

UNIQUE MUMS

of the animal world!

KOALAS

Phascolarctos cinereus



The main diet of a koala, eucalyptus, is highly poisonous. While adult koalas' bowels are lined with unique bacteria to help them digest these lethal leaves, joeys need some time to develop. To help them along, the mother produces a sticky faecal substance called 'pap', which the young eats, providing it with the bacteria it needs to survive on eucalyptus as an adult.

WOLF SPIDERS

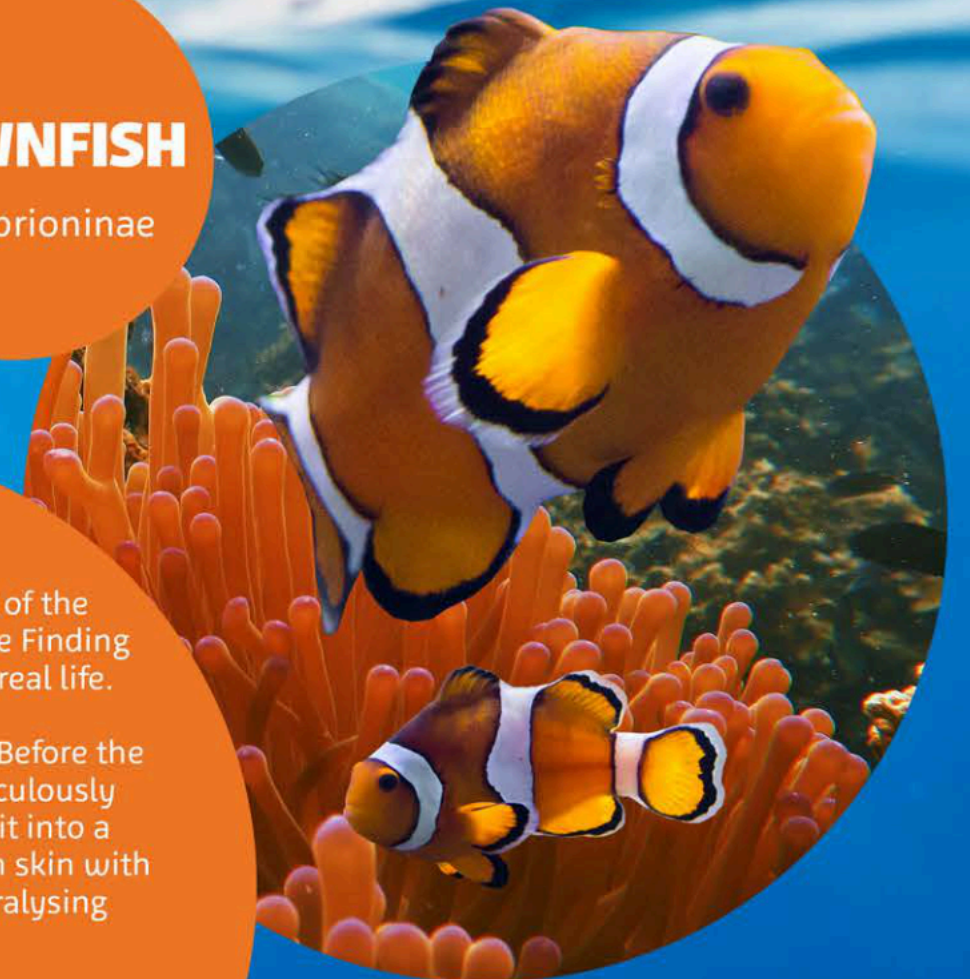
Lycosa godeffroyi



Wolf spiders are unusually attentive mothers. While most spiders will hang their eggs in their web, the female wolf spider constructs an egg sac of white, papery silk, which she then carries around on her back. Once her offspring hatch, she carries them on her back until they are ready to face the world on their own.

