

# Tommy Time



Hi Kids, I'm Dr. Tommy Prawn, I'm a mad scientist that lives in the river Shannon in Ireland. My good friends at Nature's Web rang me on the watermobile and told me ye had a few questions about science and asked if I could answer them. I told the gang at Nature's Web "no probs, of course I would try to answer the questions you asked." So here I go..... Enjoy!  
Remember, if you have any other science questions, just send them into [editor@naturesweb.ie](mailto:editor@naturesweb.ie) and they'll pass 'em on to me!

Dr. Tommy

## What is the Largest Living Structure on Earth?

This is an odd question because it is known that the blue whale is the biggest creature, but living *structure* is different. Then I remembered my brothers Mattie and Evan Prawn. They share a room back home in the Shannon river. My mother always says that their room is walking with the dirt, so maybe their room is the biggest living structure - the dirty things! Not like there older brother here, who I might add is spotless.

Dwarfing even the mighty blue whale, the largest living structure is the Great Barrier Reef, a mass of coral off the northeastern coast of Australia that extends some 1,250 miles. The reef supports an amazing array of life that includes approximately 2,000 species of fish. Coral is made by millions of tiny carnivorous (meat eating) animals called polyps. Polyps live in groups called colonies.

So if you ever get the chance to see the barrier reef do, and remember what I told you. Also seeing as you will be in Australia, your toilet water will flow down the opposite way as it does here!!!

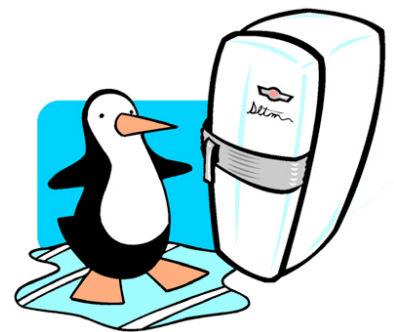


## What are the Hottest and Coldest Places on Earth?

This world seems like it is huge to all of us living on it, but in terms of our solar system this planet is tiny. Jupiter is the biggest at near 90,000 miles across, earth is only about 8,000. Still there are some very hot and very cold places. My second cousin Gillian Shrimp told me she was locked in a fridge at 4° C for a week and she was shivering with the cold but then she read the answer below and that shut her up fairly fast.

Going on averages over the year, the hottest place on earth is Dallol, Ethiopia average temperature is 34 °C (93.2 °F). However, the hottest recorded temperature was El Azizia, in Lybia, in 1922, where the temperature hit 66° C. Hot Stuff. The coldest place on average is

Eureka, Nunavut, Canada daily average temperature is -19.7 °C (-3.46 °F). That's like constantly living in your mother's deep freeze. The coldest ever recorded temperature is Vostok, Antarctica, dropped to nearly -89.2 °C (-127 °F). My grandfather Paddy Prawn told me once he spoke to a penguin in Dublin Zoo, who was born in Antarctica and he told him that he had just bought a new fridge before he moved over to Dublin from Antarctica. My grandad said what did he want a fridge for in those temperatures, and the penguin said, to keep his food warm!!!!



Dr. Tommy Prawn would like to acknowledge the help of his good friend James Ring. Text: © James Ring

© 2007 Sherkin Island Marine Station & its licensors. All rights reserved.