

a plant hopper
/plænt 'hɒpər/

1 THE INTERVIEW Part 1

- a Read the biographical information about George McGavin and look at the photos of insects on these pages. How many of them have you seen?



an ant /ænt/



George McGavin is a well-known entomologist, academic, author, explorer, and TV host. He is Honorary Research Associate at the Department of Zoology of Oxford University. He studied zoology at the University of Edinburgh before completing a Ph.D. at the Natural History Museum and Imperial College London. He is a Fellow of the Linnean Society and the Royal Geographical Society, and has several insect species named in his honor. He has hosted several TV shows for the BBC, including *Expedition Borneo*, *The Dark: Nature's Nighttime World*, and *Monkey Planet*, as well as for the Discovery Channel. He enjoys eating insects, which he describes as "flying shrimp."

- b 9.17 Watch or listen to Part 1 of the interview. What is an arthropod, and why does he think they are so important?

- c Now listen again. Answer the questions.

- 1 What examples does George McGavin give of animals with a spine, and why does he think they are less important than arthropods?
- 2 When did he first decide to focus on arthropods? What insect caught his attention?
- 3 What usually influences how new species are named? How many does he have named after him?
- 4 What currently makes him sad about arthropods?

Glossary

crustacea /kra'steɪʃə/ creatures with a soft body and a hard outer shell, usually aquatic, e.g., crabs, shrimp
mammal /'mæml/ an animal that gives birth to live babies (not eggs) and feeds its young on milk, e.g., a cow
amphibian /æm'fɪbiən/ an animal that can live on land and in water, e.g., a frog
badger /'bædʒər/ a nocturnal animal with gray fur and wide black and white lines on its head
Borneo /'bɔːneɪ/ a large tropical island in southeast Asia

Part 2

- a 9.18 Now watch or listen to Part 2. How sympathetic is George McGavin to people who have phobias of insects? Has he ever been afraid of a living creature?

- b Listen again. Mark the sentences **T** (true) or **F** (false). Correct the false sentences.

- 1 People say they have a phobia of insects because of the way insects look and move.
- 2 George McGavin thinks children develop phobias as a result of adults' fears.
- 3 He thinks a fear of spiders is never justifiable.
- 4 In the UK there are spiders whose bite can make you seriously sick.
- 5 He thinks curing people of phobias always takes a long time.
- 6 His first reaction when he saw the snake in the Amazon was excitement.
- 7 The snake didn't like the clothes McGavin was wearing.
- 8 When he realized how dangerous the snake was, he dropped it and ran away.

a shield bug
/ʃɪld bʌg/

Glossary

tarantula a large hairy spider
fer-de-lance a poisonous snake native to South America and the Caribbean
head torch (NAmE head lamp) an electric lamp that uses batteries that you wear on your head



a moth /moʊ/

Part 3

- a 9.19 Now watch or listen to Part 3. What does George McGavin say about...?

- 1 killing insects at work
- 2 killing insects at home
- 3 "optimal foraging theory"
- 4 harvesting insects in cold and hot countries
- 5 a mealworm in a snack
- 6 cooking crickets for children in Oxford
- 7 one boy's mother



a flea /fli/



a bee /bi/



a cockroach /'kækraʊtʃ/

- b Compare with a partner. Then listen again. Can you add any more details?

Glossary

a flash in the pan **IDM** a sudden success that lasts only a short time and is not likely to be repeated

ecology the relation of plants and living creatures to each other and to their environment

swarm **verb** (of insects) move around together in a large group, looking for a place to live

harvest **verb** cut and gather a crop; catch a number of animals or fish to eat

snail a small soft creature with a hard round shell on its back, that moves very slowly and often eats garden plants

prawn (NAmE shrimp) a shellfish with ten legs and a long tail, that can be eaten



a wasp
/wasp/

2 LOOKING AT LANGUAGE

Informal and vague language

George McGavin uses a lot of informal expressions, as well as vague language, which is common in colloquial English when we don't want to be too specific or precise. Vague language makes us sound more informal and chatty.

- a **9.20** Watch or listen to some extracts from the interview and complete the missing words.

- "And the sad truth is that although we are _____ sure there are eight million species of arthropods _____ there unknown..."
- "And I think adults sometimes pass their fears on by, by _____, 'Oh, what's that? Oh, it's a spider.'"
- "...but, but still there are _____ like seven million people in the United Kingdom who are terrified of spiders, and, and moths."
- "...however, if you have a cat and you don't control the fleas, are a _____ of a pest..."
- "No, it, it isn't a flash in the pan, um, we will have to, to address this quite seriously in the next, you know, _____ hundred or _____ years."
- "...lots of people say it's because insects are dirty or they look funny or _____."
- "...and the kids went wild! They, they ate the _____ lot."
- "I _____, 'Yeah, and your point is?' She was _____, 'At home he doesn't even eat broccoli.'"

- b With a partner, say how you could express the phrases in more formal or neutral language.



a mealworm /'milwɜ:m/



a cricket /'kɪrɪkət/

3 ON THE STREET

- a **9.21** Watch or listen to five people talking about animals. Who (**Je**, **A**, **S**, **Ja**, or **K**) saw an animal or a group of animals...?



Jenny
American



Alex
English



Sarah
American



James
English



Karen
English

- that really impressed them by the elegant way it moved
- that were much larger than expected
- that were recovering from injuries
- completely unexpectedly, while they were traveling across the country
- despite having been warned that they probably wouldn't see any

- b Watch or listen again. Who mentions an animal that they would like to see in the wild rather than a place they would like to visit? What places do the other four people mention?

- c **9.22** Watch or listen again and complete the Colloquial English phrases. What do you think they mean?

- "...they actually allowed them to just _____, uh, so it was really impressive."
- "But, we'd been told the _____ of seeing them in the wild were _____."
- "...you see them on TV, but never in _____."
- "I mean, it's _____ I suppose, but I did see it in the wild."
- "...so, um, it's very rare that you can, actually, um, _____"

sanctuary an area where wild birds or animals are protected
David Attenborough an English broadcaster and naturalist

4 SPEAKING

Answer the questions with a partner or in small groups.

- How do you feel about insects in general? Are there any you particularly like or dislike?
- Would you be prepared to eat insects?
- Do you ever watch wildlife shows on TV? Why do you think they are so popular?
- What's the most interesting animal that you've ever seen in the wild? Where was it?
- Is there anywhere you would particularly like to go to see animals or the natural world?