CLOWNFISH

Amphiprioninae



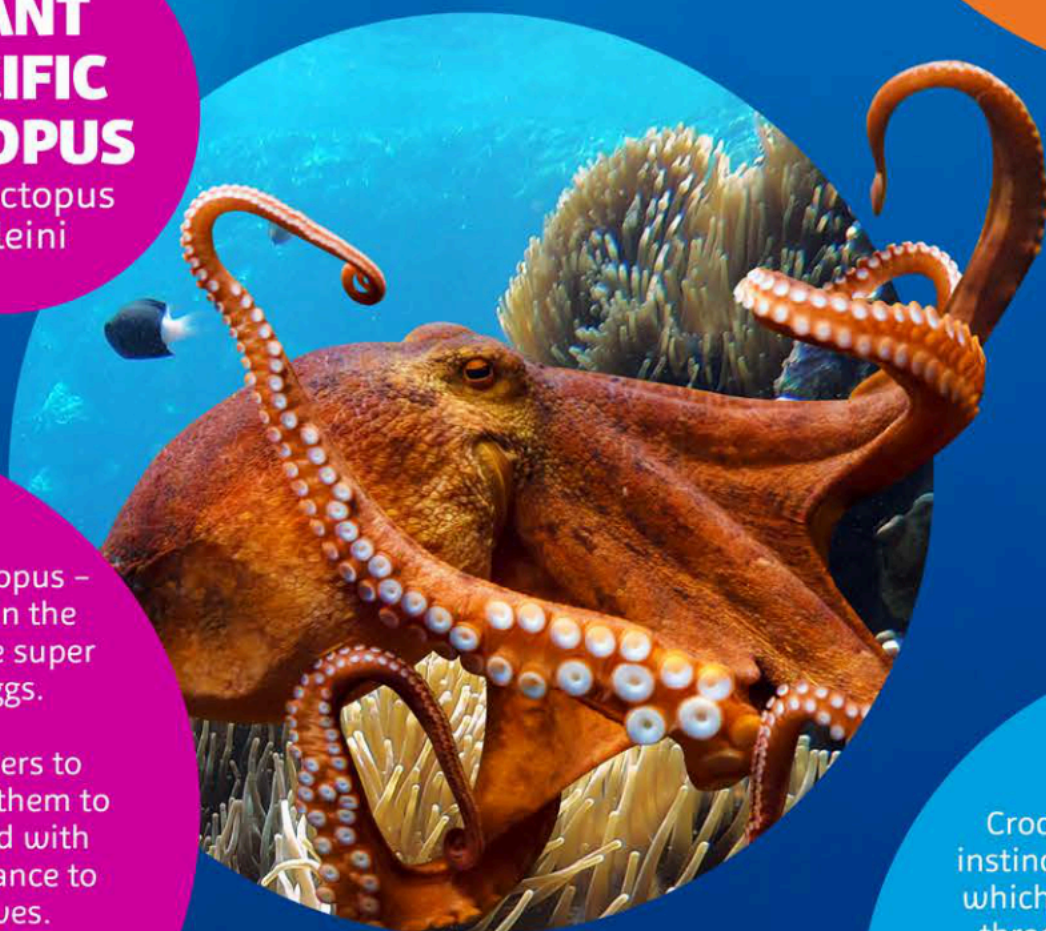
Clownfish, the starring animal of the animated film about paternal love *Finding Nemo*, make brilliant parents in real life.

They do this by working together. Before the arrival of their young, they meticulously clean an anemone to transform it into a perfect nursery, covering their own skin with protective mucus to prevent paralysing anemone stings.

Once the eggs are laid and fertilised, clownfish dads clean them until they hatch, and both parents fan the developing babies with their fins to provide them with a constant supply of oxygen-rich water to increase their chances of survival.

