

# Keeping Clean

How does it happen in nature?

Have you ever wondered how animals keep themselves clean?



## Beaks to clean

Birds use their beaks the way we use combs for our hair! They clean their feathers by fluffing, shaking, nibbling and using their beaks to straighten feathers and remove dirt or insects. Cleaning actions in birds is called **preening**.

## Feet to scratch

Some birds clean by scratching! They collect 'preen oil' from the base of their tail feathers. Then they use their beak and feet to spread this oil over their feathers.



## Bathing in sand

Many birds, from sparrows to hornbills take sand or dust baths. Birds create a shallow hole in the ground in which they roll and flap to coat their feathers with sand. Then, they shake their bodies to remove dirt and tiny insects. This dry sand bath also helps absorb excess preen oil.

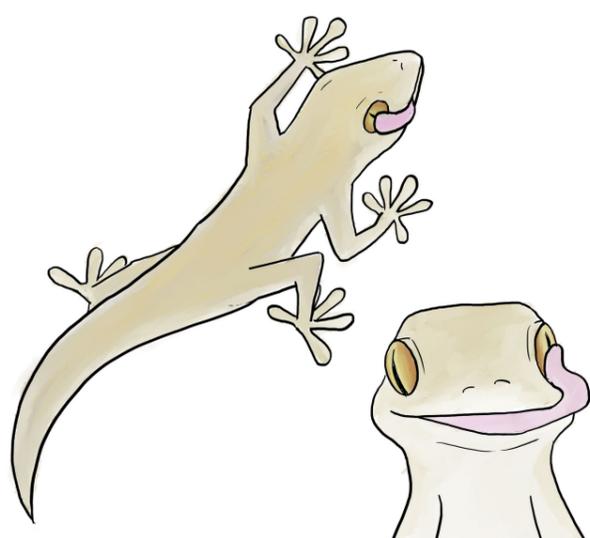
? **Why do birds need to keep their feathers clean?**

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## How does it happen in nature?

Animals regularly clean themselves and make sure their fur, feathers, other skin coverings, antennae and wings are in good condition. This cleaning or grooming behaviour may involve animals removing external objects such as unwanted insects, leaves, dirt and twigs.

**?** Look around you- what are the different body parts that animals use to clean and groom themselves ?

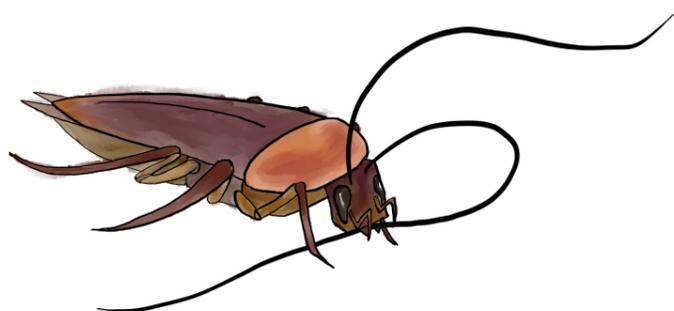


### Tongues

Geckos use their tongues for many things; to hunt and catch insects, to smell what is around them and even to clean their eyes! Which animals around you use their tongues to keep clean?

### Paws and Claws

Animals like Otters first use their tongues to lick their fur. Then, they use their paws and claws to remove little pieces of dirt. They spend a lot of time combing, drying and grooming their fur. Have you seen any other animal use paws to keep clean?



### Mouths and Mouthparts

Even cockroaches need to keep themselves clean! They use their mouthparts to remove dirt from their legs and antennae. Clean antennae and legs are important for cockroaches to smell, sense danger and move around.

# Keeping Clean

## How does it happen in nature?

Animals keep themselves clean in many ways- by using their paws and claws to comb, beaks to preen and remove dirt or tongues to lick their fur. Sometimes, animals also help each other stay clean.



Older animals may help keep young ones clean.

Here, a leopard parent is licking a cub, keeping the fur clean and well groomed.

Some animals that live in groups - like langurs - regularly help each other stay clean and free from unwanted insects and dirt. This behaviour ensures good hygiene and also strengthens bonds between the animals as they care for each other.



Have you ever seen birds like a myna or an egret on a buffalo's back?

What do you think the bird is doing there?

Birds on buffalo backs eat insects like ticks that might bother the buffalo. This cleaning behaviour of the bird is helpful for the buffalo and the bird gets an easy meal!