

INTRODUCTION

There's one animal on this planet that is truly gross. It often looks awful, makes horrible messes, creates disgusting smells and is loud, rude, annoying, mean, hairy and spotty. Yes, it's the human being!

We've half-wrecked our planet and made life difficult for wildlife on every continent... and yet we have the cheek to label other animals as gross.

But, of course, not every person appears or behaves like this. I'm sure that you are kind, well groomed and free of nasty stinks! However some creatures on Earth are very strange.

So, you can judge for yourself what is gross and what is lovely but I am sure you'll agree that the animals in this book are fascinating. Many of them are important too, keeping nature and the environment in check through their natural actions. So, all in all, gross is good!

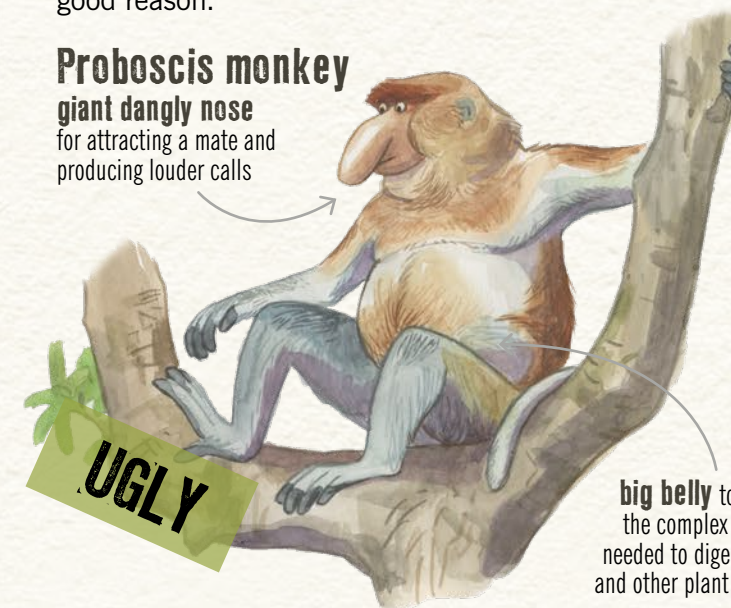


Why are some animals gross?

Some animals might seem gross to us because of their appearance or their behaviour, but these creatures are like that for a reason. They have adapted to survive and thrive! Here are some examples of animals that are gross for a good reason.

Proboscis monkey

giant dangly nose for attracting a mate and producing louder calls



Vulture

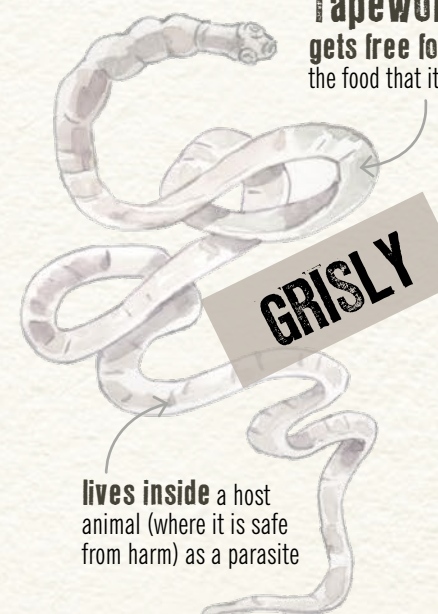
bare head means that feathers won't become matted with blood and bacteria

digestive system contains very strong acid and special bacteria, enabling vultures to eat rotting flesh

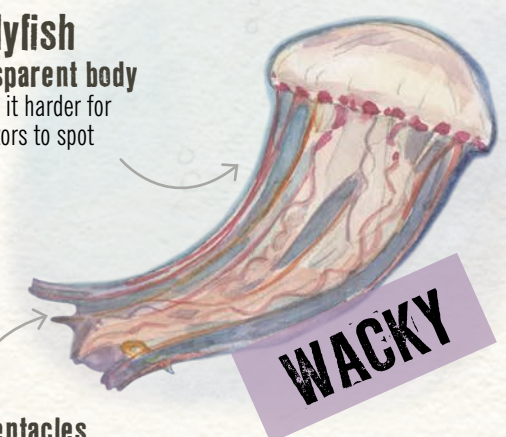


Tapeworm

gets free food by living off the food that its host eats



Jellyfish transparent body makes it harder for predators to spot



stinging tentacles can stun prey or keep away hungry sea creatures

Tick

can latch onto any passing animal without being noticed

sucks blood — a rich and plentiful source of food



Domestic cat

licks bottom to keep it clean and prevent infection

swallows hair during grooming, which means that they sometimes cough up hairballs — this stops their digestive system becoming blocked



Skunk

sprays foul-smelling liquid from its bottom when attacked by a predator. This stinky defence works even against large animals

