

**Task 1** - Read the non-chronological report. Highlight or underline any words you aren't sure about. Look them up in a dictionary to check their meaning.

### **The Sprot Gozzler**

Over 150 years ago, in the depths of Savernake Forest, the sprot gozzler was first discovered by intrepid scientists as they explored the flora and fauna. Dr Gervais, who was renowned for his in-depth knowledge of arachnid mating behaviours, documented his discovery and the sprot gozzler has been baffling entomologists from that day onwards. Unlike other members of the arachnid genus, the sprot gozzler has an endoskeleton; this makes it unique and remarkable.

#### **Appearance:**

Despite its lack of exoskeleton, the sprot gozzler is still protected by its shield-like, azure-blue skin. Its skin is extremely tough and as rough as the coarsest sandpaper. This lumpy texture, which is visible from a fair distance, is extremely unattractive and - to the sprot gozzler's relief - particularly unpleasant on the tongue. Protruding from its bulbous head are antennae. Perched on the end of these telescopic tentacles are the eyes of the sprot gozzler. Surprisingly, its eye sight is rather poor. Instead, they use the tiny, almost invisible hairs on their tail to sense the motion of their desired prey. Nestled at the front of the sprot gozzler's cephalothorax, its blunt teeth are hidden behind the strong, vice-like pedipalps; they can be seen when it yawns or eats.

#### **Diet:**

Using its rows of canines, the sprot gozzler is a formidable predator. When given the choice, it would prefer to eat only the hemel sprot however it will eat almost any organism smaller than it. The sprot gozzler is an omnivore: it eats other animals as well as plants and fungi, including mould. Due to its size and innate laziness, the sprot gozzler only needs to eat once every few days. It lurks by water sources and waits for its prey to arrive. Using its tail sensors, the sprot gozzler will engulf its prey when it senses them come down to drink. If, after a few days, it has not caught anything, it will find some nearby fungus to consumer. It is though that the sprot gozzler is also cannibalistic, but this has never been proved.

## **Habitat:**

As previously mentioned, the sprout gozzler was first discovered in Savernake Forest. It has only ever been found in temperate climates. The sprout gozzler is the only arachnid of its kind to be found in the northern hemisphere.

Similar species have been discovered living in the southern hemisphere but, like all other arachnids, these have had exoskeletons. Although its preferred habitats can become dry and warm during the summer months, the sprout gozzler thrives in moist conditions. As its eye sight is unimportant to its survival, it is content living underneath rotten logs or in composting leaf piles.

Amazing but true: did you know that the sprout gozzler will only live in a region where it can be within a five metre radius of a hornbeam tree?

## **Behaviours:**

As well as being lazy, the sprout gozzler is a solitary creature. Its low levels of sociality are enhanced by its aggression towards other sprout gozzlers. With its lack of friendliness, it is fortunate that it can reproduce asexually (much to the male of species' relief!). The sprout gozzler is an air-breathing arthropod with the ability to spin spiral orb webs; this makes it part of the araneidae group of arachnids. When threatened, the sprout gozzler is able to feign its own death. This ability, paired with its repulsive tasting skin, means that it is rarely hunted or killed by predators. The main threat to the survival of the species is itself: its hostile and aggressive nature could be its final downfall.

**FUN FACT:** Did you know that the sprout gozzler is terrified of adult mernimblers?

**Task 2** - Choose your challenge and answer the questions about the text. You can mark them afterwards to see how you have got on.

**Bronze**

1. How long ago was the sprout gozzler discovered?

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2. What colour is the creature's skin?

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3. Is the animal a carnivore, omnivore or herbivore?

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4. Name 2 things a sprout gozzler eats?

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5. What conditions do the species like to live in?

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6. What does it mean when it says 'the sprout gozzler is a solitary creature'?

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*Extra Challenge* - Jot down any words you would like to magpie and use in your own non-chronological report that you will be writing next week.

## Silver

1. Who discovered sprot gozzler?

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2. Find and copy 3 things about a sprot gozzlers appearance?

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3. How often does the creature need to eat and what does it consume?

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4. Describe the animal's habitat?

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5. What skill does the sprot gozzler have that means it belongs to the spider arachnid family?

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6. How does the animal avoid predators and being eaten?

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## Gold

1. What makes the sprot gozzler unique?

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2. Draw and label the sprot gozzler from the description of its appearance.

3. What is a surprise about the creature's appearance and how does it overcome it?

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4. What does it mean when it says the animal is an omnivore? Can you find evidence in the text to support your answer?

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5. What are a sprot gozzler's preferred living conditions?

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6. How does the creature defend itself from attack?

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7. What is the biggest threat to the survival of this creature and why?

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