



TAKE A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE



Take a Walk on the Wild Side in the Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge this October! Park near the observation deck/visitor's center. There are 10 animals hidden on the Pine Creek Dike Trail (~.5 miles one-way, easier to find) & 10 animals hidden on the Woods Trail (~.5 miles entire loop, more difficult to find). Animals will be hidden on the trail from October 17 through October 31.



Pro Tip: Print a copy of the guide to take with you on the trail & read about each animal as you go! You can also download this PDF to a mobile device to save paper!

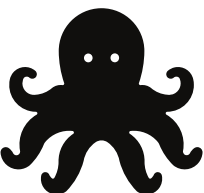
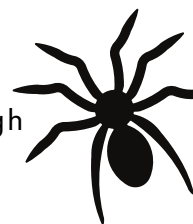
WALK ON THE WILD SIDE GUIDE



The world has many dangerous & deadly creatures that vary in how they're dangerous & the risk they pose to other animals or humans. Some animals use their strength, adaptations, & skills to attack & others to defend. Some may carry diseases that can be harmful to others. Are you brave enough to find 20 of the world's most deadly creatures?! Read about them & check them off as you go!

Please Note: Every creature has a role in its ecosystem & all life on the planet is interconnected. Just because these animals may be dangerous doesn't mean they are a less valuable part of their habitat. As human populations continue to grow, we continue to encroach on the habitats of these animals. Just be thankful only one of them lives in Wisconsin (& is far LESS dangerous than it is in other parts of the world)! Enjoy your walk on the wild side!

1. Sydney Funnel Web Spider - Found in southeastern Australia, these arachnids hold the Guinness World Record for the most dangerous venom of any spider in the world, strong enough to kill several humans! Good news, though - since an antivenom was developed in 1980, there have been no fatalities from these spiders!



2. Blue-Ringed Octopus - This tiny octopus (<9 inches long) is found in tide pools & coral reefs from Australia to Japan. It uses its highly toxic venom to feed on small crustaceans (crabs, shrimps, etc.) but has enough venom to kill 26 humans! The bright blue rings on its body get even brighter as a warning before it bites. Thankfully, this little critter is not aggressive & will only bite humans if cornered or handled.

3. Inland Taipan - This snake lives in the dry habitat of east-central Australia, but due to its shy nature & remote outback habitat, it is rarely seen by humans. That's a good thing because one drop of this snake's venom is enough to kill 100 humans! It has the deadliest venom of any snake tested so far but there have been no recorded human deaths. The inland taipan can grow to be just over 8 feet long & has a diet of small mammals.





4. Sea Wasp - This box jellyfish can be found near northern Australia & Southeast Asia. The tentacles can be over 10 feet long & are covered in stinging cells. Their prey (& sometimes people) get tangled in their hard-to-see tentacles. A chemical reaction (not just touch) between their stinging cells & the scales/skin of their prey makes them sting their prey. Lifeguards in Australia often wear pantyhose over their arms & legs to prevent stings! The venom from a single sea wasp can kill up to 60 adults! The venom is very fast-acting so there isn't always time to get someone the antivenom & over 100 people have died from stings.

5. Anopheles Mosquito - This tiny creature is often said to be the world's most deadly. Most of us have been bitten by a mosquito, but not all of them are dangerous. Scientists estimate 7.5-15% of all known mosquito *species* can carry parasites that cause Malaria - a disease with well over 200 million cases & nearly 600,000 fatalities per year. When females bite through the skin to drink blood, they can inject the deadly parasite into the blood. Malaria is rare outside of the tropics, but mosquitoes in North America can cause other types of illnesses, such as West Nile Virus or Zika Virus, but cases are extremely rare in our region.



6. Saltwater Crocodile - This massive reptile lives along the coastlines of Asia, northern Australia, & western Pacific Islands, & is the only crocodile that regularly swims out to sea. This croc can grow to be over 20 feet long, weigh over 2,200 pounds, & can slam its giant jaws shut with a bite force of 3,700 pounds per square inch (psi)! Humans bite with 150-200 psi. While most crocodile species are not considered dangerous to humans, saltwater & Nile crocodiles are! The CrocBITE database estimates these 2 species of crocs are responsible for up to 1,000 deaths annually, typically attacking while people gather food/water.

7. Golden Poison Frog - This little amphibian may look "cute", but one two-inch frog has enough venom in its skin to kill 10 humans. It lives in the humid forests of western Colombia, where the native peoples have long used poison from these frogs on blowgun darts for hunting. Poison dart frogs raised in captivity are NOT venomous, which indicates their venom may be from the insects they eat, who may get toxins from plants they eat!

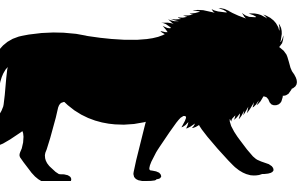


8. Komodo Dragon - The world's largest lizard can only be found on a few islands in Indonesia. These fierce predators can grow up to 10 feet long, can weigh over 300 lbs, & use their sharp teeth & claws to bring down large prey (deer, reptiles, other Komodo dragons, pigs, & monkeys). Their venom has toxins that prevent clotting, causing massive bleeding & shock in their prey. If their prey escapes, the dragon can use its keen sense of smell to follow as the venom continues to work. They can eat up to 80% of their body weight in a single feeding! Although human attacks are rare, fatalities (in the wild & captivity) have been reported.



9. Green Anaconda - These massive snakes can grow to be nearly 30 feet long (though typically are less than 20 feet), can weigh up to 550 pounds, & are considered to be the largest snakes by weight in the world. They are found in the swamps of tropical South America. They often hunt from the water, with just their eyes above the surface. Their prey may be as large as deer & they kill by constriction (wrapping around their prey & squeezing so tight that the prey's heart stops beating) or by drowning them in water!

