TIME FOR KIDS

Incredible Invertebrates



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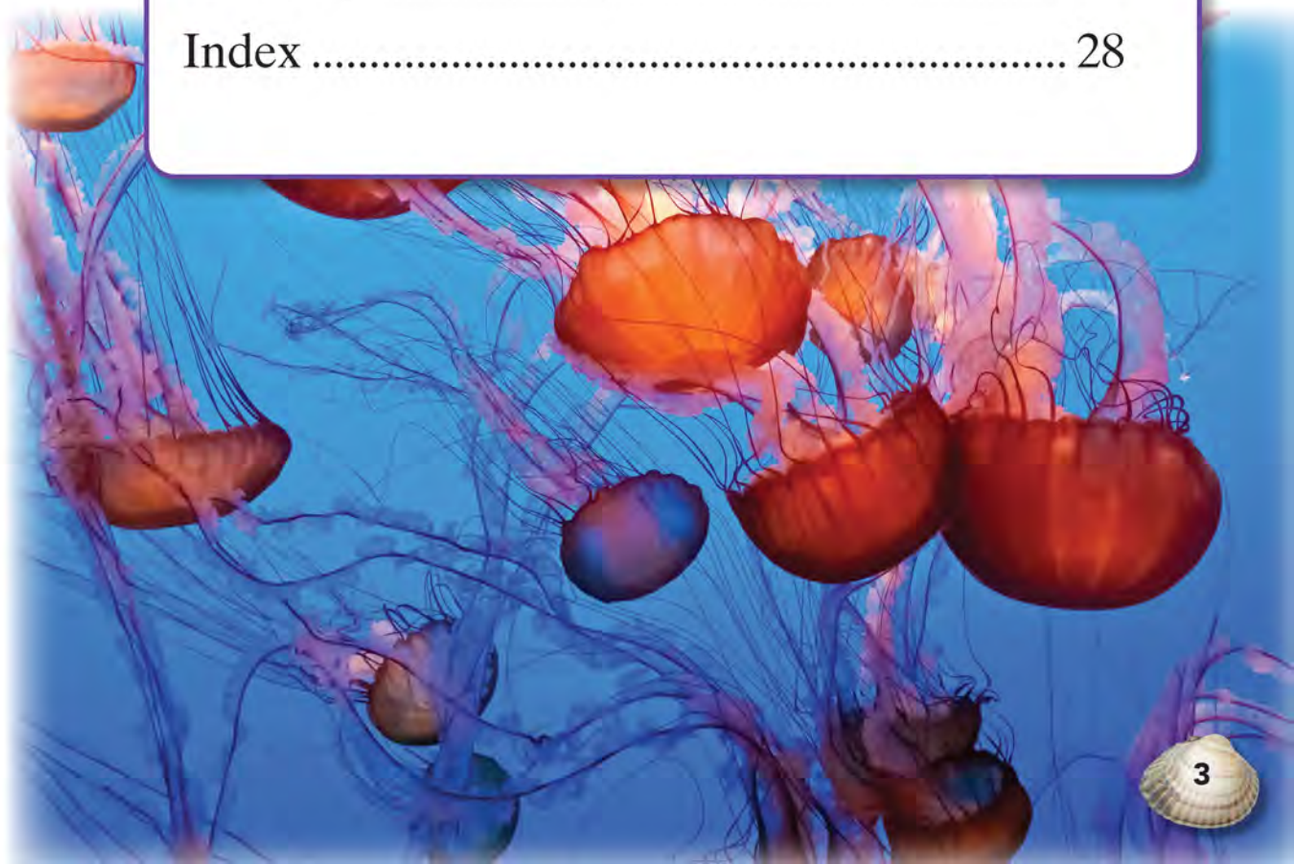
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What Is an Invertebrate?

Swish, squirm, wiggle. Creep, creep, crawl. Most animals move, but many cannot move as you do. You bend, run, hop, and climb. Some animals swish, squirm, wiggle, creep, or crawl. Others can't move at all! These animals are called **invertebrates** (in-VUR-tuh-breyts)—animals without backbones.


blue crayfish

There are more than one million different invertebrates.


snail


jellyfish

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Invertebrates' bodies are much simpler than yours. Instead of brains, they have a bundle of cells called a **ganglia** (GANG-glee-uh). This controls their bodies just as your brain controls yours. But since they lack brains, these animals cannot do many of the things that you can.

Invertebrates can be found in the air, under the water, and on land. Some are **carnivores** (KAHR-nuh-vohrs). They eat other animals. Ladybugs, for example, can eat 50 bugs a day!



a ladybug eating aphids

Sea anemones eat other sea animals.



