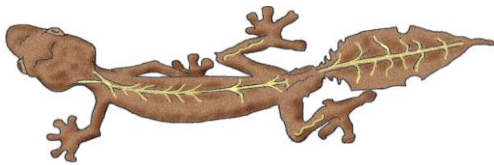


# The Aliens Are Already Here!!!

Some children in Class 5 have discovered that there are strange-looking creatures living right here on our planet. Each child has done a poster. Together they add up to a database of quite alien forms of life on Earth. There are eight altogether. Answer the questions about the posters on this page before you tackle the ones that follow.

## Leaf-tailed Gecko



**Location:** Madagascar.

**Dimensions:** 7 – 15cm.

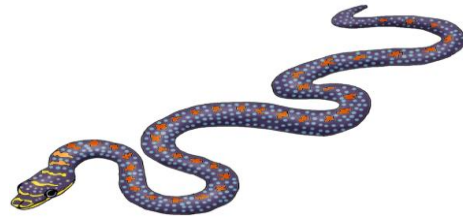
**Habitat:** in tropical forests – its green / brown colour provides camouflage among leaves.

**Diet:** a nocturnal reptile, with adhesive scales under its toes and large eyes, it quickly finds insects such as crickets and moths at night.

**Predators:** owls, rats and snakes – although the gecko can re-grow its tail if necessary; also badly affected by mass deforestation.

**Feature:** no eyelids; cleans eyes with tongue.

## Flying Snake



**Location:** South East Asia.

**Dimensions:** 5 different species – smallest is 60cm; largest is 1.2m.

**Habitat:** mainly in trees. It launches itself into the air, flattening its body and slithering to control its landing as much as 100m away.

**Diet:** mildly venomous, they prey on lizards, frog, birds and bats. (Harmless to humans.)

**Predators:** King cobras and kraits (a highly poisonous snake).

## Star-nosed Mole



**Location:** North America.

**Dimensions:** 15 – 20cm.

**Habitat:** in tunnels up to 270m long in moist soil, wet meadows, marshes, forest clearings.

**Diet:** it detects worms, slugs and small insects using the 22 sensitive tentacles of its nose. In streams and lakes, it finds amphibians and small fish. It will swim under ice in winter.

**Predators:** owls, hawks, skunks and weasels catch them on land (as well as dogs and cats); in water, they are preyed upon by mink.

## Leafy Sea Dragon



**Location:** off the south coast of Australia.

**Dimensions:** up to 35cm with leaf-shaped frills all over their body, blending in with seaweed.

**Habitat:** among kelp-covered rocks.

**Diet:** its nose is a long pipe through which it sucks in tiny shrimps and plankton.

**Predators:** mainly human divers, taking them as souvenirs to such an extent that they are now a protected species.

**Feature:** after breeding the male, like sea horses, carries the eggs under its tail.

1. Which two creatures blend in well with their surroundings?

---

---

1 mark

2. What word describes the Leaf-tailed Gecko's habit of hunting at night?

---

---

1 mark

3. How does the Flying Snake fly and land safely?

---

---

---

2 marks

4. Which of the creatures are hunted by snakes?

---

---

2 marks

5. What does **deforestation** mean?

---

---

1 mark

6. The noses of the Star-nosed Mole and the Leafy Sea Dragon are very important. Describe how each creature uses them.

---

---

---

2 marks

7. Which **two** animals are at risk from human beings and their pets?

---

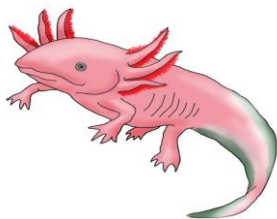
---

---

2 marks

Here are the posters of four more strange creatures. Read about them, then answer the questions that follow on the next page.

### Axolotl



**Location:** in lakes near Mexico City.

**Dimensions:** 15-45cm, though over 30cm is rare.

**Habitat:** under rocks and in crevices at the bottom of lakes, with the result that they are often white or pink.

**Diet:** its carnivorous diet includes small crabs, molluscs, worms and small fish.

**Predators:** because they remain at the bottom of lakes, they have few predators, though storks and herons will take them if they can. Fish, such as carp will eat their young. Human beings also take them as pets.

**Features:** often known as the Mexican Walking Fish, they are amphibians. Like newts, they are able to regenerate damaged limbs.

### Streaked Tenrec



**Location:** Madagascar.

**Dimensions:** 16-19cm.

**Habitat:** in burrows 1.5m long near a stream or lake. It covers the entrance by leaves.

**Diet:** foraging for food mainly at night, it eats insects and worms.

**Predators:** mainly the mongoose, although the tenrec has detachable spines which it uses to drive into its attacker's nose or paws.

**Features:** It communicates by squeaking, stamping its feet, and rubbing together special spines to produce a high-pitched sound heard by other tenrecs.

### Blue Dragon



**Location:** wherever winds and currents take it.

**Dimensions:** up to 3cm.

**Habitat:** on the surface of the sea, floating upside-down.

**Diet:** the venomous Portuguese Man of War and other jellyfish.

**Predators:** potential predators of this sea slug can receive a concentration of jellyfish poison it stores in its skin.

**Features:** a special gas-filled sac in its stomach enables it to float.

### Japanese Spider Crab



**Location:** the seas around Japan.

**Dimensions:** the leg span of this giant crab can reach 3.8 m.

**Habitat:** 300m deep on the rocky and sandy bottom of the sea close to the islands.

**Diet:** despite its fearsome size, it eats small shellfish and the remains of dead animals.

**Predators:** their size deters most predators. When they are caught up in fishing nets, they can end up as spider crab sushi in restaurants.

**Features:** not only does the crab's bumpy armour-plating blend in with the rocks, it also adorns itself with sponges and seaweed to boost its camouflage.

1. Which animal is the smallest and the most dangerous?

---

1 mark

2. Name the animals that prey on the axolotl.

---

1 mark

3. Which two animals have most to fear from human beings?

---

1 mark

4. Describe the different ways in which the Streaked Tenrec communicates.

---

---

---

3 marks

5. Describe how the Blue Dragon protects itself.

---

---

2 marks

6. How does the Blue Dragon keep afloat?

---

1 mark

7. Describe how the Japanese Spider Crab blends in with its surroundings.

---

---

2 marks