

CHAMELEONS

These cute little reptiles are both colourful and somewhat hard to see but to everyone's surprise these lizards don't change their colour to match their surroundings. Keep reading to find out more!

FANCY FEET

Like most lizards, chameleons have remarkable feet, but instead of having four or five toes that move independently of each other, a chameleon has only two fleshy pads that face each other. One pad contains three digits that are fused together while the other has two fused digits. Just imagine a set of salad tongs clamping down on a branch to hold on.

MADAGASCAR AND CHAMELEONS

There are said to be around 200 different chameleon species, with 44 percent being found in Madagascar! This has lead experts to wonder if the whole chameleon family originally evolved there. You can also find them in India, southern Europe and mainland Africa.



HOW BIG ARE THEY?

There are many different sizes of chameleons. Back in 2012, researchers discovered a new species of chameleon that is said to be the smallest on record. Known as the Brookesia micra, this animal calls an islet off the coast of Madagascar home. The maximum length is only 2 centimetres, with the juveniles fitting on the head of a match. How cute! On the other hand the two largest chameleons on record can grow up to around 68 centimetres!

Chameleons have a full 360 degree field of vision.



CHANGING COLOURS

As mentioned before, the chameleon isn't trying to camouflage itself by blending into the environment. In fact this remarkable ability is used as a way of controlling its body temperature. By lightening their skin, the chameleon can cool themselves down since the lighter colours reflect the sun's rays. On the other hand, by changing to a darker complexion, they are able to warm themselves up when it gets a little chilly.

COLOURS AND COMMUNICATING

Not only does the temperature play a vital part in what the chameleons colours will be, it also lets potential mates and rivals know what they are thinking. For a female, the bright colours help show males when she is ready to mate and the darker colours show males it time to stay away!

Just like females, males love to show their emotions on their skin but when these colourful displays aren't enough, the males won't shy away from physical battle.



STICKY SPIT

We can all imagine a chameleons long tongue shooting out to catch a fly, but how does it hold onto its lunch? Well the answer is very sticky spit. The chameleon's spit is 400 times more viscous meaning sticky, than that of a human, giving it the extra oomph to pull in even the slightly heavier victims.

