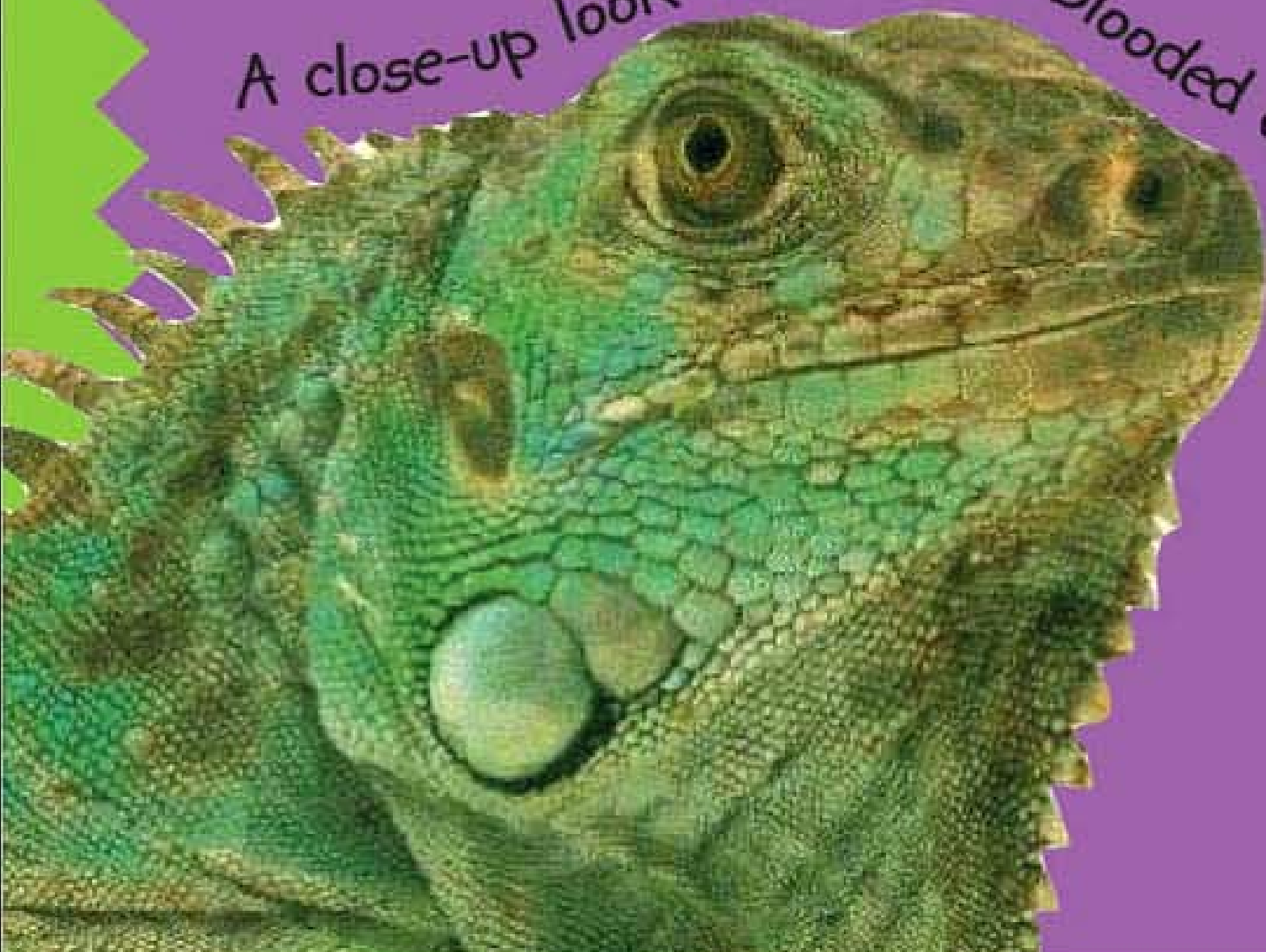




LOOK Closer

Reptiles

A close-up look at our cold-blooded cousins





LOOK Closer

Reptiles



A Dorling Kindersley Book



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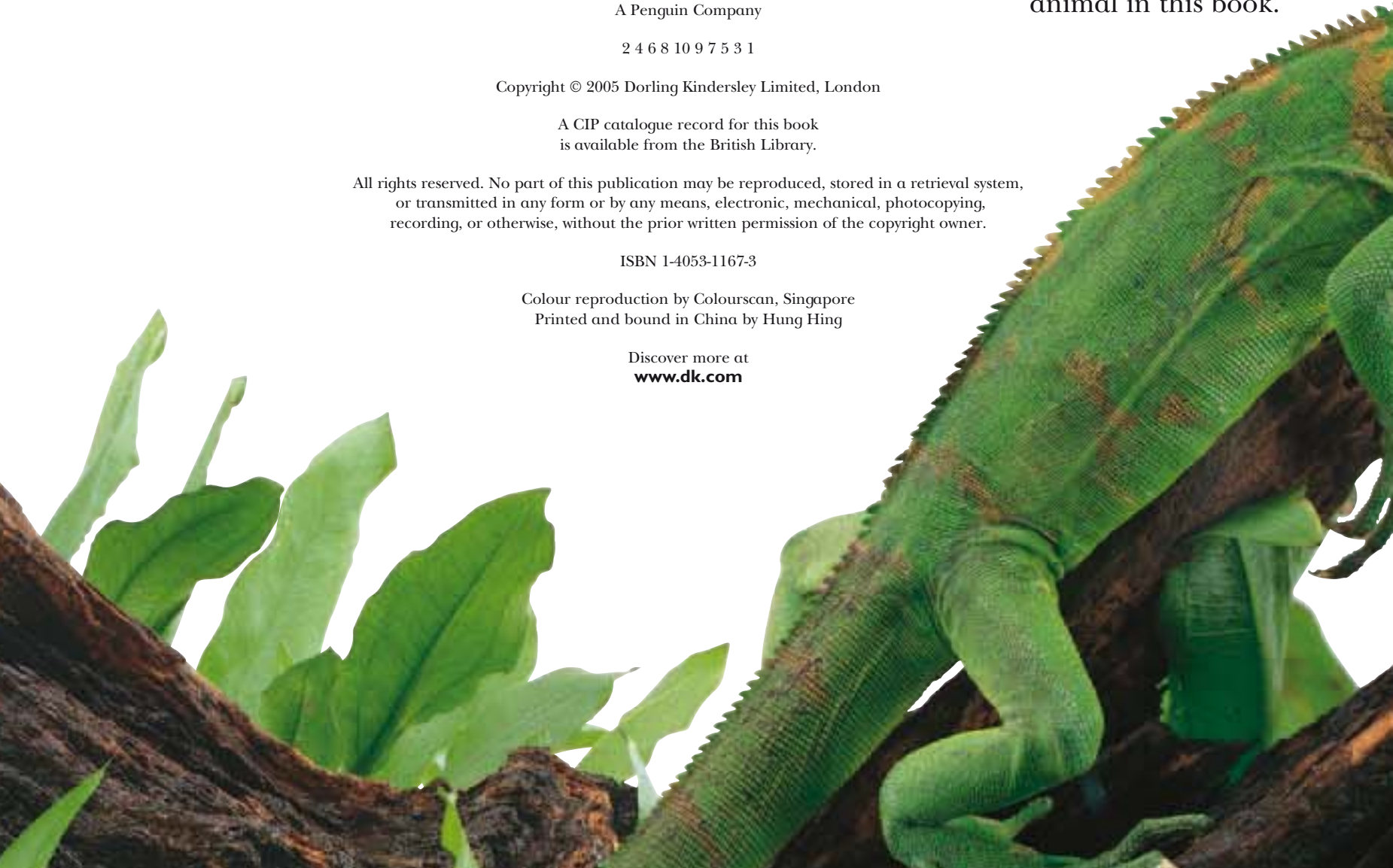
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Look out for us. We will
show you the size of every
animal in this book.



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Spot and snap

Creeping slowly out of its burrow, this spotted salamander is looking to snap up its dinner.

Did you know...

... A salamander likes to live in a shady place to help its skin stay wet. If its skin dried out, it would die.



My long, thin shape helps me to burrow into the ground.

I think I've spotted dinner.





Spotted salamanders can grow between 11 cm (4½ in) and 24 cm (9½ in) long.

When I spot an insect or a worm, I quickly snap it up in my jaws.

If I am attacked, a nasty-tasting poison oozes from my skin.

Can you spot me?

