

Survival of the Slowest **Major Themes and Components**

How can slow and steady win the race? Does bigger always mean better? [*Survival of the Slowest*](#) features animals that are slow, small or weak and explores how they use these traits to thrive!

Visitors get an up-close look at 16 live animals, including a sloth, hedgehog, scorpion and others. The exhibit has a keeper onsite to answer visitor questions, hold daily presentations and ensure the animals are healthy and happy! Meet creatures that have survived for millions of years despite their apparent disadvantages, and learn about the puzzling sides of evolution and adaptation. Discover the difference between warm- and cold-blooded animals, and see the unique ways they hide from predators. A keeper is on site to give daily presentations and answer your questions!

This is a bilingual exhibit. *Esta es una exposición bilingüe.*

Exhibit Highlights:

- **Live Animals:**
Take a walk on the wild side and meet these slow, slithery and slimy animals!
- **Unique Evolution:**
Colorful graphics and touchscreens reveal other adaptations used by wildlife like warm- versus cold-blooded body temperatures and a difference in size, speed and energy use.
- **Animal Caretaker:**
A keeper is on site during business hours to monitor the animals, as well as answer questions from guests. Lucky visitors may even get to meet some of the animals! The keeper also provides information on backyard conservation and local issues related to wildlife. Stop by and meet Del from Little Ray's Nature Centre!

Animals On Display:

- 1) **Linnean Two-Toed Sloth**
From: Central and South America
Size: About 2 feet long
Diet: Fruits, leaves, insects
Did You Know: Despite being the slowest mammals in the world, sloths are great swimmers!
- 2) **Red-Footed Tortoise**
From: Central and South America

Size: About a foot long

Diet: Leaves, grass, fungi, fruits, flowers

Did You Know: These slow-moving reptiles can live more than 50 years and primarily communicate through head movements.

3) **Green Iguana**

From: Central and South America; invasive species in Florida

Size: Up to 6 feet long

Diet: Insects and spiders when younger, mostly plants and fruits when fully grown

Did You Know: They can fall from up to 50 feet without injury and can hold their breath for up to 30 minutes!

4) **Pygmy Hedgehog**

From: Africa

Size: 6-11 inches long

Diet: Insects, small reptiles, spiders, fruits, nuts, vegetables

Did You Know: They use their spines as defense mechanisms and spread a foamy saliva over them. Scientists are unsure why this process, known as anointing, takes place.

5) **Box Turtle**

From: Florida

Size: 4-6 inches long

Diet: Snails, earthworms, beetles

Did You Know: They're identifiable by the yellow streaks on their black shells. Although small, adults can completely retreat into their shells to evade predators.

6) **Bearded Dragon**

From: Australia

Size: Up to 2 feet long

Diet: Crickets, mice, vegetables, worms

Did You Know: They will wave to other bearded dragons to show interest and use head bobbing to indicate a desire to mate.

7) **Gray Rat Snake**

From: North America

Size: 3-6 feet long

Diet: Lizards, frogs, rodents, birds

Did You Know: In Florida, they can be found in the Panhandle, west of the Apalachicola River.

8) **Horned Frog**

From: Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay

Size: 4-7 inches long

Diet: Small invertebrates, birds, mammals

Did You Know: They're also called the Pac-Man frog because of their round shape.

9) Green Basilisk

From: Central America

Size: Up to 3 feet long

Diet: Spiders, insects, small lizards, worms

Did You Know: These lizards can run short distances on water.

10) Blue-Tongued Skink

From: Australia

Size: Up to 2 feet long

Diet: Insects, fruit, plants, meat

Did You Know: They use their tongue to ward off predators: The blue color makes them seem sick and unsafe to eat.

11) Veiled Chameleon

From: Yemen and Saudi Arabia

Size: Males are 17-24 inches long, while females are 10-14 inches long

Diet: Insects, with leaves as a water source

Did You Know: They can change into a variety of colors and can even constrict themselves to look like a tree branch.

12) Pine Snake

From: North America

Size: Up to 6 feet long

Diet: Mice, small mammals, birds, lizards, insects

Did You Know: They spend most of their lives in underground burrows and are one of the largest snakes in North America.

13) Madagascar Giant Hognose

From: Madagascar and the Comoros Islands

Size: 4 to 6 feet long

Diet: Mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, eggs

Did You Know: The name "hognose" comes from their upturned nose which looks like a pig's snout.

14) Fox Snake

From: Midwestern United States

Size: 3 to 6 feet long

Diet: Small rodents, frogs, birds, eggs

Did You Know: When frightened, they release a strong odor that most predators find unpleasant.

15) Asian Water Dragon

From: India, China and Southeast Asia

Size: 20 to 30 inches long

Diet: Plants, insects, other invertebrates

Did You Know: These lizards are strong swimmers and can remain underwater for up to 25 minutes.

16) Giant Madagascar Day Gecko

From: Madagascar

Size: 8 to 10 inches long

Diet: Ripe fruit, nectar, small insects

Did You Know: As a defense mechanism, these animals can drop their tails and even a layer of skin to escape the grip of predators.