

2020 Animal Olympics



Peregrine Falcons are true champions and have a need for speed! These GOLD medalists have been recorded at speeds of over 200 mph during aerial dives to catch prey. One fun fact about these amazing falcons (and all birds of prey) is that they "potty train" their chicks at around 5 days old to poop outside of their nests.

Birds of prey nest in trees, cliffs, and even tall buildings.

.Challenge: Go outside with some water and see how far can you spit? Is it as far as birds of prey chicks?

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The Common Snapping Turtle is quite a champion, but even though they can hold their breath up to 50 minutes they don't come close to the record of 10 hours by the Loggerhead Sea Turtle - wow!

Challenge: How long can you hold your breath?

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Raccoons are nocturnal, but can sometimes be seen during daylight hours. They are solitary animals and typically the only group raccoons form consist of a mother and her young. Although they generally move slowly, with a shuffle like walk, raccoons can reach speeds of 15 miles per hour.

Challenge: Get on all fours and do the shuffle!

Measure out 40 feet and see how fast you can travel doing the raccoon shuffle!

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The Ruby-throated Hummingbird earns the GOLD medal for total number of wingbeats per second! Hummingbirds are busy, little birds who can flap their wings over 53 beats per second that is 3,180 wingbeats a minute!

Challenge: How many times can you flap your arms in a minute?

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Monarch Butterflies are the GOLD medalists for long-distance relay and endurance races! During their northern migration from Mexico to the U.S. in the spring, Monarch Butterflies pass the relay baton to their offspring. It may take 4 to 5 generations to make it back to the butterfly's northern destination. In the fall (around mid-August) the "super generation," which has a longer life span, will finish the migration travelling over 3,000 miles back to their wintering ground in Mexico. Talk about an endurance race that started with a LONG-distance relay!

Challenge: Get your favorite adult and go on a walk – how far did you travel?

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The GOLD medal for the Silent Game goes to Owls, like this Eastern Screech Owl. Owls are silent predators, waiting patiently for their prey and then soaring on silent wings to capture them.

Challenge: How long can you play the silent game without making a sound?

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Longleaf pine is an evergreen conifer that got its common name for having the longest leaves of any eastern pine species. These magnificent trees create an essential habitat for over 300 species of animals: 100 birds, 36 mammals, and 170 reptile and amphibian species. Over 20 species associated with longleaf pine habitats are on the threatened and endangered species list. Longleaf Pine trees can reach heights of 80 – 100 feet tall.

Challenge: How do you measure up? Measure your current height and share it with us.

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Eastern Rat Snakes, also known as Black Rat Snake, are excellent climbers! Rat snakes are large, powerful, non-venomous snakes that feed on a variety of prey species, which they overpower by constriction. Primarily active during the day, rat snakes are beneficial since they eat large amounts of rats, mice, and other pest animals. They have a unique flattened body which helps them to climb tall trees in search of food.

**Challenge: Lay on the ground and move like a snake.
How far can you go?**

