

Contents



If a Tiger and a Mugger Face Off, Who Would Win?....	1
Trace the Ancestor	9
Hangout Habits	11
Favourite Snacks	13
Weapons They Have	15
The Strongest Bite	17
Cool Adaptations	21
Strange Moves	23
Size Matters	25
Family Time	27
Meet the Relatives	29
Under Threat!	31
Strange but True	33
Meeting at the River	37
The Final Winner	41
Who Has the Edge?	43
Guess the Animal	44
Quiz Time	45
Fact Finder and Credits	47



If a Tiger and a Mugger Face Off ...



CRITTER CARD

Species name:

Bengal Tiger

Scientific name: *Panthera tigris tigris*

Size: 2–3 m from head to tail tip – the height of a typical room

Weight: males: 200–260 kg; females: 135–225 kg

Lifespan: up to 20 years in captivity, but rarely more than 15 years in the wild

Habitat: a wide range of habitats from tropical forests to mangroves and grasslands

Conservation status: endangered

... Who Would Win?

CRITTER CARD

Species name: Mugger or Marsh Crocodile

Scientific name: *Crocodylus palustris*

Size: 2–3 m long – about the length of a small car

Weight: variable, depending on size and age; hatchlings weigh just 80 g while adults can vary from 30–40 kg to over 100 kg

Lifespan: around 30 years

Habitat: water bodies such as lakes, rivers, marshes and occasionally even brackish water lagoons

Conservation status: vulnerable

Meet the Mugger

The mugger crocodile is a reptile that looks prehistoric. With jaws of steel, long claws and skin as tough as armour, the mugger is majestic. This aquatic predator is one of India's most crafty hunters.



Meet the Bengal Tiger

The Bengal tiger is so iconic that it was chosen to be India's national animal. Endangered but magnificent, this mammal is found in small pockets around the country, from grasslands to dense tropical forests. This apex predator is one of the most fearsome creatures in the country.



What Is a Reptile?

Reptiles are some of the oldest land animals! They usually lay eggs and are cold-blooded, with dry and scaly skin. This means that they can't generate body heat – that's why they love warm places like sun-baked stones or fields. Snakes, lizards, turtles and crocodiles are all reptiles.

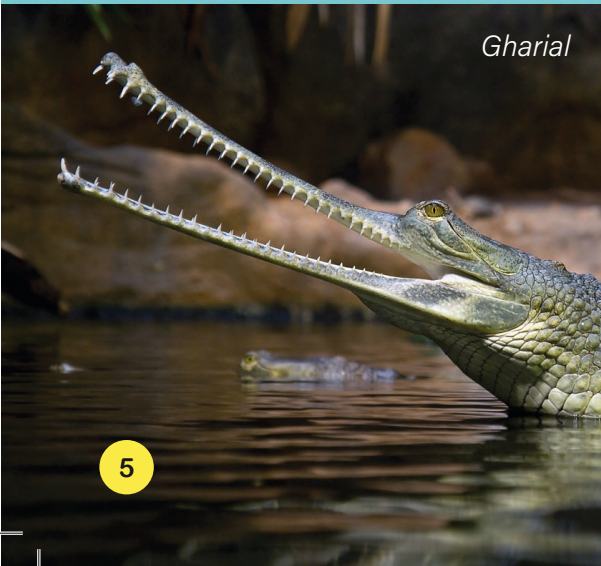
Reptiles live on every continent except Antarctica!



Indian star tortoise



Fan-throated lizard



Gharial



Oriental garden lizard



Lion-tailed macaque



Nilgiri marten

Mammals span every size, from tiny bats to massive blue whales.

What Is a Mammal?

Mammals are the new kids on the block as they evolved much later than reptiles – possibly as much as 40 million years later! But they are found in every corner of the world. We mammals (humans are mammals too) usually have lots of hair or fur, generate our own body heat and are viviparous. That means we give birth to live young, born without them ever being inside an egg. Mammals also produce milk to feed their young.

Where Can You Find a Mugger Crocodile?

The mugger crocodile is found across India wherever there are large freshwater bodies, rivers and streams. Endemic to the Indian Subcontinent, it is found only in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

Best place to spot them

National Chambal Gharial
Wildlife Sanctuary,
Madhya Pradesh





Best place to spot them

Ranthambore National
Park, Rajasthan

Where Can You Spot a Bengal Tiger?