This Madagascan day gecko's brightly coloured skin hides it perfectly among the green leaves of its rainforest home.



The Madagascan day gecko is a type of lizard. It can grow to 30 cm (12 in) long.



slurp

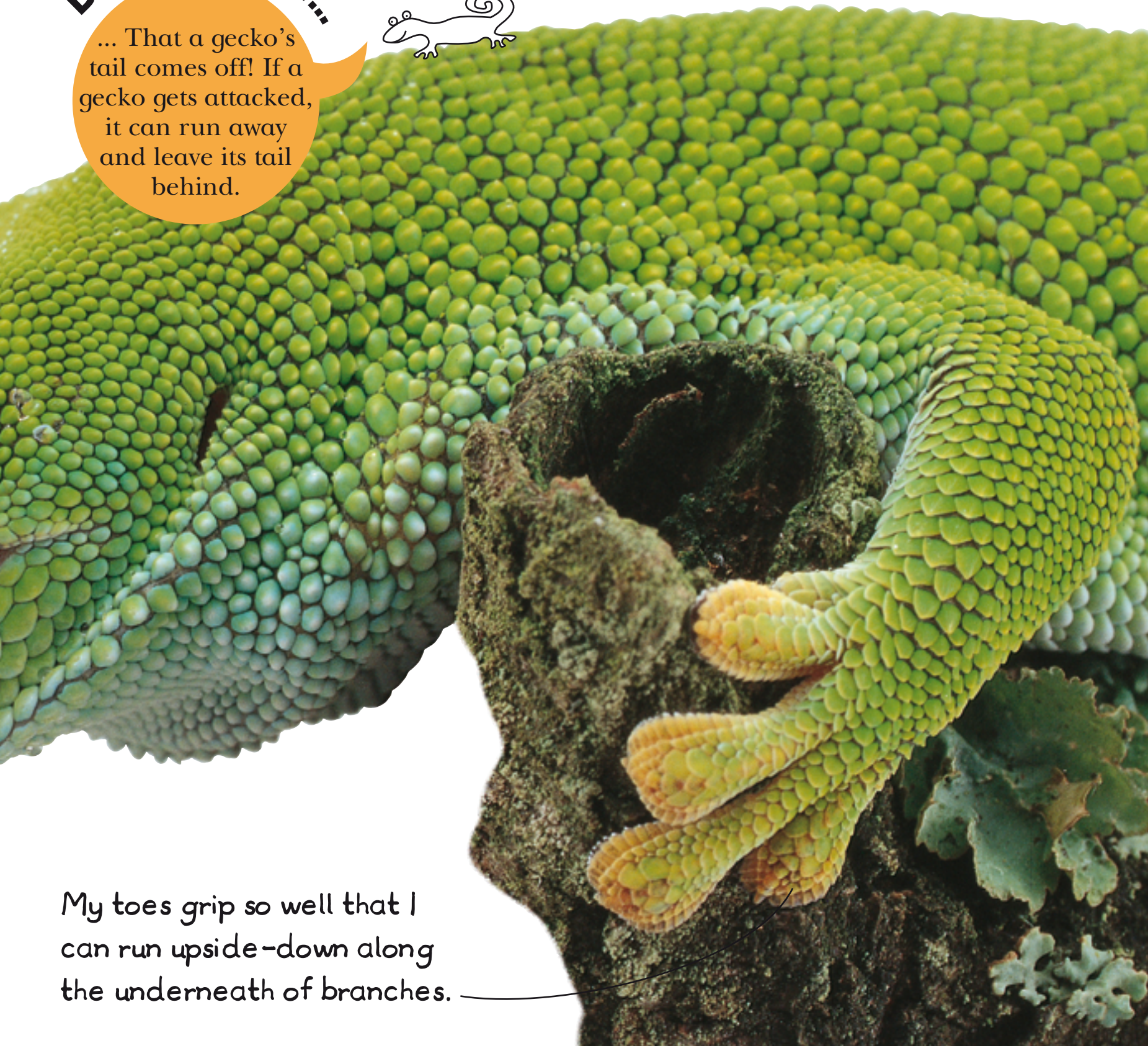
After I've eaten, I give my face a good wash with my tongue.

Did you know...

... That a gecko's tail comes off! If a gecko gets attacked, it can run away and leave its tail behind.



