

10 things I bet you never knew

This week, we focus on one of our many animals that are probably heard of worldwide, but not much is known about them. This animal is the hippopotamus.

1 The name hippopotamus comes from the Greek word "hippos", meaning horse, these animals were once called "river horses". The hippo's yawn is a threat gesture. 2 Although not part of the 'Big Five', the hippopotamus is the third biggest land animal in the world, slightly smaller, but heavier than a white rhino (the elephant is the biggest), weighing up to 4,000 pounds and more. 3 The hippo's yawn is not a sign of sleepiness or boredom, but is actually a threat gesture. 4 The ears and nostrils — located at the top of the head — close automatically when the animal is under water. 5 In spite of its huge size, the hippopotamus can outrun a human. 6 Hippos have glands that secrete a pink liquid on their skin that acts like sun screen in the African heat as well as an anti-septic against cuts and scrapes. 7 Due to the fact that hippos spend so much time in the water, they are classified as being semi-aquatic. They emerge from the water at dusk so that they can graze for food. 8 Hippos spend most of their day in water close to shore lying on their bellies. In areas undisturbed by people, hippos lie on the shore in the morning sun. 9 Hippos use the water to cool their body temperature as well as to conserve energy. If they can't find water to cool down then they will try to do so in mud. 10 Hippos are herbivores, which means they only eat plant life. Due to their enormous size though many people assume that they are meat eaters.