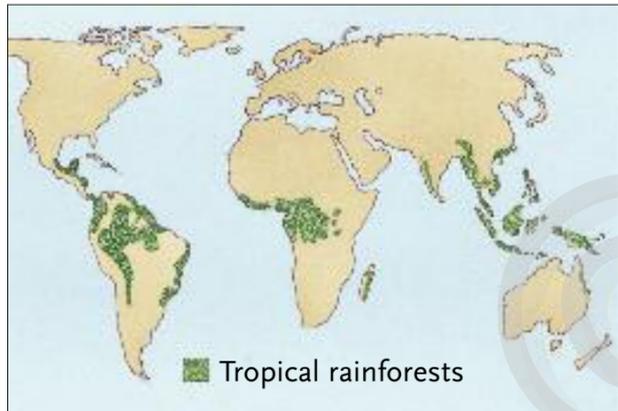


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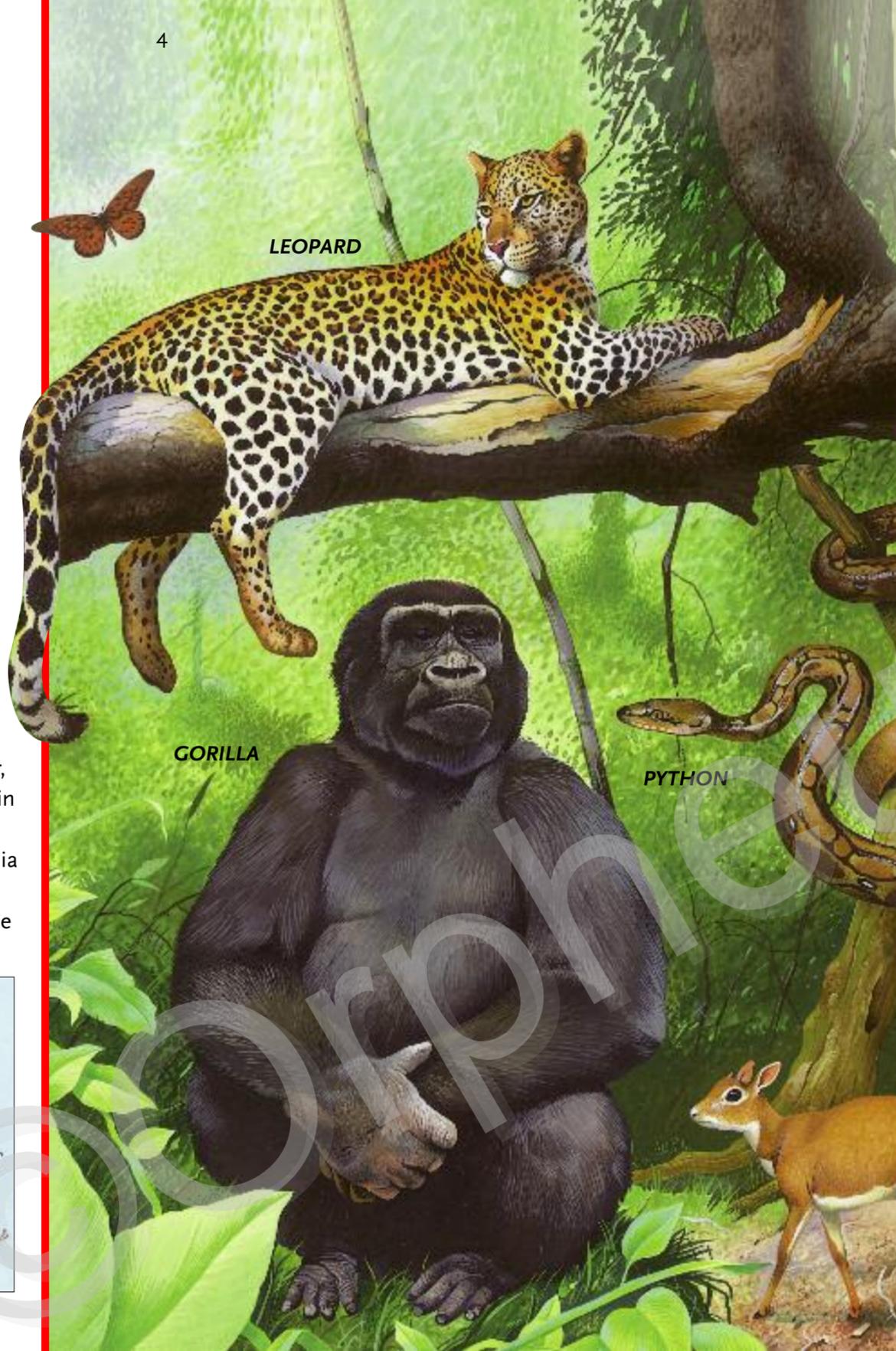
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RAINFORESTS OF THE WORLD

