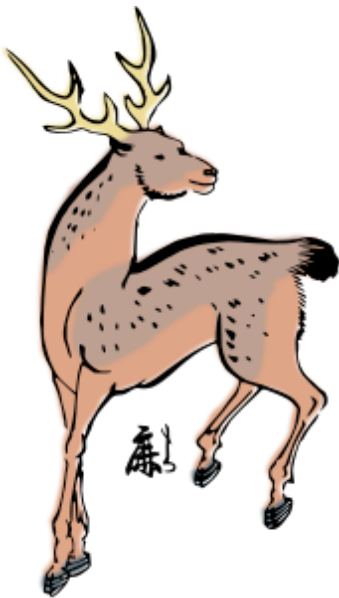


MIRROR, MIRROR ON THE WALL, WHO IS THE FASTEST ANIMAL OF ALL?

If you were an oyster, speed is irrelevant to you. Oysters, sea anemones and other sea animals like sponges get their meal delivered to them. They prey on trusting fishes that come too close for comfort.



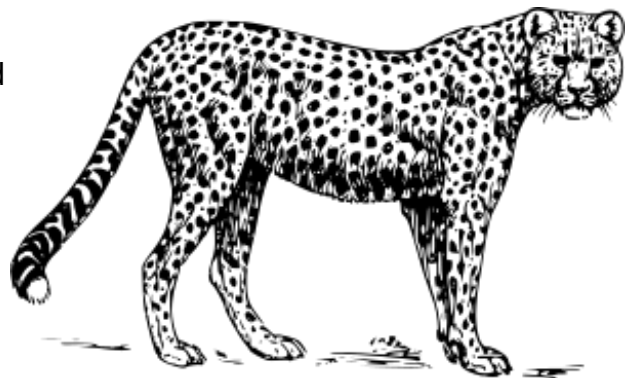
But if you were a rabbit, deer or a tiger or a cheetah, speed is of the essence for survival.

Predatory animals need to outrun their prey, to ensure their families don't starve for days together.

For the prey though, outrunning and escaping their predator is a question of life and death.

Based on the food cycle, environment and animal demographics, animals have developed their body locomotion and speeds.

On land, the cheetah or the leopard would win hands down.

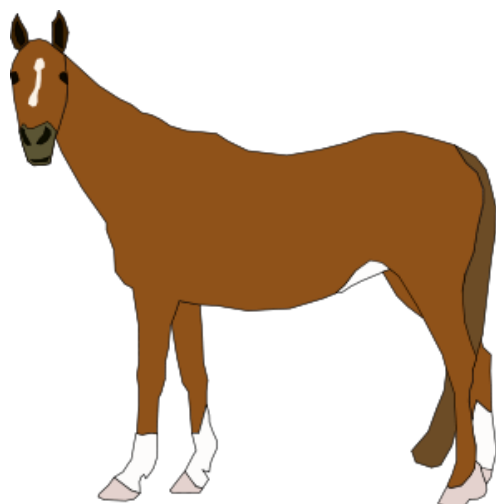


In flying though, the Indian spine-tailed swift and the European Peregrine hold the record for diving and flying at high speeds.



Some animals like the cheetah are built for speed. This sprinter has a flexible body and a long stride. The pronghorn on the other hand can run longer distances and can withstand long chases.

Respiratory, Cardio-vascular and Musculo-skeletal factors contribute to animal speeds. When animals run faster, they increase their stride length – how long can they move in one step or increase their stride rate – how many times can they move in a given time.



km/hr.

A horse has a maximum stride length of about seven meters, a stride rate of about 2.25 strides/second and a top speed of about 70 km/hr. A cheetah, which is much smaller than a horse, has a stride length that is about the same as that of the horse; but a top speed of about 110

Kangaroos hop across the grassy plains of Australia at high speed. They cruise at 40 kph and reach 60kph for short bursts, using their long tail to help them balance. One red kangaroo made a record-breaking long jump of almost 13 metres.



Pronghorn antelopes live on the open plains of the western United States. Their lungs and heart are large which enables them to run at a fast, steady speed for long distances. They can keep going at 56 kilometres per hour for 6 kilometres.

When it comes to animal speeds, it is a matter of food and life for most of them.