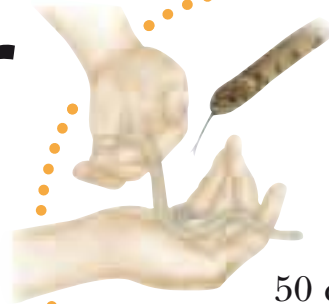
scaly



My toes grip so well that I can run upside-down along the underneath of branches.

Slither, slither

Frogs and newts need to watch out when this grass snake comes looking for food. If it catches a victim, it swallows it alive and whole!



Slow worms are around 50 cm (20 in) long, but grass snakes can grow to two or three times that size.

I'm not poisonous, but if I wave my head and hiss I can look really frightening.

I flick my tongue in and out to pick up smells from the air.

hissssssss

I'm called a slow-worm, but I'm really a kind of lizard with no legs.

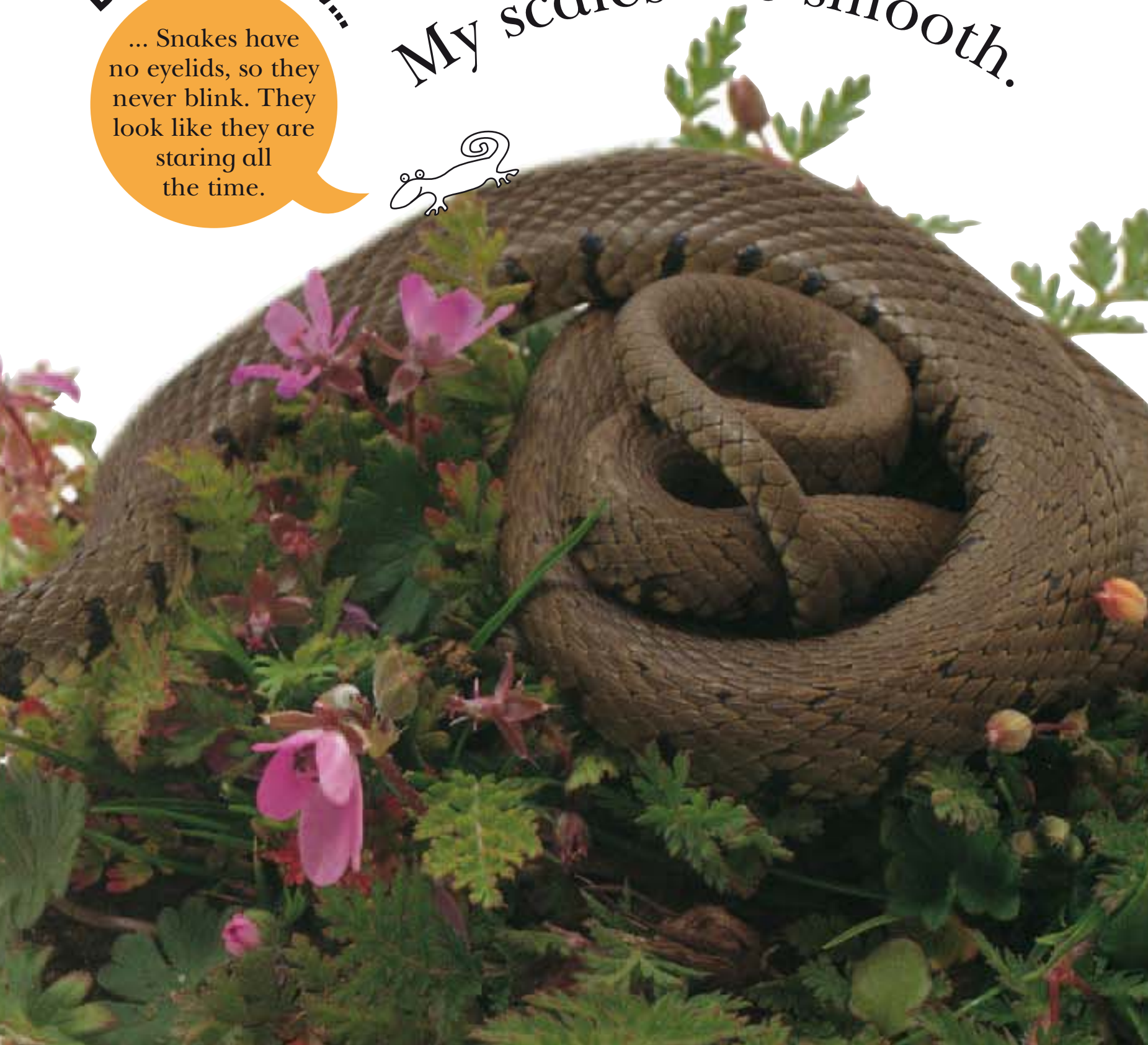


Did you know...

