

WHAT'S LURKING IN THE MANGROVES?

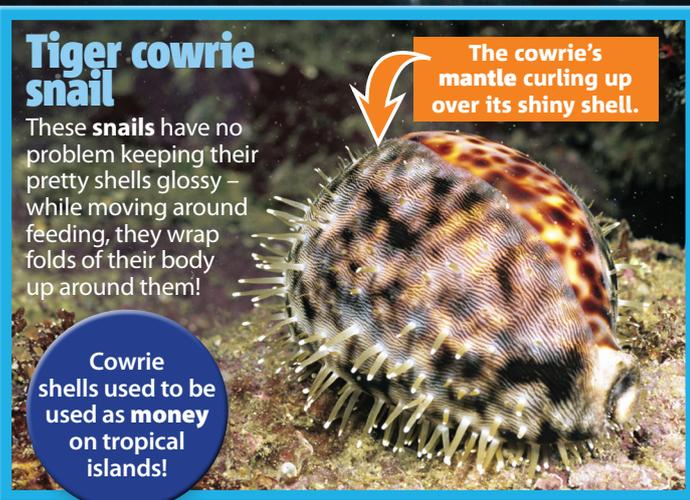
Jo tells us about some of the cool creatures we spotted on our adventure...



LEAF ME ALONE!

Batfish

Only **baby batfish** are found in the mangroves – they disguise themselves by lying on their sides and floating around like **leaves**! Once they're adults they migrate out towards the reef.

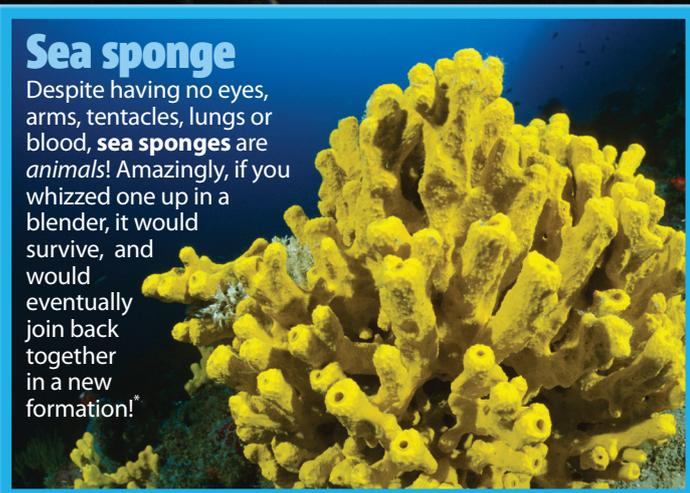


Tiger cowrie snail

These **snails** have no problem keeping their pretty shells glossy – while moving around feeding, they wrap folds of their body up around them!

The cowrie's mantle curling up over its shiny shell.

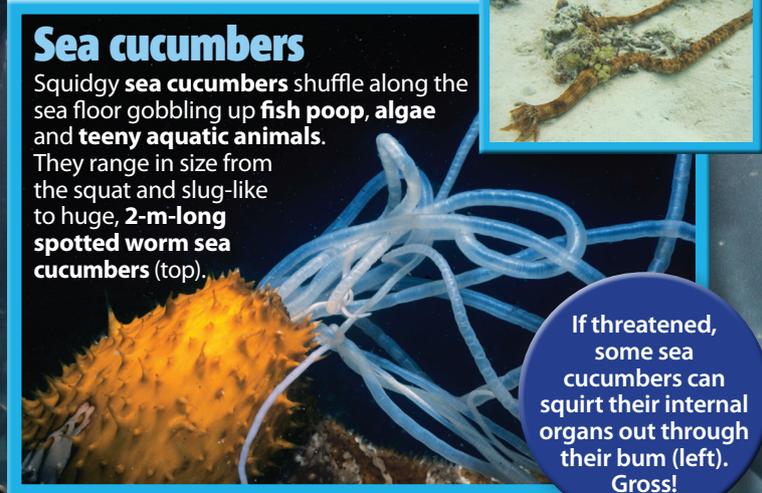
Cowrie shells used to be used as **money** on tropical islands!



Sea sponge

Despite having no eyes, arms, tentacles, lungs or blood, **sea sponges** are **animals**! Amazingly, if you whizzed one up in a blender, it would survive, and would eventually join back together in a new formation!*

* But DO NOT try this at home!



Sea cucumbers

Squidgy **sea cucumbers** shuffle along the sea floor gobbling up **fish poop**, **algae** and **teeny aquatic animals**.

They range in size from the squat and slug-like to huge, **2-m-long spotted worm sea cucumbers** (top).

If threatened, some sea cucumbers can squirt their internal organs out through their bum (left). Gross!



Feather duster worm

You can guess where these creatures get their name from, right? The worm itself stays hidden in a tube in the sand, or coral, while its wispy **tentacles** unfurl to catch food. But if disturbed, they'll shoot back inside the tube at incredible speeds!



DANGER!

Stonefish

Luckily we didn't actually spot any **stonefish** – they're some of the **most venomous fish** in tropical waters. And unfortunately, they're hard to avoid because they look *exactly* like algae-covered rocks!

13 **venomous spines** line the top of a stonefish's body.

Sea cucumber inset picture © Jo Eames | WiseOceans. All other pictures © Getty Images UK.

NG KIDS' amazing mangrove snorkelling experience was provided by the **Four Seasons Hotel, Mauritius**. Travel courtesy of the **Mauritius Tourism Authority**. Check out tourism-mauritius.mu for more info. With thanks to **Jo Eames** at **WiseOceans**, a marine conservation and education company.