



Fun Beetle Facts for Kids

Check out our range of fun beetle facts for kids. Learn about the many different species of beetle, their defences used to protect themselves from predators, and much more.

Read on and enjoy our information about beetles.

- Beetles are the common name for an order of insects called *Coleoptera*.
- The name *coleoptera* comes from the Greek words *koleos*, meaning "sheath" (cover) and *pteron*, meaning "wing", so "sheathed wing". Beetles have two pairs of wings, the front pair, called "elytra", are hard, thick sheath or shell-like and protect the more normal rear pair of wings which are used for flying.
- Around 40% of all known insect species are beetles, this equals about 400,000 species and some estimates suggest there could be as many as 3 - 8 million beetle species on Earth.
- The order *Coleoptera* is the largest order in the entire animal kingdom, making up nearly 30% of all animals.
- Beetles are incredibly versatile and are found nearly everywhere on Earth except for the very cold polar regions.
- To avoid being attacked by predators, beetle species have many strategies such as camouflage, toxic properties, and fighting defences.
- Some bigger species of beetle have even been known to eat small birds or mammals but the majority of beetles play a vital role in the ecosystems they live in because they feed mainly on debris from plants and animals.
- Ladybirds (ladybugs) are one type of beetle that help to control pest populations by feeding on aphids that would otherwise eat vegetable plants.
- Dung beetles are very important in many ecosystems because they feed on animal droppings, so are recycling waste material and speeding up the circulation of the nutrients back into the food chain.
- Other species of beetle are seen as pests. Those that enjoy burrowing into trees to feed on the dust from wood, kill millions of trees each year. While beetles that feed on vegetables, grains and fruit can cost farmers millions in pesticides.
- Humans eat more beetles than any other kind of insect. There are over 300 species known to be eaten, with most of these eaten at the larvae stage.
- The scarab variety of dung beetle was a popular sacred symbol in Ancient Egypt.