

Practical Science's Most Amazing List: Biology's Record Setters

The biosphere is full of amazing living things. This list is a glance of the most extreme and impressive living things on the Planet Earth. These are the record setters.

PRACTICAL SCIENCE WITH PHIL FREDA

Size Matters

There are creatures that make us humans look down right puny or gigantic.

- *The Blue Whale*

The largest living animal to ever walk on the Earth actually doesn't walk at all. The [Blue Whale](#) is larger than any known dinosaur ever found.

According to the [American Cetacean Society](#), the largest Blue Whale ever recorded was a 108 foot long female weighing in at 150 tons!

Adult females are larger than males of similar age. An adult Blue Whale can eat over 4 tons of [krill](#) a day! Krill are very small, shrimp like organisms that the Blue Whale filter through specialized teeth called baleen.

It is said that a small child could actually walk inside some of the larger arteries of these animals.

- *Redwoods and Sequoias*

The list would not be complete without considering these mammoths.

These trees are the largest single living things in the world.

As far as height is concerned, the coast redwoods are the clear winners. According to [Monumental Trees](#), a [coast redwood](#) named Hyperion, is the tallest tree in the world. Hyperion is 379 feet all.

That's one and a quarter foot ball fields!

As far as volume, a sequoia named "[General Sherman](#)" is the largest.

According to the [National Park Service](#), General Sherman's volume is 52,500 cubic feet! General Sherman may not be as tall as Hyperion, but it still hits 275 feet.

- *Mycoplasma*

Now it is time to look at the other end of the spectrum. [Mycoplasma](#) is a genus of bacteria that make humans look like behemoths. These tiny creatures only reach a length of 300 nanometers. In case you were wondering, a nanometer is a billionth of a meter.

These bacteria are only a tenth the size size average bacteria like *E.coli*.

These guys also have the smallest genome of any other organism.

- *Paedocypris Fish*

These [tiny guys](#) are the smallest vertebrates, or back-boned animals, on the planet. They only reach a length of 8 millimeters, which is smaller than your fingernail.

According to the [Natural History Museum of the U.K.](#), these fish are translucent, and have a reduced skull that leaves the brain unprotected.

Speed Kills

- *Cheetah*

The [Cheetah](#) is the fastest land animal in world and reaches top speeds of 71 miles per hour, according to [cheetahspot.com](#).

This speed can only be maintained for 200 to 300 yards because of the incredible amount of energy required.

Next time you are driving in your car on the highway, look out the the side window and envision a cheetah actually keeping up with you!

- *Cosmopolitan Sailfish*

The [Cosmopolitan Sailfish](#) is the fastest recording swimmer in the animal kingdom, reaching speeds of 68 mile-per-hour. ([Fun Animal Facts](#)).

- *Peregrine Falcon*

This [amazing bird](#) is the fastest flying animal on the planet. During its dive to catch prey, the Peregrine Falcon can reach speeds of 200 miles per hour. ([National Geographic](#)).

- *Three-toed Sloth*

Aside from the obvious animals like turtles and snails, one of the slowest animals on the Earth is actually a mammal. The [Three-toed Sloth](#) makes a turtle look like a fighter jet, reaching a top speed of 0.003 miles per hour, according to [scienceray.com](#).

These guys live on leaves, which aren't a very energetic meal. Instead of evolving to look for alternative food sources, sloths evolved to become slower as to save energy.

Brains or Brawn

- *Chimpanzee*

Aside from humans, the [chimps](#) are the second most intelligent creatures on the planet. We humans share 99 percent of our DNA with chimps and it definitely shows.

Chimpanzees [use tools](#), have signs of intricate social structure, and even show [emotion](#).

As our closest ancestors, the chimps show lifelong maternal care, friendship, and even anger.

- *Octopus*

The [octopus](#) species are [extremely intelligent](#).

Octopi are extremely curious creatures that have the ability to learn how to solve simple puzzles, like unscrewing glass jars.

Some octopi can distinguish shapes and colors and even understand the concept of a mirrored image of themselves.

- *Rhinoceros Beetle*

Whats the strongest of all the animals? I know what your thinking – the elephant, grizzly bear, lion? Well when compared to body weight, the strongest animal is actually an insect called the [Rhinoceros Beetle](#). This little beetle can lift 850 times its own weight, according to [scienceray.com](#).

Honorable Mention

These creatures really don't fall into a specific category, but they are definitely worth mentioning.

- *Basilisk Lizards*

These lizards are usually called “Jesus lizards” because of their ability to [walk on water](#).

Basilisk Lizards are able to do this by keeping themselves upright while moving their legs extremely fast. They are able to do this by correctly displacing their weight on the water while moving their legs.

- *Aye-Aye*

These are one of the strangest looking creatures on the planet.

According to [Primate Info Net](#), the [Aye-Aye](#) is a primate that lives in Madagascar. They are nocturnal and have extremely large eyes to capture light. They also have a very [long middle finger](#) used for tapping tree trunks in the forest.

The reason the Aye-Aye does this is to listen for changes in noise that would signify a mass inside of a hollow part of the tree.

This usually means that a grub or other small insect is inside the trunk for the Aye-Aye to eat.

- *Mantis Shrimp*

This small crustacean produces the [fastest punch](#) in the animal kingdom. Using a ratcheting muscle system, the mantis shrimp can propel its arms to speeds above 50 miles per hour.

This punch is enough to crack aquarium glass or a [crab's shell](#).

According to [Not Exactly Rocket Science](#), the punch is so powerful, that it causes light to be emitted and the water around the impact site to boil. This is achieved by lowering the pressure of the water in front of the impact.

- *Leafcutter Ants*

These amazing creatures are the only other animal, other than humans, that [actually cultivate](#).

Leafcutter ants spend all day cutting down vegetation from the forest. One would think that they are doing this to feed themselves, but this is not the case.

Leafcutters actually feed the leaves they cut to a fungus that lives in their anthills.

The fungus is maintained by the vegetation while the ants eat byproducts of the fungus.

- *Lyrebird*

This amazing bird is able to mimic all of the indigenous bird species in its Australian habitat.

What's astounding is that the lyrebird is even able to [mimic the sounds of inorganic sources](#) like cameras and even chainsaws.

These creatures are the record breakers of the biosphere. Whether they be large or small, fast or slow, they all are perfectly evolved to their respective environments and equally important to our planet. Think About it.

Make sure to check out the videos imbedded in the article to see these creatures in action!

What's your favorite living organism of this 'Practical Science's Most Amazing' list? [Tell us in the comments.](#)