Tropical rainforests are found near the Equator, in regions of high rainfall. The main areas are in the Amazon basin of South America, Central America, central and west Africa, Southeast Asia and eastern Madagascar. There are also small areas of rainforest in northern Australia and the Pacific islands.

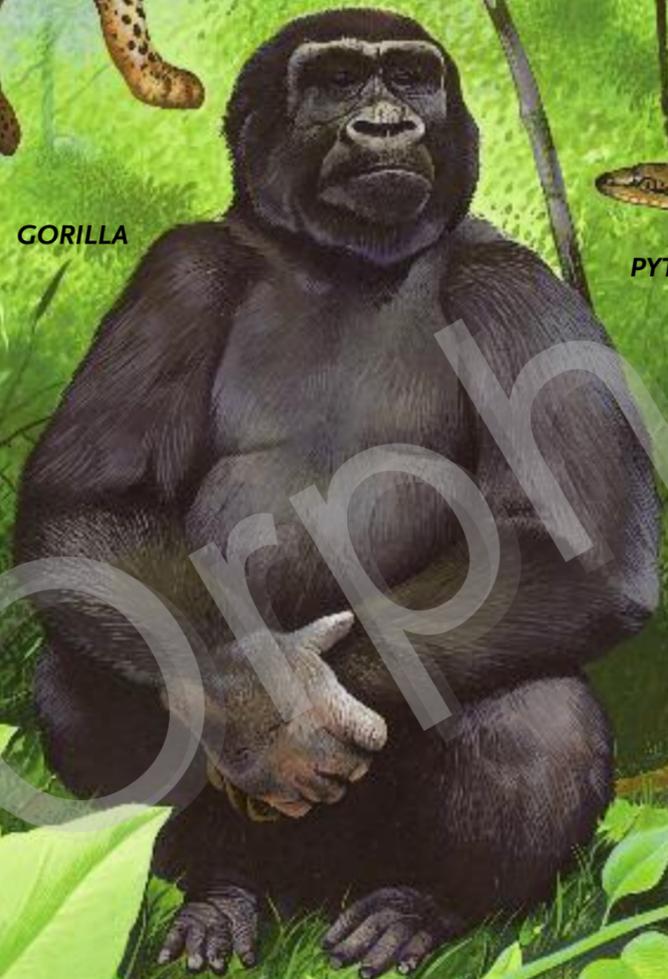


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LEOPARD

GORILLA



PYTHON



LIFE IN THE RAINFOREST

