

Teeny Tiny Creatures

Did you know that you're growing right now? You may not be able to tell, but your body is always changing and growing. By the end of this year, you could be about two inches taller! Just about every creature on earth grows. Some grow quickly, and others grow very s-l-o-w-l-y.

Some animals don't grow much at all. In fact, there are lots of animals on earth today that are no bigger than a quarter! Let's take a look at some of the world's tiniest creatures to see what BIG lessons we can learn from them.

Small Animals, Big God

Isn't it amazing that God made every creature on earth? All different shapes, sizes, colors, and kinds. And all of God's creation, no matter how big or small, teaches us something about how great God is!

In Genesis 1:24, God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind." God created each animal, and he created you too! God knows your every fingerprint and sees the smallest hair on your head. No detail is too small for God. Sometimes you may feel tiny in this huge world, but you can do BIG things with God's help.

Match Em' Up!

See if you can match the fun facts about the tiniest animals on earth!

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1. My eggs are the size of coffee beans. | a. fairyfly |
| 2. I can catch flies and spiders while I fly. | b. bumblebee bat |
| 3. I am the size of a house fly. | c. <i>Paedocypris progenetica</i> |
| 4. I am part of the carp family. | d. brown leaf chameleon |
| 5. I have tiny hairs on my wings. | e. bee hummingbird |
| 6. I can play "dead" to trick predators. | f. <i>Paedophryne dekot</i> |

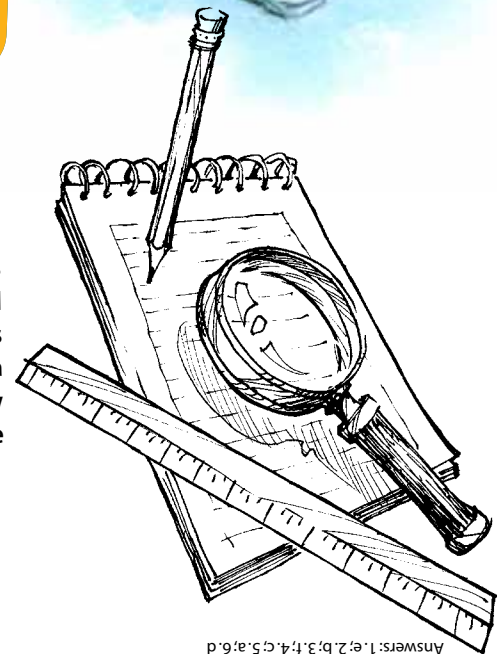


ILLUSTRATION BY SCOTT HOLLADAY PHOTOS BY WIKIMEDIA



Animal Explorers

Scientists discover new kinds of animals every day. Now it's your turn to be an animal explorer! Can you find the tiniest creatures in your neighborhood? Grab a notebook, a pencil, a ruler, and a magnifying glass. Draw a picture of each creature you find, and see if you can measure its length with a ruler.





Bird

Bee hummingbirds are very colorful birds. They find their homes in Cuba and are so small that they look like large bumblebees. They eat sweet nectar from flowers and even some insects like mosquitoes and gnats. When they fly, their wings beat up to 200 times per second!

Why do hummingbirds hum?
Because they don't know the words!



Reptile

The **brown leaf chameleon** is found on the island of Madagascar. This teeny animal is about an inch (2.5 cm) long—so small it can fit on the tip of an adult's finger or rest neatly on top of a match! They can hide themselves among brown leaves and can change color. These amazing creatures would be great at playing hide-and-seek!

What kind of tiles can't stick on walls? Reptiles!

Fish

The world's smallest fish is the **Paedocypris progenetica** (a big name for such a tiny creature). This fish is about 7.9mm. That's less than one third of an inch! These teeny little fish were discovered about 10 years ago in the swampy waters of Indonesia. They have clear bodies that look like glass.

Why do fish live in salt water?
Because pepper makes them sneeze!



Frog

The world's smallest frog, the **Paedophryne dekot** (another long name!) lives in the rainforests of Papua New Guinea. Only 8.5mm long, their name *dekot* means "very small"—about the size of an M&M!

How does a frog feel when he has a broken leg? Unhobby!



Mammal

Bumblebee bats, like the bee hummingbird, get their name because they are about the size of a bumblebee. They are one inch (3cm) long and live in groups of 100 or more in the cool caves of Thailand. These small creatures eat lots of bugs. They are also called "Kitti's hog-nosed bats" because their nose looks like a pig's snout.

What's more amazing than a talking bat? A spelling bee!

Bug

Scientists believe the **fairyfly** is the world's smallest bug. Only about .005 inch long, it is not really a fly, but a tiny wasp. But these small bugs don't have magic fairy dust—they eat the eggs of other bugs.

Why did the fly never land on the computer? Because he was afraid of the World Wide Web!



Christin Baker is a wife and homeschool mom who has worked for years in children's ministry.

She attends Tabernacle Community Church in Grand Rapids, Mich.