



Published by the Peter Underwood Centre

May 25, 2020

Discover fun facts about insects: Page 2



Follow us on Facebook



www.facebook.com/UnderwoodCentre/

Our red handfish has been named: Page 2



CATCH THE BUG

A fascinating world surrounds those curious enough to look



A Royal Society of Tasmania Entomology GO ID card will provide interesting facts about the insects you discover.



Share projects inspired by *The Wonder Weekly* with us. Email: UnderwoodCentre.Enquiries@utas.edu.au

IT'S EASY BEING GREEN: The golden stag beetle, *Lamprima aurata*, is commonly referred to in Tasmania as the Christmas beetle. Picture: iStock.com/ Redzaal.



BUG GIRL: Shasta Henry.

SHASTA Henry loves insects. For Shasta it's a case of what's not to love? "They are beautiful," she says. "I am in awe of what tiny yet perfect working machines they are. "It is like holding a galaxy the size of a marble in the palm of your hand. "And I love how well they fit into the environment; balanced as key parts of ecosystems - it's elegant." Shiny, fluffy, colourful, angular, sleek and funny looking, Shasta is fascinated by all insects, but beetles are her favourite. The PhD student in Entomology at the University of Tasmania,

even has a beetle named after her. *Hyboptera shasta* was named after Shasta by American entomologist Dr Terry Erwin. Shasta worked as an intern for Dr Erwin at the Smithsonian Natural History Museum in Washington DC. "The beetle is about 1.5 centimetres long and lives in the canopy of the Amazon rainforest," she says. You might know Shasta from her involvement in the Young Tassie Scientists program, which links University of Tasmania students with primary and high school students during National Science Week: youngtassiescientists.com **Continued Page 2**



And the winner is...

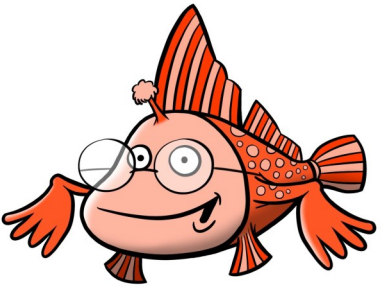
Digit the red handfish



FUN FACTS about insects

1. About 75% of all animals are insects.
2. It is estimated there are 10 quintillion insects in the world.
3. Insects have:
 - A body divided into three parts - the head, thorax and abdomen.
 - No skeleton, instead they are protected by an external shell (exoskeleton).
 - No more than three sets of legs (six in total).
 - One pair of antennae on their heads.
 - One or two pairs of wings (but a few are wingless).
4. The first insects were around about 400 million years ago.
5. Insects are arthropods (as are crustacea such as crabs, and arachnida such as spiders).
6. Insects are the only arthropods which can fly, which means they can seek out new environments and escape unsuitable places for them to survive.
7. Insects have adapted to nearly all environments on earth.
8. Insects play important roles in most ecosystems as predators, parasites and pollinators.
10. One third of the human food supply is crops dependent on pollination by bees.

Source: australianmuseum.net.au



PROFESSOR Finn is excited to announce the winner of the Name the Handfish Challenge. With many great posters entered, judges had a tough task, but awarded first prize to Arlo Burns. It means that Arlo has been given the honour of naming the Peter Underwood Centre red handfish - Digit. Digit, pictured above, is a

living, breathing handfish (but don't tell Professor Finn he is a caricature), which the Peter Underwood Centre has sponsored. This sponsorship will help scientists at the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies, at the University of Tasmania, and the CSIRO, and others working to save the rare fish. There could be fewer than 100 red handfish in two areas near

Hobart, and the researchers have established a database of each individual and will be tracking their movements. You can find out more about the Handfish Conservation Project here: handfish.org.au Laura Diprose (Best Drawing) and Kasia Taylor (Best Overall Poster) were other award winners.

Shasta surrounded by a world of fascination

From Page 1

Or you may have heard her talking about her favourite topic on ABC Radio. Through her work to encourage curiosity and the importance of insects, Shasta has become quite well known as "Bug Girl". It is a title she picked for herself to build her online presence. It has worked well, but she is now looking forward to graduating "like a pokemon into Bug Doctor". Another project Shasta is involved with is the Royal Society of Tasmania Entomology GO challenge: rst.org.au/etymology-go/ Shasta wants you to GO and discover some of the unique insects in your world. If you send her a photo or a drawing of your discoveries you will receive an Entomology GO ID card and learn some more wonderful facts about your insect.



HONOUR: The beetle named after Shasta Henry.

Remember that some insects bite or sting, so look but do not touch. Whether you send in images of the insects to the RST Entomology GO challenge or not, finding and observing insects is great fun, and insects are everywhere.

Shasta says insects are "solar powered", so they are not as present in winter. But moths are still flying at night, and are attracted by a porch light, or you could look where insects live in cool, dark places all the time - under bark, rocks and logs.



FIND: Native millipedes.

While not an insect, Shasta found the millipedes, pictured above, last week. "Their large, greenish and pale bands mean these are native species, not the black Portuguese millipedes, but both are harmless herbivores that turn dead leaves into soil."

Some of Shasta's earliest memories are of observing flowers, snails, leaves and the shrimp in rock pools at Bridport, where she visited her grandmother on school holidays. Her message to you is if you like insects, that never has to change, and one day you could become an entomologist (a scientist who studies insects). "Part of my Young Tassie Scientists talk is that knowledge is a pyramid, and that what you know about insects now, is the same stuff that's the base of my own pyramid," Shasta says. "All you need is to love insects and to want to know the truth about them, and keep going." "You can study at University like I have, or just study insects for fun." Shasta worked as a white-water rafting guide before university. "The tourism experience has been a big help with science communication."