GIANT PACIFIC OCTOPUS

Enteroctopus dofleini



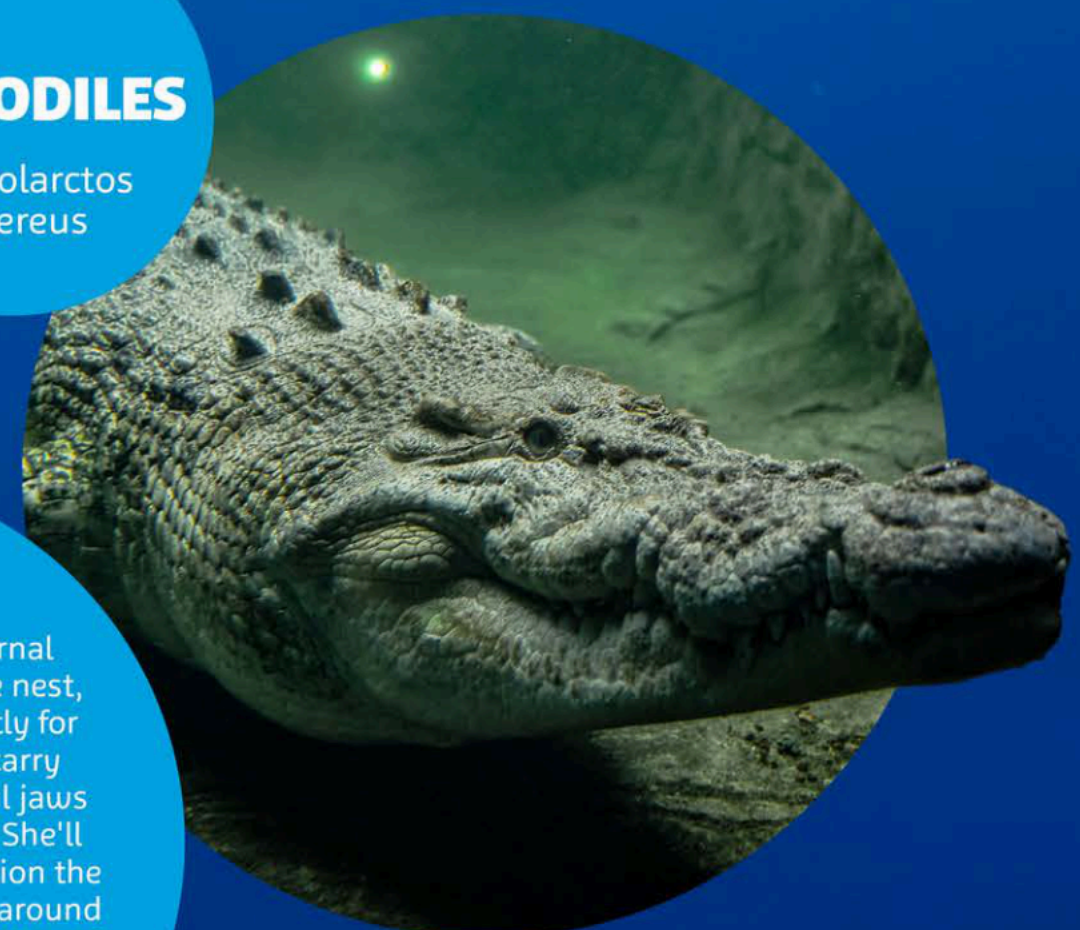
The 4m-long giant Pacific octopus – the largest octopus species in the world – lays and tends to one super brood of about 100,000 eggs.

So dedicated are these mothers to their eggs, carefully caressing them to keep them clean and supplied with oxygen, that they have no chance to feed or look after themselves.

After six months of dedicating themselves solely to safeguarding their eggs, the mothers die once the eggs hatch.

CROCODILES

Phascolarctos cinereus



Crocodiles have superb maternal instincts: They construct a large nest, which they watch over diligently for three months. A mother will carry newborn babies in her powerful jaws until she finds suitable waters. She'll even use her jaws to help condition the eggs for hatching, moving them around and (gently) applying small amounts of pressure. Don't mess with these creatures once they hatch; the mother crocodile is a ferocious guardian.