

Name: _____

Tamanduas

by Guy Belleranti

In Mexico, Central America, and South America, there lives a most peculiar-looking animal with four legs, a long snout, big ears, and flexible tail. It's the tamandua!



Like its relative the giant anteater, the tamandua has long claws on its front feet, a long snout and a long worm-like tongue. Also like the giant anteater, mothers give birth to only one young at a time. In both cases the young rides on Mom's back for several months.

The tamandua also has many differences from the giant anteater. One difference is size. While

weighs or

Unli

the trees,



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mandua

. It also lives in

tail also

anchors or supports the animal when it needs to defend itself with its front claws. The tail makes a super pillow for sleeping.

Hollow trees, abandoned burrows and other natural shelters are common daytime sleeping places for the tamandua. Then at night, out it comes using its great sense of smell to search for dinner. Insects like termites, ants, and bees are food favorites. It eats bee honey and soft fruit, too.

Sometimes the tamandua will find food in the trees. Other times it finds food while walking on the ground. Because of its long claws, a tamandua must walk on the outside edges of its feet. When it finds a termite mound or other insect colony the tamandua digs in with its claws. Then it sticks its bristly 16-inch tongue out of its pencil-wide mouth and slurps

up dinner. The tamandua has no teeth. Its stomach grinds up the food after it's swallowed.

Like the giant anteater the tamandua does not stay long at any feeding site, but moves on to another. This way it never destroys the site and can return again. Moving on also keeps the tamandua from getting bitten or stung by angry insects. Its thick coarse fur provides protection, too.



In addition to its claws the tamandua has a way to p doesn't l skunk. Th other wc



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About the Author

Guy Belleranti works as a docent at Reid Park Zoo in Tucson, Arizona. The information in this article comes from his experiences working with wild animals and teaching others.

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1. The tamandua lives...
- a. in trees
 - b. on the ground
 - c. both in trees and on the ground
 - d. in water

2. Which is larger, the tamandua or the giant anteater? _____

3. Name two reasons why a tamandua will not stay too long at a feeding site.



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4. Complete the table below.

Body Part	How it Protects the Tamandua
front claws	
thick fur	
gland by tail	

5. How is this article organized?
- a. The author lists facts about the tamandua randomly.
 - b. The author gives facts about the tamandua in sequential order.
 - c. The author compares and contrasts the tamandua to another animal.
 - d. The author writes about causes and effects of events in a tamandua's life.

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Match each vocabulary word from the article with the correct definition.

_____ 1. peculiar

a. hill; lump of dirt

_____ 2. flexible

b. holds in place

_____ 3.



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in one place

_____ 4.

sleeping

_____ 5. coarse

e. bendable; able to be moved many ways

_____ 6. colony

f. strange; unusual

_____ 7. anchors

g. a place that is no longer used

_____ 8. pillow

h. rough

◆ Now try this: On a sheet of lined paper, use each vocabulary word from above in a sentence.

ANSWER KEY

Tamanduas

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1. The tamandua lives... **c**
- a. in trees
 - b. on the ground
 - c. **both in trees and on the ground**
 - d. in water

2. Which is larger, the tamandua or the giant anteater? **the giant anteater**

3. No  site.

1.
2.



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4. C

Body Part	How it Protects the Tamandua
front claws	<u>helps it defend itself and attack predators</u>
thick fur	<u>protects the skin from insect bits and stings</u>
gland by tail	<u>produces a stinky smell to ward off predators</u>

5. How is this article organized? **c**
- a. The author lists facts about the tamandua randomly.
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ANSWER KEY

Tamanduas

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Match each vocabulary word from the article with the correct definition.

f 1. peculiar

a. hill; lump of dirt

e 2. flexible

b. holds in place

g 3. abandoned

c. group of people or animals living in one place

a 4. m



sleeping

h 5. cc

any ways

c 6. colony

f. strange; unusual

b 7. anchors

g. a place that is no longer used

d 8. pillow

h. rough

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