

# WORLD'S TINNIE BEASTS!

There's a whole world of life around us that we can't even see! Meet the world's tiniest creatures.

## Fairy wasp

Fairy wasps are parasitoids, meaning that they lay their eggs in the eggs of other insects so their babies have a meal when they hatch. Sweep a net through long grass to find them, but you'll have to look super-hard to see them.

Size: ●



## Rove beetle

These beetles live in damp habitats. They can walk on water and produce a special chemical from their back end that propels them across the water like a jet ski!

Size: ●



## Water bear (aka moss piglet or tardigrade)

These are common on moss and lichen in ponds and ditches, and on seaweed. If the water dries up they'll shrivel up and stay like that for decades until the water returns!

Size: you'll need a microscope to see these creatures!



## Pseudoscorpion

Look among sieved leaf litter for these fierce predators. They have a tiny tooth on their pincers to inject venom into their prey. They also make tiny silken igloos where they shed their skin.

Size: ●

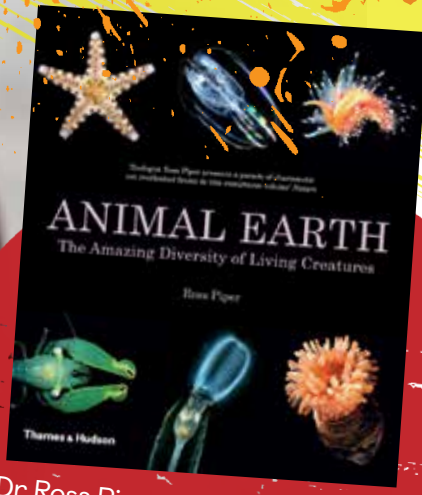


## Hairy-belly

Found in ponds, ditches and on the shoreline and seabed, they glide around on loads of tiny hair-like structures. When hairy-bellies lay their big eggs a hole opens up in their body.

Size: you'll need a microscope to see these creatures!



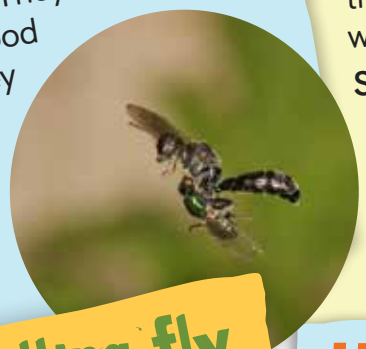


Dr Ross Piper is an entomologist, zoologist and explorer. His TV work includes the BBC series, *Wild Burma: Nature's Lost Kingdom*. His latest book, *Animal Earth*, is a cutting-edge exploration of animal diversity.

## Digger wasp

Digger wasps catch small flies, hold them with their strong legs, and inject venom into the unfortunate victim. The wasp larva feeds on these paralysed flies, caught by its mother. They are found in dead wood where they dig tiny tunnels.

Size: —



## Tortoise beetle

Found in parks, woodland and meadows these little beetles nibble the outer layers of leaves, making little windows in them. The larvae carry a shield of their own poo and shed skins to ward off enemies.

Size: —



## Hybotid fly

Sweep a net through long grass and other vegetation in woodlands, parks or messy gardens to find these creatures. They are fierce mini predators that use their strong middle legs to catch and hold their prey before stabbing it with their pointy mouthparts and sucking it dry.

Size: —



## Snail-killing fly

Look for these flies perching on vegetation near ponds and lakes. The larva eats snails, scoffing them completely and often as many as three or four of them before they are ready to pupate in the shell of their last victim.

Size: —



## Hydra

Use a pond net to scoop some plants from a pond, lake or ditch and look carefully for these tiny creatures. They are related to jellyfish and anemones and shoot tiny, venomous harpoons into other tiny animals to catch them. They reproduce by budding tiny copies of themselves.

Size: ●