... Snakes have no eyelids, so they never blink. They look like they are staring all the time.



My scales are smooth.

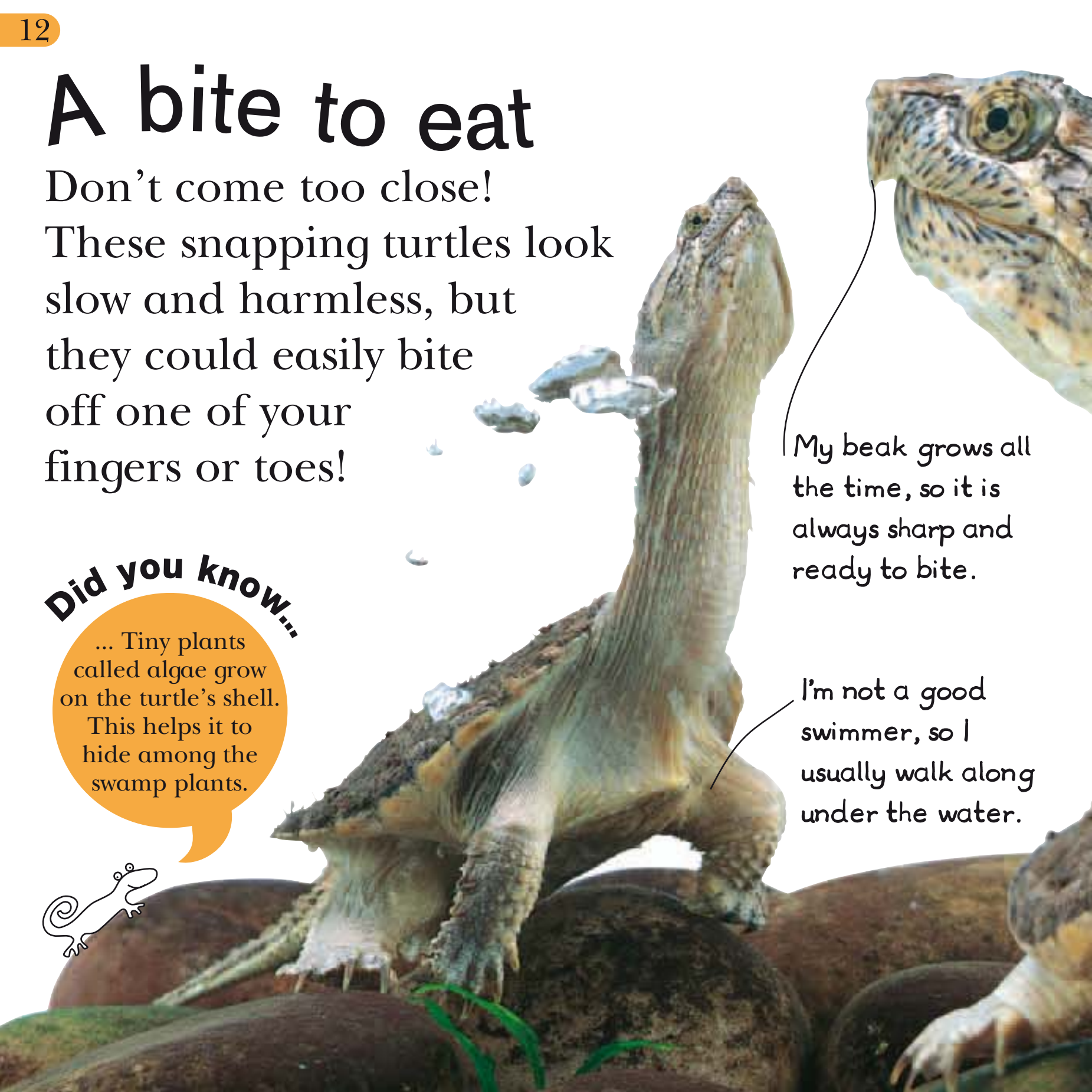


A bite to eat

Don't come too close!
These snapping turtles look slow and harmless, but they could easily bite off one of your fingers or toes!

