



Educator's Guide

Educational extensions for the September 2009 issue of *Ranger Rick*® magazine

BEHIND-THE-SCENES WILDLIFE

In “Dear Ranger Rick” (page 4), the “Tell us!” section asks readers to report on backyard wildlife sightings. After discussing this question with your students, ask them to think about what goes on in their yards when they’re not looking. From worms underground and birds concealed in the leafy canopy, to nocturnal animals wandering through, wildlife is busy all day and night! Ask students to imagine these unobserved wildlife happenings in their yard or neighborhood—and then write a story about them.

GREEN BY THE NUMBERS

“The Buzz” (pages 12-13) includes tips for “green” back-to-school choices. Discuss these ideas, as well as students’ own. Then have students put several actions in context by gathering some data and calculating the effects. For example, if everyone in the class brings reusable lunch containers instead of throw-away ones, how many fewer pounds of garbage will pile up during the school year? If ten students walk or bike to school instead of riding in a car, how many gallons of gas will it save? Challenge students to choose at least one action and chart the results over the course of the year.

AMAZING ANTS

“The Buzz” (pages 12-13) reports on the fast-biting trap-jaw ant. Invite students to view the videos at berkeley.edu/news/multimedia (click on “Quick-jaw ants”). Ask them to think of a few questions they have about the ants and then skim the accompanying text (an important research skill) to see if they can find the answers.

MAKING MUSHROOMS

Read all about mushrooms and their life cycle in “Mushroom Mania!” (pages 18-23). Discuss their important ecological role as decomposers. Make spore prints (page 25) to better understand how they reproduce. Then try growing your own mushrooms. Search “mushroom growing kits” online for lots of options—including oyster mushrooms that grow out of a roll of toilet paper!

BETTER TOGETHER

Check out the photo in “What’s Going On Here?” on pages 32-33. The cleaner wrasses and the sweetlips each are getting something out of their relationship. It’s a case of “you scratch my back and I’ll scratch yours,” also known as *mutualism* in the science of ecology. Two different species interact in a way that benefits both. Engage students in an investigation of this phenomenon—including examples that involve humans.

GONE HIKIN’

Read “Take a Hike!” (pages 34-39), paying particular attention to the “Quick Tips for Happy Hiking” at the end. Then plan a safe and fun hike of your own. Have students help 1) choose the destination, 2) look at a map to plan the route, 3) make a list of what to wear and pack, and 4) come up with guidelines to follow while on the trail. Then head out on your adventure and have some fun!



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ANIMAL ADJECTIVES

As you read “Cougars” (pages 6-11 in the September 2009 issue of *Ranger Rick*), notice that the story gives ten adjectives (describing words) to explain cougars. Choose another animal that interests you. Then think of ten words or phrases that describe this animal.

1. Adjective: _____

Why it fits: _____

2. Adjective: _____

Why it fits: _____

3. Adjective: _____

Why it fits: _____

4. Adjective: _____

Why it fits: _____

5. Adjective: _____

Why it fits: _____

6. Adjective: _____

Why it fits: _____

7. Adjective: _____

Why it fits: _____

8. Adjective: _____

Why it fits: _____

9. Adjective: _____

Why it fits: _____

10. Adjective: _____

Why it fits: _____





ANIMALS IN ACTION

Turn to **pages 28-29** in "Fishing Kings" (in the September 2009 issue of *Ranger Rick*). Look at the set of photos numbered 1 to 6 that show how a kingfisher dives into the water and catches a meal. In the boxes below, draw your own version of each of these photos. Then, for each picture, write a sentence that describes the action.

1**2****3****4****5****6**