

Incredible Insects

Have you ever thought about all the different insects in the world? They crawl, jump, fly and scuttle over every continent on Earth.

There are more than 900,000 known species of insect in the world. Here are a few fun facts about some of the most unusual insects that have been discovered.

Freezing temperatures

Belgica antarctica is a wingless midge that only grows to about half a centimetre long. It's the only insect that is able to survive in Antarctica. In fact, it's the largest land animal that lives in the Antarctic all year round. It's so cold there that the midge's insides sometimes freeze.

Huge colonies

Termites can be found on every continent except Antarctica. They usually eat wood, leaves or plants. Queen termites can live for up to 50 years — that's the longest lifespan of all the insects in the world! They can also produce thousands of eggs a day, which means that termite colonies can contain over a million termites.



Recent discoveries

Tinkerbella nana is a tiny insect found in Costa Rica. It's less than 250 micrometres long — the width of about three human hairs. It was only discovered in 2013 and is named after the fairy from *Peter Pan*.

Endangered giants

Giant Weta are enormous insects that live only in New Zealand. They have become endangered because their habitats are being destroyed. An adult Giant Weta can weigh more than a house sparrow, and their bodies can grow to around 10 cm long.

Long and thin

Chan's megasticks are giant stick insects that live in Borneo. They are among the longest insects on Earth, growing up to 55 cm long.

Super strength

Horned dung beetles are the world's strongest insects — they can pull 1141 times their own body weight. That's like you trying to pull five elephants!

Written by Zoe Fenwick.

- 1 Find and copy two words from the text that mean "very big".

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2 marks

- 2 Draw lines to link each insect with the correct fact.

Belgica antarctica

was discovered in 2013

Horned dung beetle

can survive its insides freezing

Tinkerbella nana

is the world's strongest insect



3 marks

- 3 According to the text, where would you be able to find a Chan's megastick? Circle one.

Borneo

Costa Rica

New Zealand



1 mark

- 4 Explain in your own words why Giant Weta have become endangered.

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1 mark

- 5 Find and copy a subheading from the text.

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1 mark

- 6 Which insect do you think is the most interesting? Explain your answer.

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2 marks

Total
out of 10

Answers

1. Any two from: huge; giant; enormous.
2. Belgica antarctica — can survive its insides freezing
Horned dung beetle — is the world's strongest insect
Tinkerbella nana — was discovered in 2013
3. Borneo
4. E.g. Because the places where they live have been destroyed.
5. Any one from: Freezing temperatures; Huge colonies; Recent discoveries; Endangered giants; Long and thin; Super strength.
6. Any appropriate answer. E.g. Belgica antarctica because it can survive in really cold temperatures even when its insides freeze.