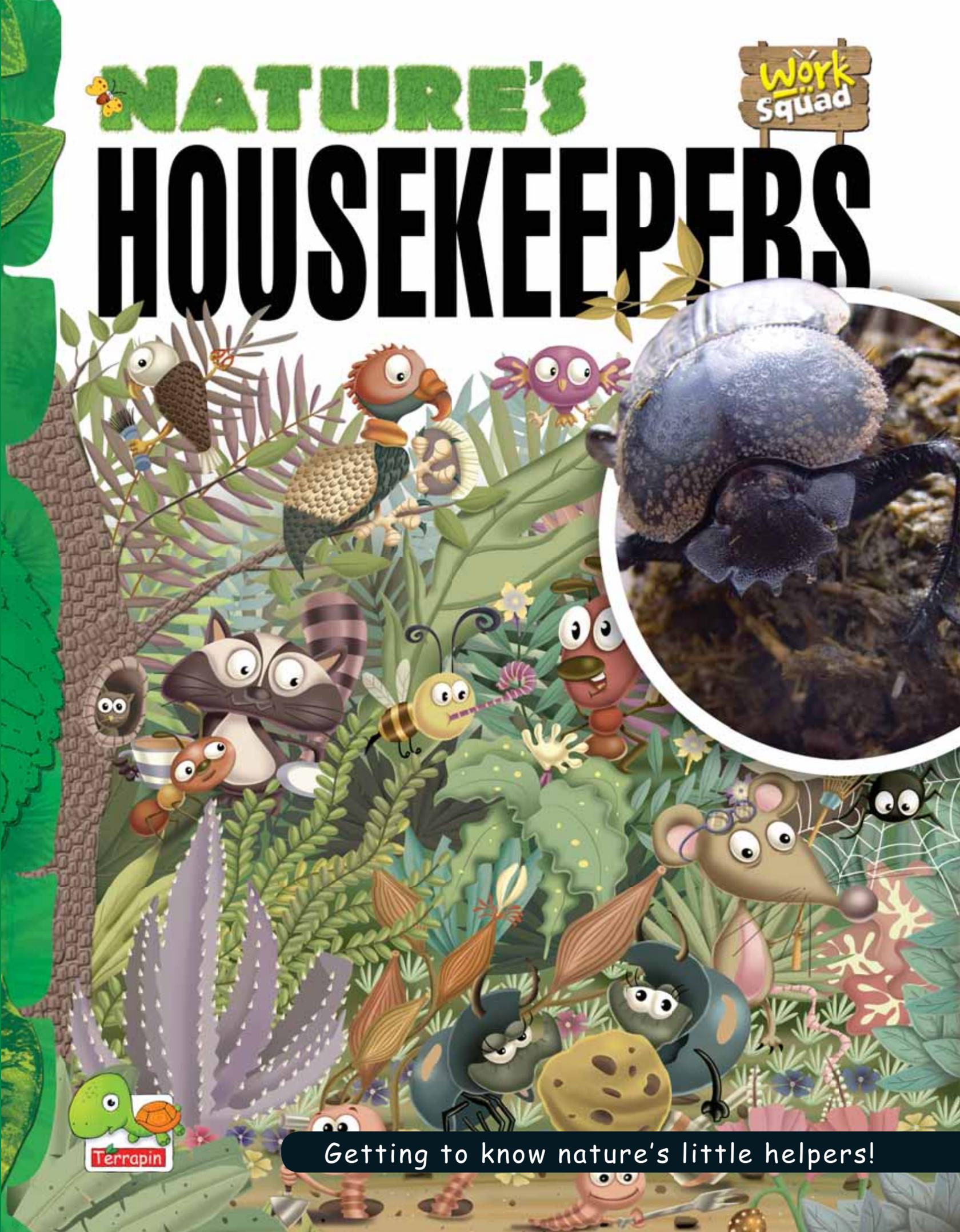


NATURE'S



# HOUSEKEEPERS



Getting to know nature's little helpers!





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The Energy and Resources Institute

### **A note from Dr R K Pachauri**

The world of animals and insects is truly wondrous. If we delve a little deeper, we will be amazed at the similarities between their ways and ours. In fact, at times their industriousness, skill, resourcefulness, and knowledge are awe-inspiring.