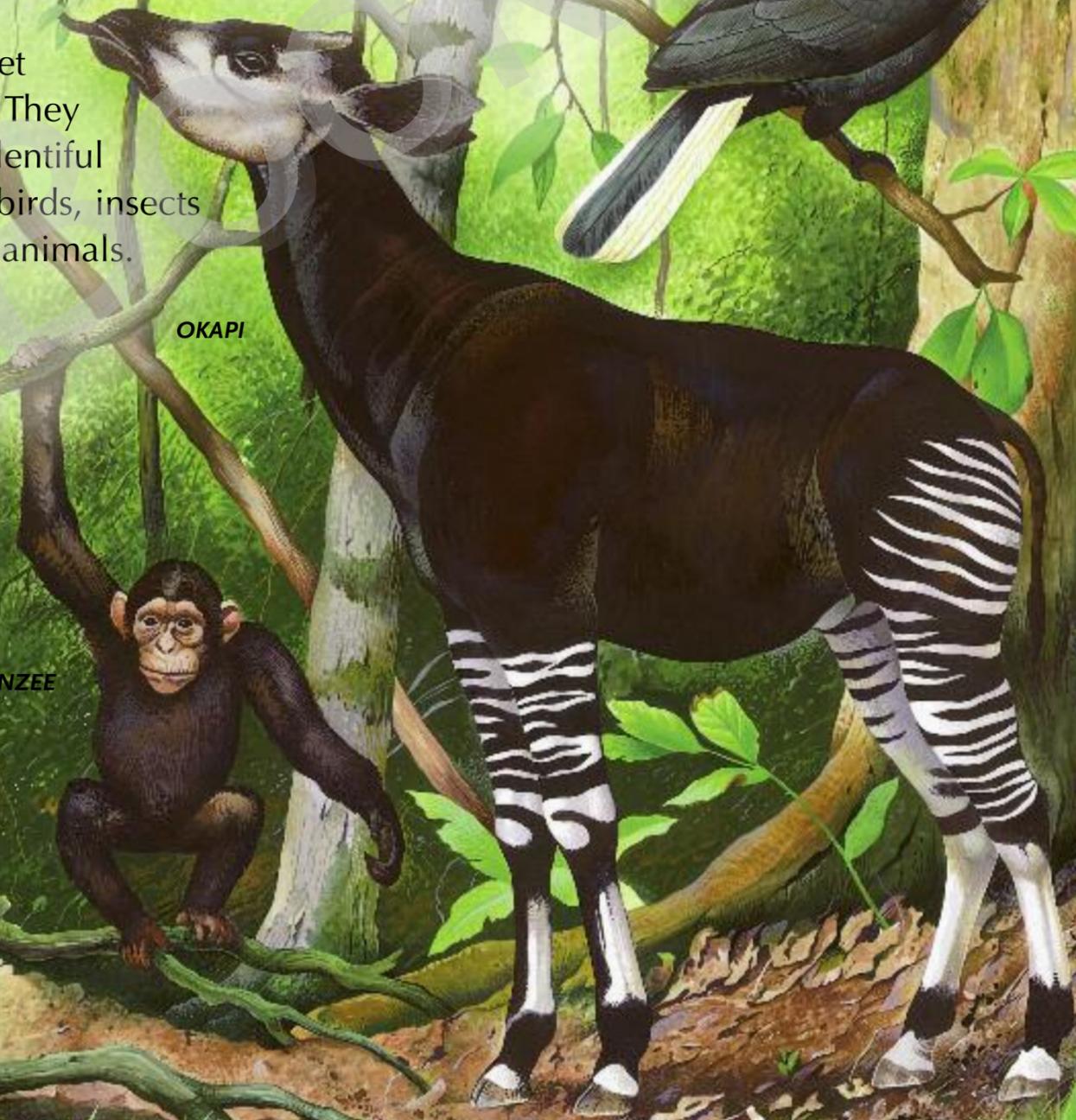
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THANKS to year-round warmth and high rainfall, lowland tropical rainforests have the greatest diversity of plant and animal species on land anywhere on Earth. Even today scientists are discovering new species in remote areas. Plants grow well in the warm, wet conditions. They provide plentiful food for birds, insects and other animals.