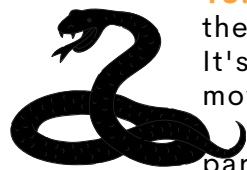
10. Purple Cone Snail - Snails might sound harmless, but this one is anything but! It is found in the coastal waters of the Pacific Ocean from Mexico to Peru. Many types of cone snails use a harpoon-like tongue to spear their food & inject venom to stop the worms/fish from moving. Most cone snails are small & their stings are similar to a bee sting, but the purple cone snail can reach nearly 30 inches in length & is one of the few cone snail species dangerous to humans. Scientists estimate over 30 people have been killed by their venom. Beachgoers watchout!



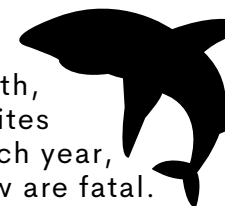
11. African Lion - These cats are known as the top predator in Africa & the only cat known to hunt as a group (usually females). They can be up to 8 feet long, weigh up to 500 pounds, & they have extremely sharp claws & very strong jaws. Although lions do not typically attack humans, older/weaker lions who cannot bring down stronger/larger prey & lions whose food sources have been depleted due to human development, are more likely to attack. Lions are responsible for 200-250 deaths per year in Africa.



12. Reef Stonefish - This fish spends most of its time camouflaged as a rock in ocean reefs near East Africa, Asia, & Australia. When threatened by predators, it can raise 13 venomous spines. Most human incidents occur by accident - by stepping on it! It is the most venomous fish in the oceans & the venom can be fatal, but there have been few recorded deaths, especially since antivenom was developed. This tricky fish can live for up to 24 hours OUT of water! Beachgoers watchout!



13. Black Mamba - This snake isn't the world's most venomous, but it is often considered to be the world's deadliest due to its strong venom & highly aggressive behavior when threatened! It's Africa's longest venomous snake (up to 14 feet) & the world's fastest snake, capable of moving at 10mph in short bursts! When threatened, it rears its head, hisses, & opens its black-lined mouth very wide. Then, it strikes many times in quick succession, injecting paralyzing venom into its prey! Antivenom is not widely available, so bites remain highly fatal.



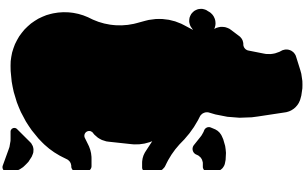
14. Great White Shark - One of the ocean's largest top predators, this shark can be found all over the world & can live up to 70 years! Its massive size (more than 20 feet long), strength, 300+ saw-like teeth, & powerful jaws help it kill mammals the size of small whales. Great whites typically take a large bite out of their prey & wait for it to bleed to death before eating it. Each year, over 100 shark attacks are reported worldwide, with 33-50% from great whites. Typically, few are fatal.



15. Siberian Tiger - The largest of the cat family, these tigers can be over 10 feet long & weigh over 600 pounds. They're found in the cold, snowy forests of Asia. Unlike lions, tigers live alone & hunt alone, relying on camouflage & stealth to bring down deer & wild pigs. Like lions, some weak/old tigers or tigers in areas where their natural food has disappeared have come to rely on attacking humans, although this is not typical behavior. Only ~400 Siberian tigers remain in the wild.



16. Tropical Freshwater Snails - Freshwater snails found in the tropics of Asia, Africa, & South America carry five types of parasitic worms (blood flukes) that cause Schistosomiasis, a disease that has been nicknamed Snail Fever. It affects ~250 million people per year, with fatalities between 25,000-200,000. Snails are hosts for the parasite. The larvae exit the snail into freshwater & can penetrate human skin! They develop into adult worms that live in human blood vessels & females release eggs, causing an immune reaction. Populations without access to clean water sources are most at risk.



17. Hippopotamus - Perhaps the most dangerous of all the plant-eaters, this 4-ton animal is known for its bad temper & aggressive behaviors. Hippos have larger mouths than any other land animal (opening as wide as 150 degrees) & they have enormous canine teeth that can grow up to 20 inches long. Males are very territorial & females have been known to flip over boats & attack occupants to protect their young. Hippos live in freshwater in Africa, & many attacks happen as humans try to collect water, resulting in ~500 deaths per year.



18. Polar Bear - As the largest land predator, a polar bear can be nearly 10 feet tall & weigh over 1,500 pounds. They have unusually large paws that act as snowshoes & very sharp claws to help them catch the slippery seals they favor as prey, which they tear apart with their big teeth. As sea ice disappears, polar bears are being forced to change their habitats, bringing them into contact with people more often. Females with cubs or "teenagers" who are inexperienced hunters are the most likely to get into an altercation with humans.



19. Indian Red Scorpion - There are ~1,750 species of scorpions. All of them are venomous, but only about 25 have venom strong enough to kill a human. The Indian red scorpion (found only in India & parts of the Middle East) is thought to be the most lethal & has resulted in several fatalities. As a nocturnal animal, numerous stings have occurred while people were in bed or when the scorpion fell from the ceiling onto an unsuspecting victim in the night. ☹️



20. Saw-Scaled Viper - Although this snake is not as venomous as the inland taipan or the black mamba, it is thought to be the cause of more human fatalities per year than any other snake. It lives in highly populated areas of the Middle East & India. The combo of its close proximity to people, excellent camouflage, nocturnal habits, & aggressive behavior results in frequent human bites, though only about 10% are fatal.