Did you know...

... Tiny plants called algae grow on the turtle's shell. This helps it to hide among the swamp plants.

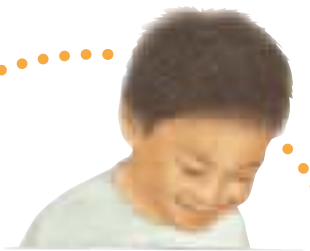


My beak grows all the time, so it is always sharp and ready to bite.

I'm not a good swimmer, so I usually walk along under the water.

Stretch that neck!

When a fish swims past, I shoot out my long neck and gobble it up.



These turtles grow fast, from just 12 cm (5 in) aged two to 35 cm (14 in) aged 15.


It's hard to see me at the bottom of the creek or swamp.



Open wide

Opening its huge jaws, this mangrove snake is ready to pounce. It poisons its prey, then swallows it whole.

I inject poison into my prey from my back teeth.





Come here, little bird.



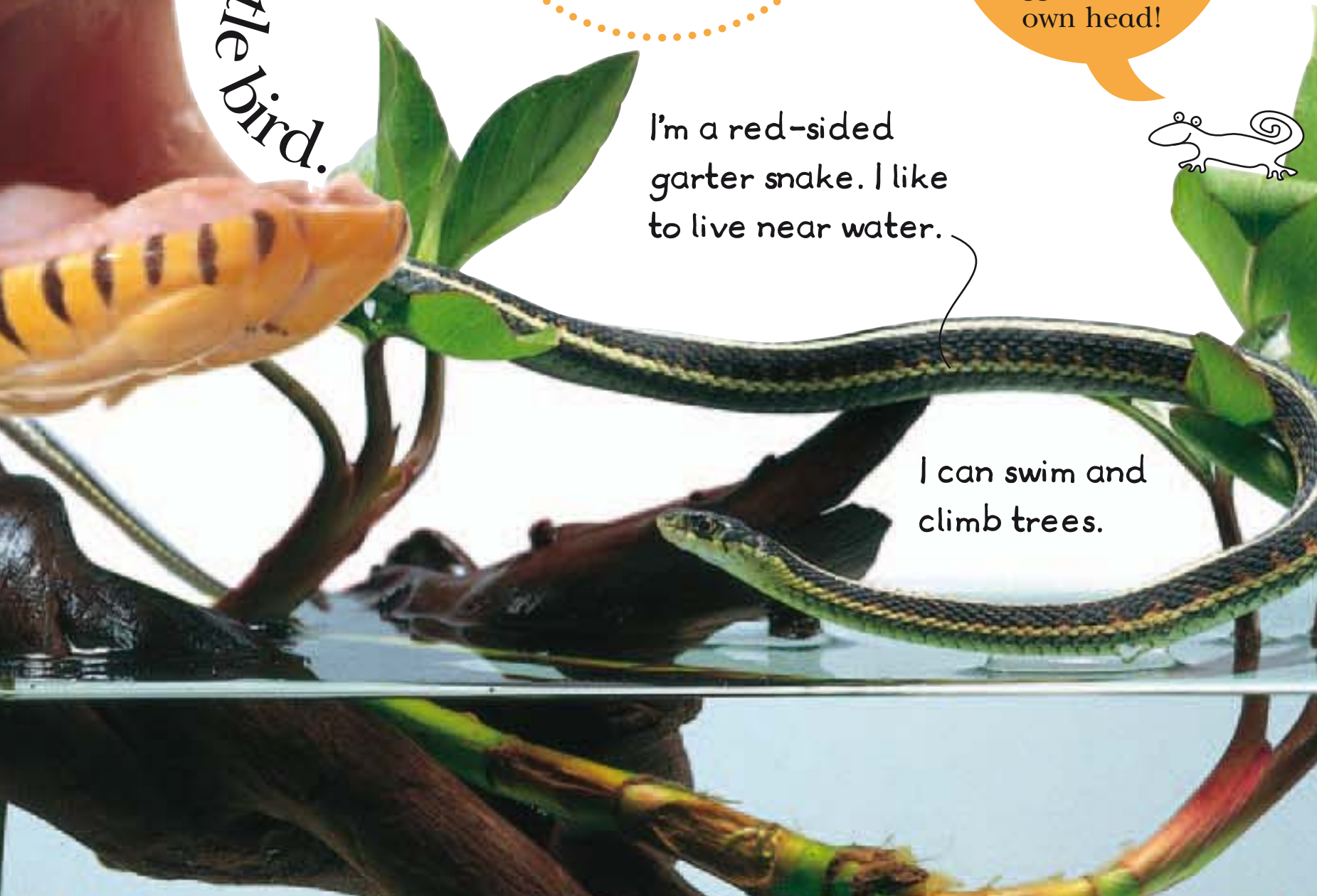
Mangrove snakes can grow to 2.5 m (8 ft), three times longer than the red-sided garter snake.

