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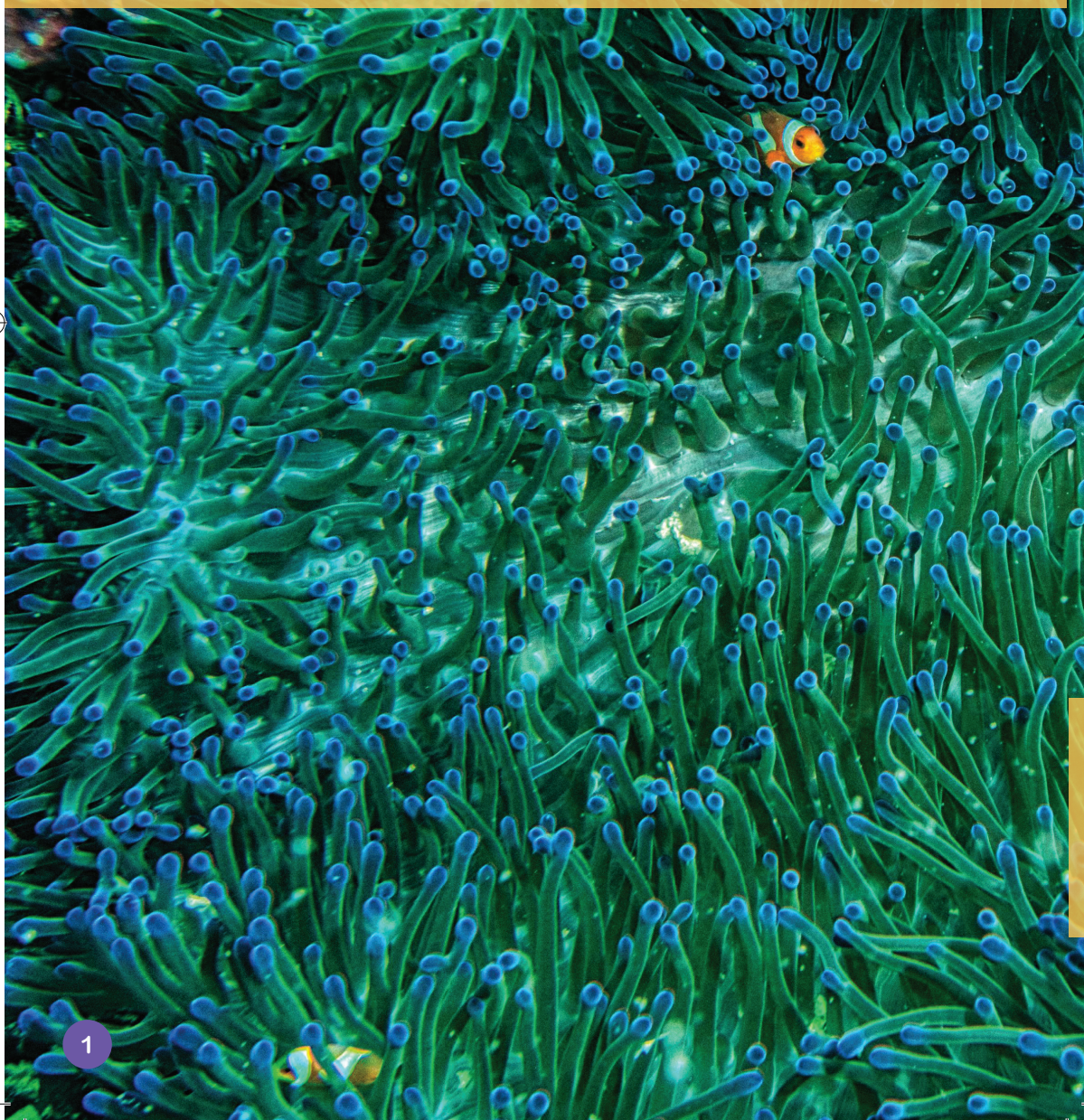