This series focuses on the unique world of animals and insects, revealing their incredible habits and amazing skills. Ants that build colonies, worms that produce light, tiny polyps that build huge reefs under water—these are just some of the myriad examples to show that nature never ceases to amaze.

While revealing little-known facts and amazing secrets of the animal world, these books will entertain and enrich young minds. I hope that as they leaf through the pages, readers will also feel inspired to protect the beautiful world brought to life within these covers. More importantly, I look forward to these books making young readers realize that the world of animals is meant to be explored and appreciated rather than destroyed for selfish reasons.



R K Pachauri  
Director-General, TERI  
Chairman, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

# Contents

**6-7** King vulture

**8-9** Striped hyena

**10-11** Ant

**12-13** Brown rat

**14-15** Dung beetle

**16-17** Raccoon

**18-19** Opossum

**20-21** Cockroach

**22-23** Tasmanian devil

**24-25** Goanna

**26-27** Bald eagle

**28-29** Earthworm

**30** Words to remember

**Name:** King vulture

**Job:** Cleans the jungle

**Home:** Central and South America

## Vulture World

Vultures live in all the continents of the world except Antarctica and Oceania. They are the big swooping cleaners of the jungles. Vultures feed on dead bodies of animals, which would otherwise lie around and spread disease. The king vulture is one of the most unique and colourful vultures.

## Good Bird

Even though the king vulture is brightly coloured, it manages to hide itself when perched on a tree. While looking for food, it flies higher in the air than most other vultures. From high above the ground, it looks below for dead creatures. Once it notices a carcass, it swoops down. The bird uses its long and thick claws to hold the meat tightly. It then tears the meat with its strong beak and starts eating.





# Vulture Theory

Even though the king vulture has very good eyesight, no one knows exactly how it finds its food. Some believe that this bird uses its highly developed sense of smell; while others think that it just follows other vultures to the carrion.

## All in a day's work

People of the ancient Maya civilization sometimes portrayed the vulture as a god, with a human body and a bird's head.





**Name:** Striped hyena

**Job:** Bone cleaner

**Home:** Africa, Middle East, Pakistan, and western India

## HYENA FAMILY

The hyena family consists of four groups. However, all the groups have one thing in common—they wobble when they walk, just like a bear. This is because their front legs are longer and lighter than their back legs.

The striped hyena, one of the members of this large family, is a solitary animal that loves to spend most of its time alone.

## STRIPED CLEANER

Like vultures, hyenas also feed on the flesh of dead animals. They eat parts of the carrion that other animals leave behind. Striped hyenas have powerful jaws with which they can crush and chew bones. Their strong digestive system helps them digest the flesh, as well as the bones.

# JUNGLE FIGHT

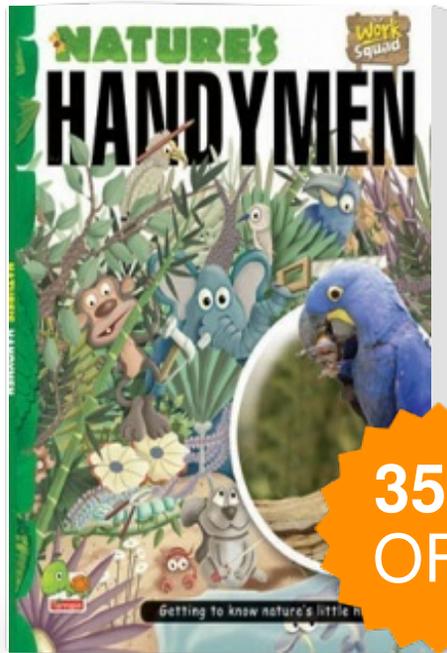
The striped hyena feasts on the hunt made by other animals. It follows the smell of a kill made by lions, wolves or other animals, and fights to grab a piece or two of the carrion. However, this is not easy for the hyena, as wolves and lions move in packs, while hyenas hunt alone or in pairs. Very often, the hyena is shooed away without a meal.

## All in a day's work

Believe it or not, hyenas also like eating fruits. In Israel and Egypt, these animals often sneak into melon fields for a juicy treat.



# Work Squad : Nature's Housekeepers



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