Did you know...
... A snake can open its mouth wide enough to swallow things bigger than its own head!



I'm a red-sided garter snake. I like to live near water.

I can swim and climb trees.

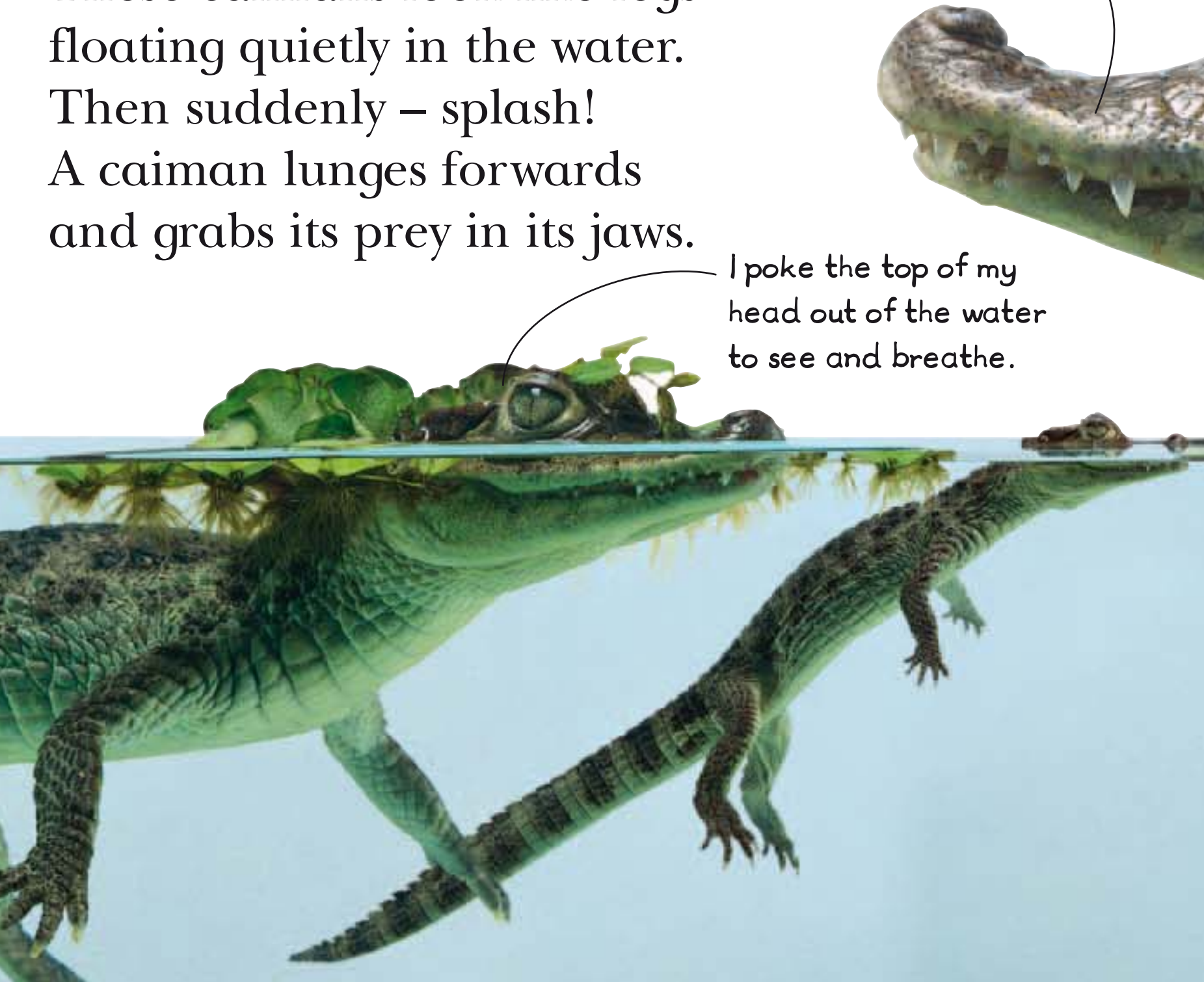


Splash and grab

These caimans look like logs floating quietly in the water. Then suddenly – splash! A caiman lunges forwards and grabs its prey in its jaws.

Once I've got a fish in my teeth, it has no chance of escape.

I poke the top of my head out of the water to see and breathe.

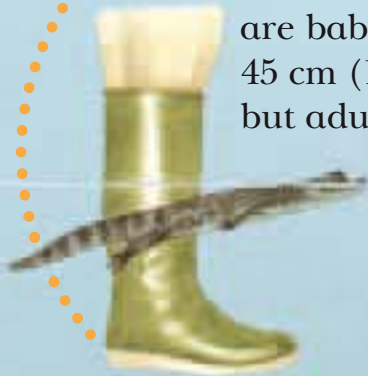


Did you know...

... A caiman can't chew. If its prey is too big to swallow in one go, it rips off bite-sized pieces.



These caimans are babies just 45 cm (18 in) long, but adults grow to be longer than your bed.



I'm really tough! Under my thick scales I have a layer of bony plates that protect my body.

Slowcoach

Tortoises are slow movers. They can't run away from enemies, so they rely on their shells to protect them.



These desert tortoises are 36 cm (14 in) long – tiny compared to their massive Galapagos tortoise cousins, who are 1.2 m (4 ft) long.



My shell is very strong. It's made of bones that are covered in big, horny scales.

I'm more than 100 years old. I might even reach my 200th birthday.

If I'm frightened, I pull my head and legs back into my shell.

Did you know...

... The rings on a tortoise's shell scales show its age. The more rings, the older the tortoise is.



plod, plod, plod

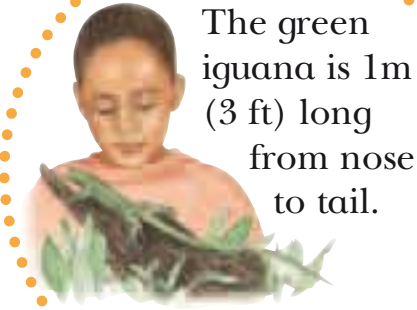
I don't have any teeth, but my jaws are very sharp.



Sunbathers

Lying on a branch, this green iguana warms itself in the sunshine.

Its colour helps it to hide among the leaves.



The green iguana is 1m (3 ft) long from nose to tail.