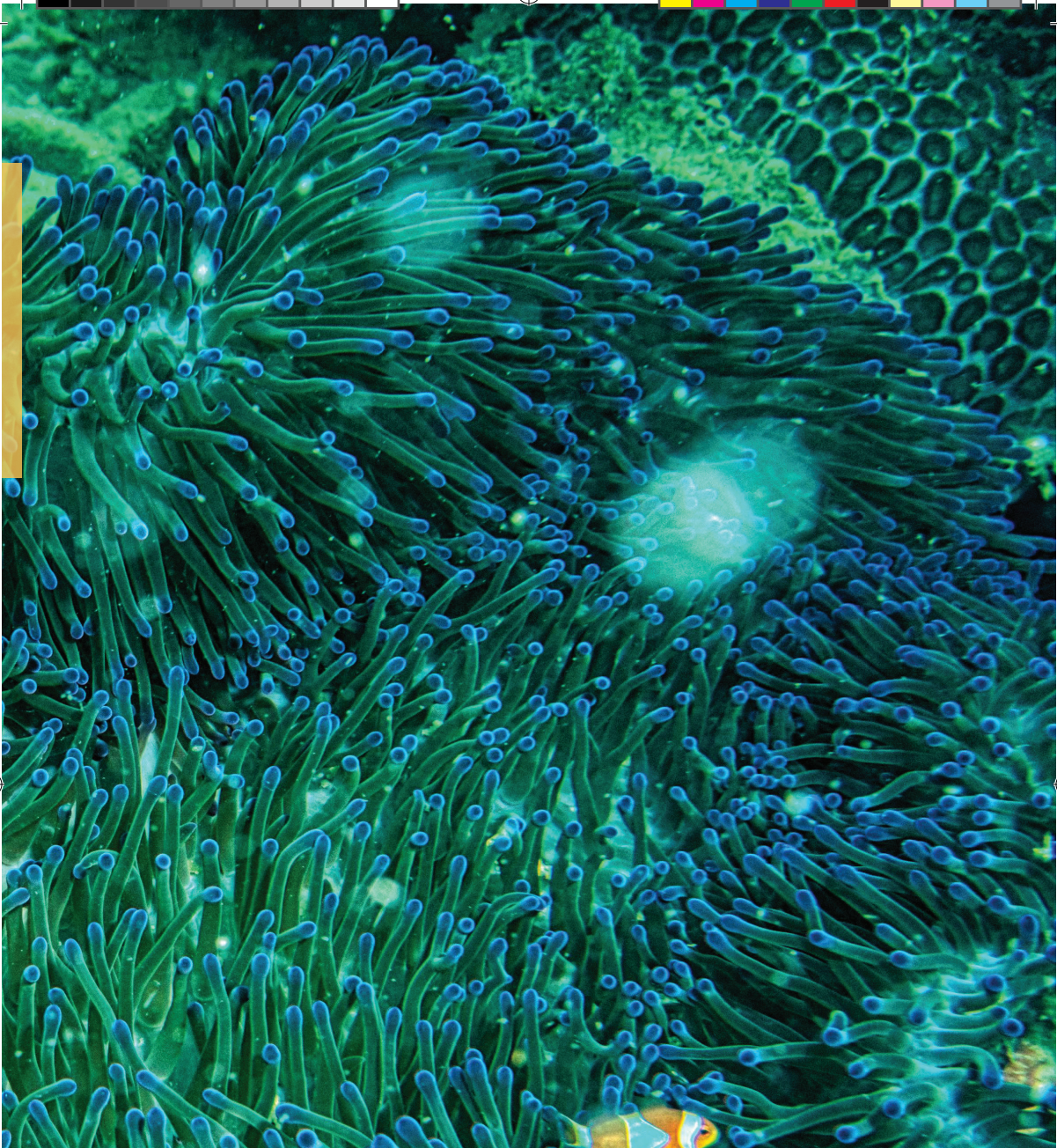


## Strange but True

Why do you suppose some animals have incredible abilities? Animals develop these unique qualities so they can live and survive in the different habitats they call home. Evolution – the process by which living things can gradually change over time – has armed animals with superpowers of survival.







