

Did you know?

- The genome is the set of instructions, encoded in DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid), needed to make a human.
- The Human Genome Project was an international scientific research project completed in 2003. It gave scientists a new understanding about human disease and paved the way for current research into diagnosis, treatment and prevention.
- Human eyes can be brown, blue, green or hazel. Genetics control what colour eyes a baby will inherit. Some people are born with eyes that are different colours – a condition known as heterochromia.
- Charles Darwin attended Edinburgh University, hoping to become a doctor like his father. He soon gave up on the idea because he couldn't stand the sight of blood!
- For Darwin's 25th birthday, on 12th February, 1834, Captain Robert FitzRoy of HMS *Beagle* named a mountain after him: Mount Darwin.
- The full title of Darwin's famous book on evolution is *On the Origin of Species by means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*. Phew!
- Scientists can tell the weight of an animal by measuring the depth of its fossilised footprint.
- Palaeontologists (scientists who study fossils) sometimes find fossilised faeces, which are called coprolites. The world's biggest coprolite from a carnivore is a tyrannosaurid dropping found in Alberta, Canada. It is 64 cm long, 17 cm wide, and is full of crushed bone.
- Marine iguanas from the Galápagos Islands have black skin that turns bright red or green to attract a mate. They are the only modern lizards that live in the ocean.
- The biggest Galápagos tortoise ever recorded measured 1.8 metres long and weighed over 400 kg!
- The most famous resident of the Galápagos Islands was Lonesome George, the only surviving giant Pinta Island tortoise left on Earth. He was known as the rarest creature in the world, and became a symbol for conservation. Lonesome George died on 24th June, 2012. He was 100 years old.
- Five major ocean currents converge at the Galápagos Islands which creates variable water temperatures and unpredictable tides that have led to a unique marine ecology.