

Animals of the World: Arachnids



THE SCORPION

Scorpions belong to the animal class arachnids and are closely related to spiders and mites. They have eight legs and a very long tail that ends in a coiled shape with a stinger at the tip that is filled with venom. This means that all scorpions are poisonous, but only a quarter of them possess highly dangerous venom that can kill a person. Thus, they become very feared animals for human beings.



Despite being creepy creatures, they have interesting features. Scorpions have from 6 to 12 eyes, but they do not have good vision. Because of this, they rely on vibrations and their sense of smell. This allows them to perceive what happens in the terrain where they are, to find food, and hide from danger.

Because scorpions are sensitive to light, they adopted night habits. During the day, they hide under rocks or in holes. They can live up to a year without food and water. In their natural habitat, they can live from two to ten years, and in captivity, up to 25 years. Soil is essential for scorpions to live since they bury themselves in it. In places with strong frosts and no loose soil, these animals are not likely to survive. It is possible that because of their ability to survive, scorpions existed on the planet hundreds of millions of years ago.



Most experts agree that scorpions are not aggressive. They simply come into contact with people when trying to find a warm place when it gets colder. It is often difficult for humans to notice a scorpion before it is too late because of the color of their bodies.



More than 2000 species of scorpions are known, but not all are the same size. This varies according to the species and its habitat.



The smallest can measure half an inch, while the largest can measure up to 7 and a half inches. They are not the same color either, since they are of various colors, between brown, black, or even greenish.



These animals can be found worldwide. They inhabit rain forests, arid deserts, beaches, mountains, and rural areas. They are adaptable; therefore, they can be found in multiple places, such as trees, rocks, sand, cracks, crevices of houses, among others. They like to live in places where they enjoy very cold or very hot temperatures, such as deserts.

The amount of food a Scorpion eats is not a concern because it can slow down its metabolism and survive on an insect for up to a year. It is an aggressive creature when it comes to foraging and being nocturnal they hunt at night, usually insects or rodents. Because they have poor vision, they perceive the vibrations of their prey, attack it, inject venom with their stinger, and then absorb it. They have the strength and agility to jump onto prey quickly if given the opportunity.



For scorpions to reproduce, they initially rely on their vibrations and smell to determine who to mate with. Then a mating ritual begins that can last from an hour to a day. When the mating ends, each one continues on its way. However, if

the male does not run away, either in search of food or another female with which to mate, he ends up becoming food for the female.

The gestation period of scorpions lasts from five months to a year. The young grow inside the mother. After they are born, they live on the mother's back for the first few weeks. In this way, the mother protects them until they are abandoned.



Name _____

Date _____



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Answer the questions.

1. What class do scorpions belong to? To whom is it related?

2. Write the physical characteristics of scorpions that were presented all through the text.

3. What characteristics did you find interesting about scorpions?

4. How do scorpions hunt their prey?

5. How many scorpions have highly dangerous venom?

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6. How do scorpions perceive what is happening around them?

7. How do scorpions survive when food is scarce? How long can it live without food or water?

8. Where do scorpions live? Where do they prefer to live and why?

9. How many species of scorpions are found? How much can the smallest and largest measure?

10. What did you understand about the reproduction of scorpions? If you can, ask your parents to find a picture of the baby scorpion so you can see how they live on their mother's back. It's incredible!

