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A World of Wonders

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Surprising Natural Wonders

There are many beautiful places all over the world. Some are in the far north. Others are in the sea. Some are in the sky!

High in the sky we may see colored lights. They are bigger and brighter than fireworks. These are the Northern Lights.

The lights are caused by electric **particles** from the sun. **Bursts** of these particles move towards earth. When they get here, they cause colorful lights in the sky.

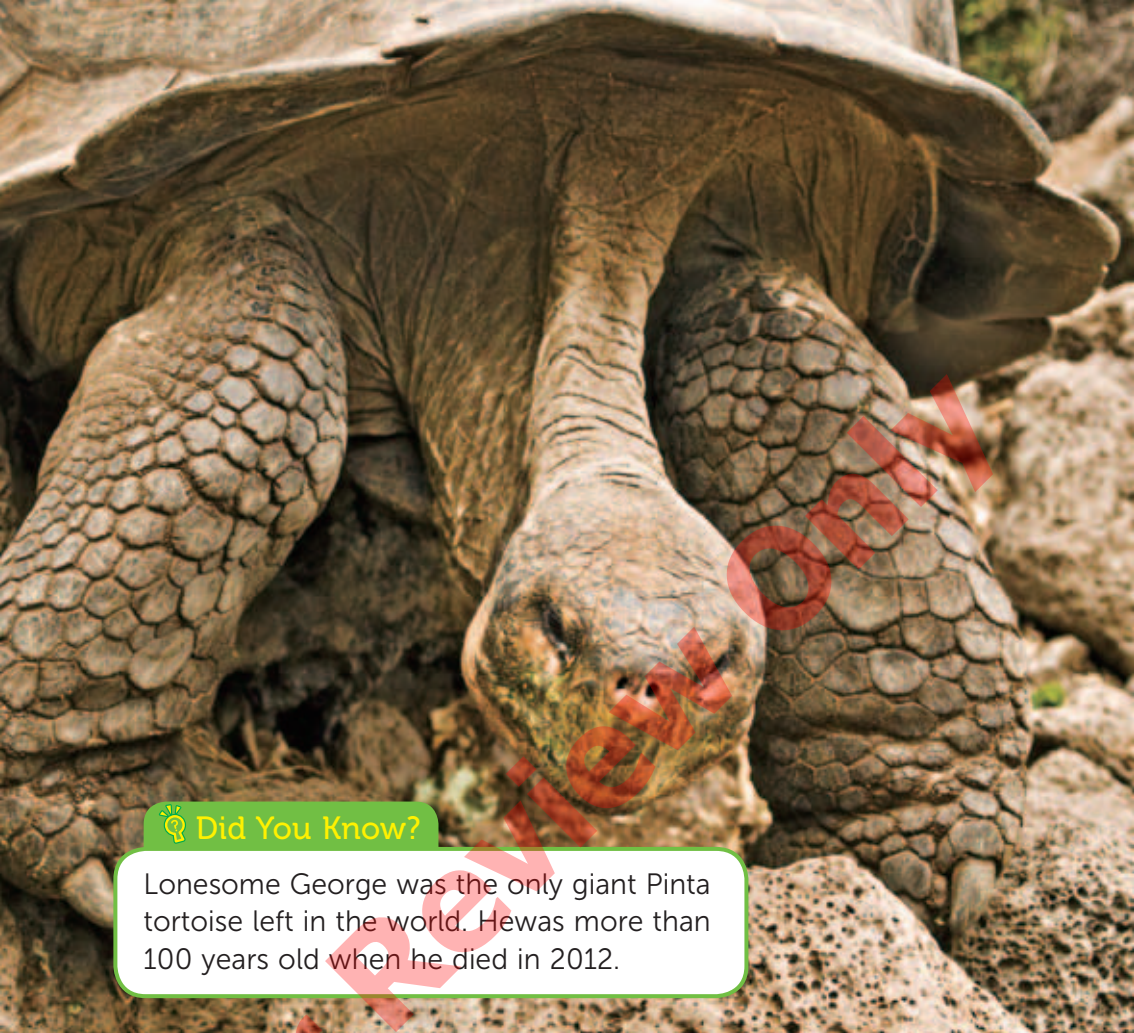




The Kamchatka Peninsula in Russia is hot and cold. There are both volcanoes and glaciers there!

It is surprising to see lights in the sky. It is also surprising to see volcanoes and glaciers in the same place!

The Kamchatka Peninsula has more than three hundred volcanoes. Kamchatka also has lots of **glaciers**. Kamchatka is a place of fire and ice.



Did You Know?

Lonesome George was the only giant Pinta tortoise left in the world. He was more than 100 years old when he died in 2012.

Another wonder in South America is the Galapagos Islands. These islands are like a museum! The 120 islands there have mountains, beaches, and forests. They are home to many unusual animals and birds. The islands and their animals help scientists understand the natural world better.

Natural Wonders That Help

Some natural wonders are not just beautiful places. They help the earth. The Great Barrier Reef of Australia is one. The whole reef is alive! Tiny sea animals make coral. The coral builds up into **reefs** under water. These huge reefs can be seen from space. Many kinds of sea plants live in the reefs. Thousands of kinds of fish and animals also live there. The Great Barrier Reef helps keep the ocean healthy.





Can a hole in the ground surprise people? It can if the hole is really big! The Grand Canyon is a big hole. A small river made it. It took a long time, though! It took six million years to make the Grand Canyon. This canyon in North America has a lot of **fossils** and caves. Many people visit there to learn about its history.



The Amazon rainforest is another wonder filled with plants and animals. The Amazon rainforest is almost as big as Australia.

The rainforest has been called Earth's lungs. The plants and trees change **carbon dioxide** into **oxygen**. The rainforest helps keep Earth healthy.