I can run very fast to escape from predators.

If someone disturbs me, I will dive into the water below and swim away.



nibble
nibble



I stick out this flap of skin when I want to look big and frightening.

Did you know...

... Iguanas have amazingly good eyesight. They can see another iguana more than 100 m (330 ft) away.



Hunting for dinner

Sliding quickly and silently across the rocky desert, a hungry king snake looks for a bird or lizard to eat.

Did you know...

... When a snake grows, its skin splits and falls off. This reveals a new, bigger skin underneath.

As I slither along, my scales grip the ground to stop me slipping.

It's hard to find



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A king snake is between 1m (3 ft) and 2 m (6 ft) long, but it can swallow prey bigger than itself.



Sometimes I have to wait a long time for my meal, but I can go for days without eating.

food out here.



I can't see very well. I only spot things that are moving around.

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Glossary

Burrow an underground hole that an animal lives in. It is also the action of digging the hole.

Creek a small, narrow part of a sea, river, or lake that comes inland. Also called a brook.

Poison a liquid or other substance that kills or harms an animal if the animal touches or eats it.

Predator an animal that hunts and kills other animals to eat.

Prey creatures an animal hunts for food.

Rainforest a tropical forest that has a lot of rainfall. Its very tall trees form a canopy all year round.

Reptile an animal class that includes crocodiles, lizards, snakes, and turtles. They live on land or in water, and lay eggs.

Swamp soggy land that is sometimes covered in water.