The Bengal tiger is found in specific regions in India. Important areas include the Western Ghats, central Indian forests and the eastern Himalayas. While the Bengal tiger (*Panthera tigris tigris*) is found only in the Indian Subcontinent, tigers are found across Asia, and notably in Russian Siberia.

Trace the Ancestor

Crocodiles evolved around 80 million years ago, living alongside their dinosaur relatives. When the dinosaurs became extinct after an asteroid slammed into Earth, crocodiles survived because they could live in water and on land. With their swimming and hunting skills, these ancient reptiles outlived their dinosaur relatives and continue to exist today.



Tyrannoneustes lythrodectikos
Lived approximately 165
million years ago



Crocodylus palaeindicus
Lived 23 to 5 million years ago



Crocodylus palustris
Evolved 4 million years ago

Although crocodiles
look like oversized
lizards, they're most
closely related to birds!

The very first ancestor of all carnivores, the Miacids, evolved over 50 million years ago. A descendant of the Miacids known as *Pseudaelurus* is the common ancestor of tigers, lions and all other big cats. Even the extinct sabre-toothed tiger shares history with *Pseudaelurus*, though it isn't very closely related to modern Bengal tigers.

Tigers and snow leopards are very closely related, and both species evolved in Asia.



Pseudaelurus
Lived 20 to 8 million
years ago



Sabre-toothed cat or smilodon
Evolved 2.5 million years ago
and was around until 8,200
years ago



Panthera tigris tigris
Evolved more than 2 million
years ago

Hangout Habits

Mugger crocodiles usually live alone but may gather in small groups while basking in the sun or during breeding season. They are mostly nocturnal, resting during the day and becoming active at night, when they hunt fish, birds and mammals using stealth and patience.

Basking helps raise reptiles' body temperatures, as they can't produce heat on their own. Good sunbathing spots can have dozens of muggers at a time!



Snow leopards might be famous for being alone, but tigers have them beat! They live and hunt almost entirely in solitude. Tigers avoid sharing space, meeting only to mate or when mothers raise their cubs. Adolescent tigers often travel large distances to leave their families behind and establish new territories on their own.

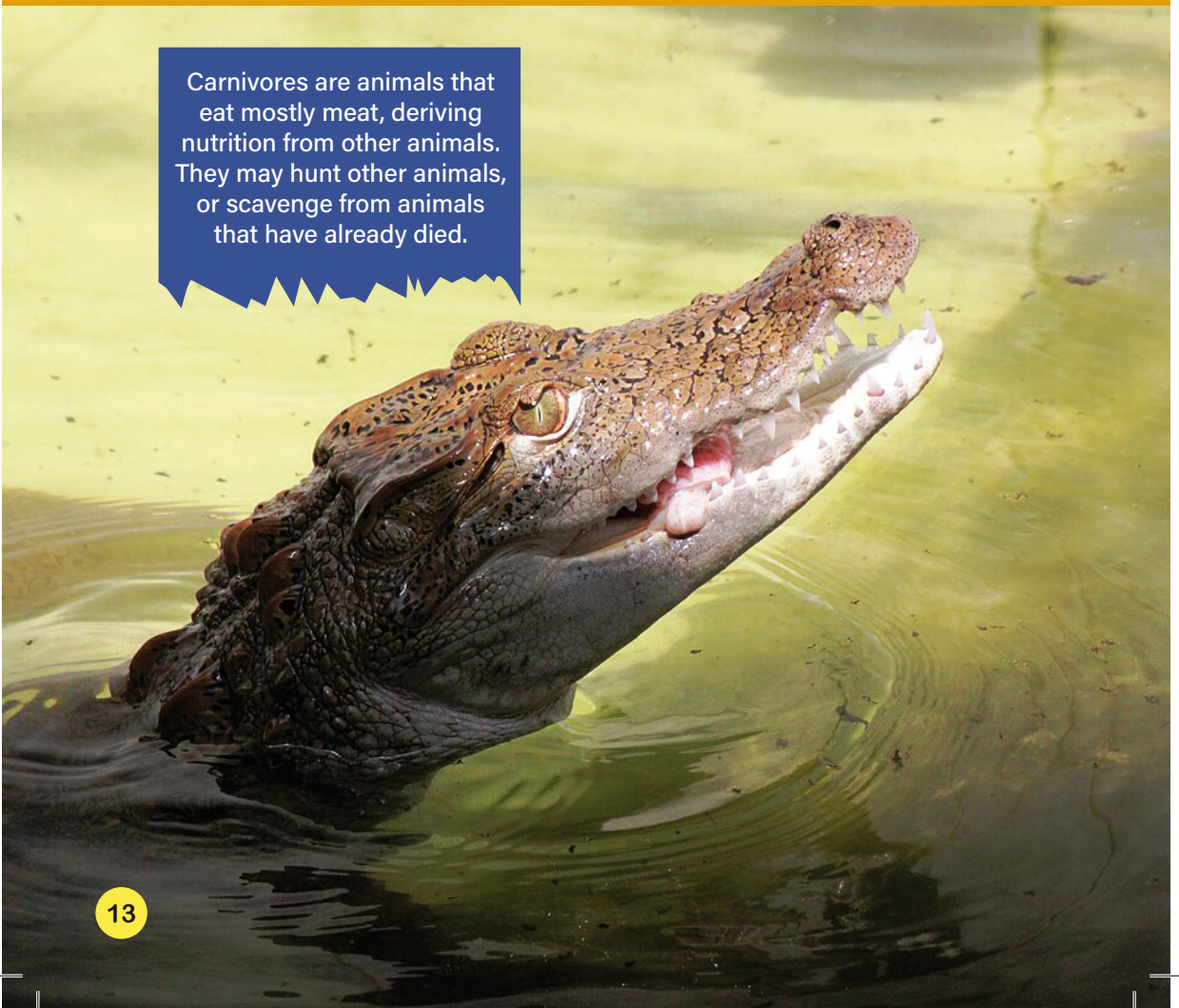
Each tiger has a large territory that it marks with scent and scratches to warn others away.



