

Name: _____

Reptile With Horns

by Guy Belleranti

In desert and semi-arid areas of Guatemala, Mexico, the western United States, and parts of Canada lives an interesting animal called the horned lizard.

Because the horned lizard has a wide toad-like shape some people call it a horny toad. However, it's not really a toad at all. Toads are amphibians. The horned lizard is a reptile.



There are more than a dozen species of horned lizards. Certain types of ants are the horned lizard's favorite meal, but it also catches creatures like spiders, grasshoppers and beetles with its quick, sticky tongue.

Why is this lizard called a *horned lizard*? Well, it has a spiky crown of horns on its head. These horns can actually stab a potential attacker. The lizard also has numerous spine-like scales on its back, sides and tail.

Predators of the horned lizard include large birds, such as hawks and roadrunners. Mammals such as coyotes, foxes, wolves, cats and dogs also hunt the horned lizard. Reptiles, such as snakes and large lizards pose a threat as well.

In addition to its spiky body and horned head the lizard also uses other ways to protect itself. One is camouflage. The animal's color patterns help it blend in with the soil of its habitat. It also can flatten against the ground, eliminating shadows and the chance it might be seen. In addition, a horned lizard can inflate itself with air so it looks like a big spiny balloon. And finally, some species can shoot blood from the corners of their eyes! This startles and scares off predators. The blood also has a taste that coyotes, dogs, foxes, wolves and cats don't like.

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1. Horned lizards mostly eat...

- a. plants
- b. bugs
- c. fish
- d. birds

2. List nine predators of the horned lizard that are mentioned in the article.

3. **Four Ways Horned Lizards Protect Themselves from Predators**

a.	b.	c.	d.
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

4. Where do horned lizards live?

- a. in the Eastern Hemisphere
- b. in the Western Hemisphere
- c. in the Eastern United States
- d. in the tundra areas of Canada

5. Tell whether each sentence is a fact or opinion. Write *F* or *O* on each line.

_____ The horned lizard is a reptile.

_____ The horned lizard is an interesting animal.

_____ The horned lizard can shoot blood from the corners of its eyes.

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Match each vocabulary word from the article with the correct definition.

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| _____ 1. arid | a. possible |
| _____ 2. spiders | b. many |
| _____ 3. potential | c. top of an animal's head |
| _____ 4. numerous | d. dry |
| _____ 5. roadrunners | e. areas of darkness where light is blocked |
| _____ 6. crown | f. thin, fast-running birds |
| _____ 7. eliminating | g. type of bug with eight legs |
| _____ 8. shadows | h. getting rid of |

◆ Now try this: On a sheet of lined paper, use each vocabulary word from above in a sentence.

ANSWER KEY

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1. Horned lizards mostly eat... **b**

a. plants

b. **bugs**

c. fish

d. birds

2. List nine predators of the horned lizard that are mentioned in the article.

hawks, roadrunners, coyotes, foxes, wolves, cats, dogs, snakes, and large lizards

3. **Four Ways Horned Lizards Protect Themselves from Predators**

a.

**blend into their
surroundings
(camouflage)**

b.

**flatten against
ground to eliminate
shadows**

c.

**inflate itself
like a spiny
balloon**

d.

**shoot blood from
the edges o
its eyes**

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F The horned lizard is a reptile.

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