapping krill in brush-like plates in its mouth, called "baleen".

Blue whales are also extremely loud! They make deep, rumbling sounds. These sounds help them talk to other whales far away.





DID YOU KNOW?

Blue whale babies are called calves and they are born big! A newborn calf can be 7 to 8 m long – that is as long as your school van!



Milk guzzlers: blue whale babies drink up to 200 litres of milk every day. That's more than a whole bathtub full of milk!

Hold your breath! Blue whales can hold their breath for up to 30 minutes underwater before they come up to breathe.