Favourite Snacks

Mugger crocodiles are the opposite of picky eaters. Closer to rivers and lakes, they may eat mostly fish or aquatic crustaceans. In wetlands, they may even snack on small mammals, birds and other reptiles. Essentially, they're happier to eat anything tinier than themselves (including other crocodiles)! Crocodiles can eat 10 percent to 25 percent of their body weight in a single meal.

Carnivores are animals that eat mostly meat, deriving nutrition from other animals. They may hunt other animals, or scavenge from animals that have already died.



Tigers are a bit more selective in what they choose to eat. They are obligate carnivores, which means that they must eat meat. Birds, monkeys and small mammals are just not enough for tigers, which prefer larger ungulates like sambar, chital and wild boar. Occasionally, they might eat baby buffaloes, gaurs or elephant calves. Tigers always hunt alone.

A photograph of a tiger with orange and black stripes standing over a dead deer with large antlers. The tiger is looking directly at the camera. The deer is lying on its side on the ground. The background is a blurred forest floor.

A tiger can eat up to 30 kg of meat in a single night! They often feed off a kill for days together before hunting again.

Weapons They Have

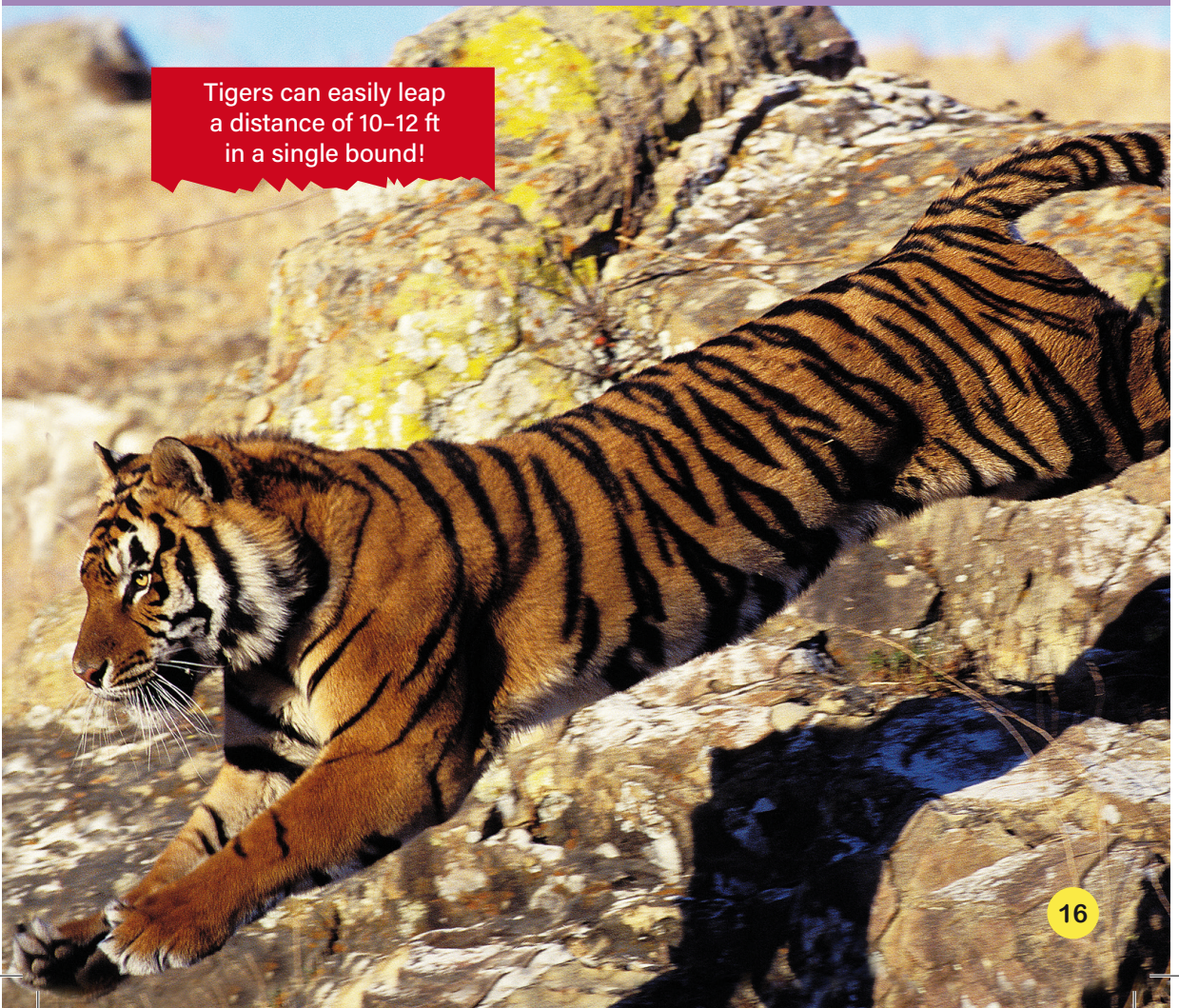
A mugger wears super strong armour all the time! Its skin is thick and scaly, almost impenetrable for another predator. Even its eyes aren't a weak spot! This croc has an extra eyelid protecting the eyes, and a long, thin vertical pupil to let in extra light when it's dark. This ambush predator is also cunning, and knows how to wait for an advantage.

Muggers are fast and strong, despite their short legs. They can reach speeds up to 20 km/h when running over land.



The tiger's weapons are its muscular body and cunning brain. A tiger will often stealthily creep up and pounce on prey using its powerful legs, before the victim even realises what's happening! Strong leg muscles and sharp claws help the tiger deliver killing blows. With one leap, the tiger can catch almost any prey.

