

DID YOU KNOW?

- 1 Which animals do you think can survive in the Sahara desert? Make a list. Then read the text and see if you guessed correctly.



Animal life in the Sahara desert

Look at this picture of camels in the Sahara. It is almost impossible to imagine that life can exist there. But many mammals, reptiles, and over 300 species of birds survive.

Mammals

There are many species of mammals in the Sahara desert.

Mammals must keep the same body temperature at all times. If they get too hot, they breathe very fast but they lose a lot of water when they do this. This is a problem in the desert, so mammals try to stay cool. Small mammals hide under the sand or under rocks during the day to avoid the hot sun.

Most desert mammals only eat grass and plants, but this gives them all the liquid they need. In fact, gazelles do not need to drink at all.

Birds

Birds, of course, have a great advantage. They can fly long distances to find food and water. Their feathers protect them from the heat of the sun. Most desert birds live on insects, but some also eat seeds and small mammals.

Reptiles

Reptiles survive very well in the desert. In fact, there are nearly 100 species of reptiles in the Sahara. Reptiles have very thick skin and lose water from their bodies very slowly. This is a big advantage in the desert. They are also cold-blooded, so their body temperature goes up and down with the temperature outside. However, reptiles do not like to be too hot, so they move from one shaded area to another. The largest reptile in the Sahara is the desert monitor lizard which can be 1.6m long.

- 2 Read the text again and match the sentences with the animals in the box.

gazelles birds reptiles small mammals

- 1 They have feathers to protect them from the hot sun. birds
- 2 They are cold-blooded. _____
- 3 They hide under rocks and in the sand during the day. _____
- 4 They do not need to drink. _____



- 3 Which animals live in your country? How have they adapted to their environment?