These traits are not accidental. They are the product of nature's smart design to help animals find food, escape danger and survive tough environments. Take a look around – you might spot some of these unusual abilities closer to home than you'd expect!

*Coral reefs in Indian waters are home to the clownfish*

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## Neighbourhood Oddities

Imagine having the ability to disappear in plain sight! The Indian leaf butterfly is a perfect hide-and-seek artist, rolling its wings up to resemble a shrivelled-up leaf and making itself nearly invisible. The common raven – the crow's larger cousin – can fly upside down. Sometimes, they do it just for fun, but they also use this ability to slow down and lose height as they fly.



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*The Indian leaf butterfly, found in the Himalayas and central India*







## What Tricks Do Our Pets Have up Their Sleeves?

Even our pets have astounding secret gifts. Dogs, for instance, have a highly developed sense of smell that allows them to follow scents and discover treasures that the human eye cannot spot. Have you ever seen a cat leap from a great height and land on its feet? Well, this is thanks to their flexible spines and keen sense of balance. This unique ability is called the “righting reflex”, which helps them survive falls.







## What Makes Humans Special?

Have you ever wondered why we have two legs, while most other animals have four legs? Bipedalism, or walking and standing on two legs, frees up our hands for other tasks, like writing. Opposable thumbs and well-developed brains are some of our other special traits. These have helped humans communicate, grow their food, hunt, create beautiful works of art, develop technology and build large civilizations.

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*Early humans evolved to walk upright and learnt to hunt*





# Ganges River Dolphin

Find Me Here!

In the Ganges, Brahmaputra and their tributaries in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Assam and West Bengal.

## CRITTER STATS

**Scientific name:** *Platanista gangetica*

**Size:** 2–2.6 m – as long as a regular bed

**Weight:** 70–90 kg

**Lifespan:** up to 30 years

**Habitat:** freshwater rivers

**Conservation status:** endangered





**With its cheeky smile and inquisitive nature, the Ganges river dolphin is an adorable creature that can be found – you guessed it – in the waters of the Ganges river. While it is known for its playful nature, what sets it apart from other swimmers is its ability to swim sideways.**



Being a sideways swimmer is great for hunting in the murky waters of the Ganges.

The Ganges river dolphin can flip onto one side so that its flippers trail along the bottom of the river.

This unique behaviour helps it use its flippers to stir up the muddy riverbed, flushing out hidden prey like fish, crabs and shrimp.







As the prey are driven out of their hiding spots, the dolphin's long, slender snout makes quick business of catching the slippery fish and shrimp.



The dolphin must then head back to the surface because it cannot breathe underwater indefinitely.



All this action takes place in a matter of just 30 seconds to 2 minutes!







# DID YOU KNOW?



The Ganges river dolphin makes a peculiar sound while breathing. Thanks to this sound, it is also called “susu” in parts of India.



This river dolphin is nearly blind. It “sees” with sound by using sound waves and echoes to figure out the location of an object.





# Slow Loris

Find Me Here!

Lives in the  
dense forests of  
Northeast India.  
Can be spotted  
at Kaziranga  
National Park.

## CRITTER STATS

**Scientific name:** *Nycticebus bengalensis*

**Size:** 26–38 cm – like a loaf of bread

**Weight:** 0.6–2.1 kg

**Lifespan:** 20 years

**Habitat:** evergreen and semi-evergreen forests

**Conservation status:** vulnerable





**Found deep inside the tropical jungles of Northeast India, the slow loris is a nocturnal creature that sleeps during the day and hunts at night. It spends most of its life in the treetops and rarely comes down.**

The slow loris moves painfully slowly (just 1.5 km in an hour) and can sit on a branch for hours.



Its hands and feet have adapted to this slow tree life and can grip branches for extended periods of time.