HORNBILL



OKAPI



CHIMPANZEE



ROYAL ANTELOPE





KEY

- 1 Toco toucan
- 2 Umbrella bird
- 3 Harpy eagle
- 4 Scarlet macaw
- 5 Cacique
- 6 Hoatzin
- 7 Hummingbird
- 8 Kingfisher
- 9 Sunbittern
- 10 Curassow

BIRDS OF THE RAINFOREST

FROM the tiny hummingbird, hovering over flowers to feed on nectar, to the harpy eagle, a fearsome bird of prey, the Amazon rainforest is rich with bird life. The scarlet macaw's strong beak can crack open even the hardest nuts, while the toco toucan uses its huge bill to pick fruits. On the forest floor, curassows

scratch around for fruits and seeds. At the river's edge, the sunbittern wades in search of fish and small crustaceans while a kingfisher waits to dive for its fish supper.

The untidy nest of the hoatzin looks as if it may fall apart at any moment. By contrast, the long hanging nest of the cacique is carefully woven.

IN THE RAINFOREST TREES

Southeast Asian rainforest

HIGH FLYERS

Crested swifts perch high in forest trees watching for insects. Then they dash through the air, screeching as they go, seizing and swallowing their prey in mid-air. The main part of a bee-eater's diet is, as you would expect, bees and wasps. After a chase, it returns to its perch with its prey caught in its bill. The bee-eater knocks the insect senseless on the branch, then carefully removes the sting with its beak before starting its meal.

MIGHTY BILL

The hornbill is a noisy, turkey-sized bird. All small animals that live in the canopy are wary of it. It eats mostly fruit but will also take any prey it can overpower, even poisonous animals such as snakes and scorpions.

FLYING MAMMALS

The Southeast Asian rainforest is home to many different species of bat, the only mammals that can truly fly. Most are insect-eating bats, which hunt their prey at night using echolocation. But some are fruit bats, thriving on the year-round supply of fruit and flowers.

GLIDERS

The easiest way to get from one tree to another in the forest is to fly—or glide. The colugo, or flying lemur, has a loose flap of skin between its neck, limbs and tail that enables it to glide for huge distances while losing very little height. The gliding frog uses the webbing between its toes like tiny parachutes. The flying dragon, a kind of lizard, has skin flaps like wings.

LEAPERS

Primates get from tree to tree by leaping. Tarsiers move around the branches only at night. Their huge eyes give them good vision in the dark, while they listen for insects with their dish-like ears. The silvered langur is equally at home on the ground or in the trees. Pushing off from a branch with great force, it can leap up to 12 m.

LONERS

The orang-utan has shaggy red hair and long arms. It swings cautiously by itself through the trees. It has a good knowledge of the forest and always knows where to find its favourite fruit trees. The leopard is another loner. Hunting at night, it carefully stalks its prey with its excellent senses of hearing and smell.

GROUND-DWELLERS

On the ground, fungi grow, fallen leaves collect and tiny shoots push through. The tapir searches for water plants at night. Both Sumatran rhinoceroses and tigers are now very rare, due to the disappearance of their forest habitat and to hunting. The proboscis monkey, named after the male's long, fat nose, lives among the branches of mangrove trees, feeding on fruit and leaves.

FISH OUT OF WATER

There is a kind of fish that spends most of its life out of water. The mudskipper makes its home on the mudflats. It skips about on the soft mud using its flippers and fins, even climbing trees with the help of a sucker on its underside.

LIFE in the rainforest is organized into several layers, like the storeys of a building. The highest storeys are the trees that grow taller than the other trees around them. These are known as emergent trees. Beneath the emergent layer is the canopy, a near-continuous "roof" made up of tree foliage. Bathed in sunlight, plants and flowers take

root on the branches themselves. These are called epiphytes. Many animals, including apes, monkeys, butterflies and birds, make their home in the canopy. Lower down is the understory, where some animals glide from tree to tree. Here too is the domain of the leopard. It waits on branches for its prey to pass on the ground below.



SONGSTERS

Each dawn, the peace of the rainforest is broken by the call of the gibbon. These are often elaborate "songs" that, in some species, sound like operatic solos or duets! Males have throat sacs that help amplify their voices. Gibbons swing through the trees using their long arms and hooked hands.