Tigers can easily leap a distance of 10-12 ft in a single bound!



The Strongest Bite

The mugger jaw has one of the strongest bite forces among animals. Its long mouth helps it snap up prey and can slam down with a force of 2,500 PSI – that's over 10 times what our jaws can achieve. Not surprisingly, dozens of their teeth break often – hunting is hard work! These teeth are replaced throughout the crocodile's life. They can regrow thousands of teeth over the course of their lifetime!

The mugger crocodile's skull has special sensory pits along its jaws that detect tiny vibrations in water. These help it locate prey even in murky rivers and marshes.



At 1,050 PSI, the tiger has less than half the bite force of the mugger. But it still has powerful jaw muscles which can open wide to take deadly bites. The sharp, fang-like canine teeth pierce the prey and hold it in place. Carnassial teeth (the sharp ones behind the canines) shred and slice flesh, allowing the tiger to kill quickly, effectively and silently during hunts.

Tiger canines can be up to 4 in long!



Hello Mr Strong Feet!

Muggers split their time across two worlds: in water and on land. Their feet are key to navigating this transition. Wide, webbed toes help them swim smoothly and stop them from sinking in muddy and marshy environments. Sharp claws grip mud and prey alike. While the mugger's jaw might be terrifying, its feet can be just as dangerous.

A mugger crocodile is shown resting on a muddy, brownish ground with patches of green grass. The crocodile is facing left, with its head lowered towards the ground. Its body is covered in scaly, greyish-brown skin. The background is a mix of mud and sparse vegetation.

Sturdy legs and wide feet allow muggers to walk, crawl and even gallop across short distances while moving or hunting.