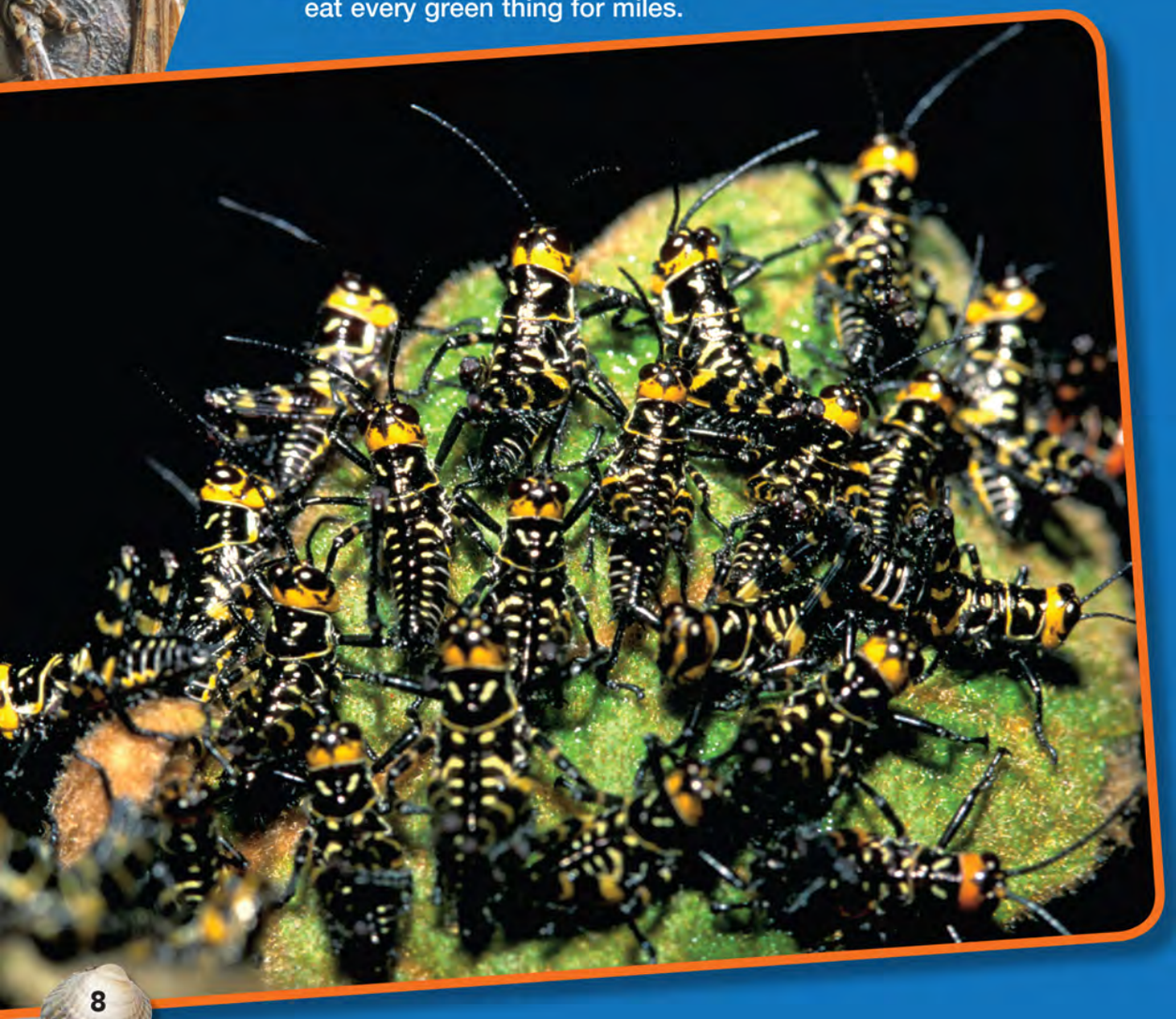
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Wow!

Invertebrates have rest periods, but they never fall asleep.





Swarms of grasshoppers may eat every green thing for miles.



This black-lip pearl oyster eats the dead plant and animal matter found in seawater.



earthworm

Other invertebrates are **herbivores** (HUR-buh-vohrs), or plant eaters. Snails, for example, eat leaves, vegetables, and fruit.

Some invertebrates eat meat and plants. They are **omnivores** (OM-nuh-vohrs). Earthworms, for example, eat tiny pieces of rotting plants and animals found in the soil.

