

# BIODIVERSITY



**Grades:** 2-5

**Subjects:** Classification  
Biomes  
Diversity

**NGSS:** 2-LS4-1 Biological Evolution: Unity and Diversity

**Materials:** Biodiversity Tables (attached)

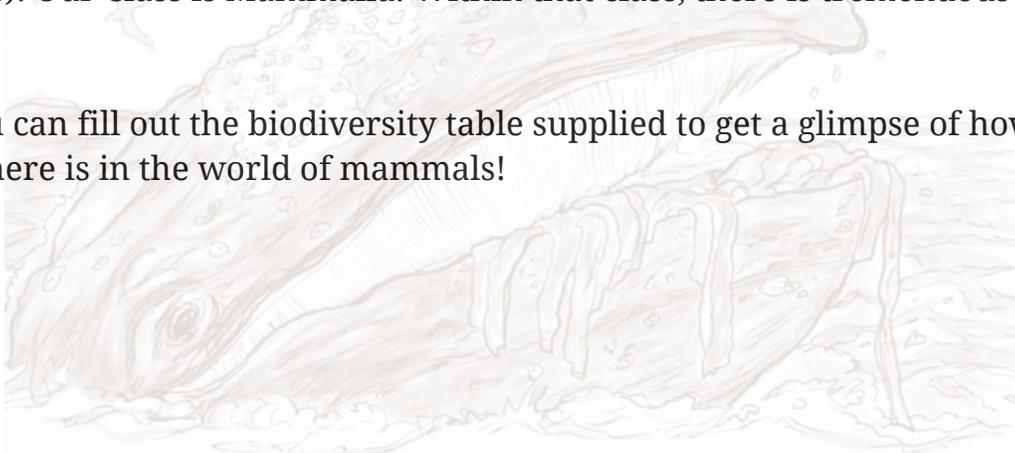
## Background

There are thousands of mammal species sharing our planet. Most scientists believe there are approximately 4,600, while others put the number closer to 5,100.

Although we do not know the exact number of mammal species, we do know that all of them have milk glands, hair or fur, a backbone, and are warm-blooded. All mammal mothers feed, protect, and teach their young. And all mammal babies need to learn how to feed and protect themselves, but that's where the similarity ends.

Humans have classified animals in order to group them by characteristics. All mammals are in the kingdom Animalia and the Phylum Chordata (having a backbone). Our Class is Mammalia. Within that class, there is tremendous diversity.

See if you can fill out the biodiversity table supplied to get a glimpse of how much variety there is in the world of mammals!



# Mammal Biodiversity Table

ANIMAL	TYPE OF MAMMAL	SLEEP PATTERN	NAME OF YOUNG	LOCOMOTION	HABITAT	EATING CATEGORY	SOMETHING SPECIAL
Platypus							
Pacific Gray Whale							
Least Shrew							
Mexican Free-Tail Bat							
African Elephant							
Koala							
Giraffe							

Mammal Biodiversity Table (Key)							
ANIMAL	TYPE OF MAMMAL	SLEEP PATTERN	NAME OF YOUNG	LOCOMOTION	HABITAT	EATING CATEGORY	SOMETHING SPECIAL
Platypus	Monotreme	Nocturnal	Platypus	Swims (freshwater)	Underwater burrow	Carnivore	Locates prey by detecting electric fields, most poisonous mammal (males have venom)
Pacific Gray Whale	Placental	(none)	Calf	Swims (ocean)	Migrates (Ocean)	Carnivore	Longest known migration
Least Shrew	Placental	(none)	Shrew	Walks	Underground burrow	Omnivore	Extremely fast metabolism
Mexican Free-Tail Bat	Placental	Nocturnal	Pup	Flies	Cave	Insectavore	Only flying mammal
African Elephant	Placental	Diurnal	Calf	Walks	Rainforest, Savanna	Herbivore	Largest land mammal, longest gestation
Koala	Marsupial	Diurnal	Joey	Climbs	Trees	Herbivore	Mothers feed predigested food to babies
Giraffe	Placental	Diurnal	Calf	Walks	Savanna	Herbivore	Boring childhood to conserve energy

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This activity is excerpted from the Teacher's Guide to:

***If My Mom Were a Platypus***

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