Educator's Guide

Educational extensions for the March 2011 issue of *Ranger Rick*® magazine

TRACK AND TRAIL

In "Dear Ranger Rick" (**page 4**), a reader describes some mystery tracks and her ideas about what animal made them. Take advantage of the last snow of winter or the first mud of spring to get students out on a hunt for tracks. Engage them in making observations, evaluating possible explanations, and drawing conclusions about what they find.

THE GREEN SCENE

"Critters Go Green" (**page 13**) is a series of just-for-fun drawings of animals displaying "green" behaviors. Have students choose one of these examples or make up their own version of a "critter gone green," and then use it as one element on a poster encouraging people to adopt a similar habit.

TRASH TO TREASURE

The GENeco car featured in "The Buzz" (**pages 14-15**) runs on methane made from sewage. Ask students to brainstorm some other waste products (food waste, excess heat from manufacturing, etc.) and how they might be turned into a useful resource. As a group, choose a few of the ideas to turn into skits explaining the concepts.

EXPLORE-A-BIRD

After students read "Not Your Average Bird" (**pages 16-21**), ask them to choose one of the featured birds and further investigate its unusual characteristics. They can then share the highlights of their research with the rest of the group.

MIGRATION INVESTIGATION

Read "Ranger Rick's Adventures" (**pages 22-24**) and then see if you can get a glimpse of what Scarlett and Rick saw. Invite students to go out when the moon is full (or nearly full) with a pair of binoculars and look for birds crossing the moon. Then try to find out more about what kinds of birds might be migrating through your area at this time of year, where they are coming from, and where they are headed.

MOON FOR A MONTH

Engage students in a month-long moon observation project. Start with the information and journal page in "Moon Watch" (**pages 26-28**). Or, for a more detailed lesson plan, visit **planetariumweb.madison.k12.wi.us/obsmoon**.

MOON ART

Use moon observations as a jumping-off point for some artistic explorations of our nearest neighbor in space. For example, students could:

- ✔ Make stamps of each phase of the moon from sponges, potatoes, or other objects and use them to print some designs.
- ✔ Make a scratch drawing by coloring a page fully with crayon, painting over it with dark paint, and then scratching out a design of the night sky.

MYSTERY ANIMALS

Encourage students to look for the answer to the "Who Am I?" contest on **page 39**. Then engage them in making their own mystery animal games for each other. They could do it the same way—with a photo of an obscure animal and word clues about its identity. Alternatively, they could choose less obscure animals, offering just word clues and no picture, for classmates to guess.

ASK THE MUSK OX

In "Mighty Musk Ox" (**pages 30-35 in the March 2011 issue of *Ranger Rick***), you learn that musk oxen live an extreme life in a very cold climate. What might an animal from a warm climate ask a musk ox about its life? Choose another animal and imagine a conversation between the two. Fill in the other animal's name in the shaded spaces below and then write what each animal says to the other.

_____ _____

_____

Musk Ox: _____

_____

_____ _____

_____

Musk Ox: _____

_____

_____ _____

_____

Musk Ox: _____

_____

_____ _____

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Musk Ox: _____

_____

SEA TURTLE FACTS

Are you sea-turtle savvy? After you read "Sea Turtles" (**pages 6-12 in the March 2011 issue of *Ranger Rick***), see how many of these questions you can complete. Try to fill in the answers without looking back at the story. Then go back to the text to find the rest.

1. There are _____ species of sea turtles.
2. One way that sea turtles are different from most other turtles is that _____

   _____

   _____
3. Which of these sentences is true? _____

   a. Sea turtles don't travel very far from home.

   b. Sea turtles migrate hundreds and even thousands of miles.
4. The green sea turtle holds the record for how long it can hold its breath underwater.

   It can last for up to _____ hours!
5. The leatherback is the deepest diver, diving to depths of more than _____ feet.
6. The turtles' beaks give clues about the kinds of foods they eat.

   Loggerhead (sharp and strong beak) eats: _____

   Hawksbill (narrow and pointed beak) eats: _____

   Leatherback (soft and delicate beak) eats: _____

   Green (jagged-edged beak) eats: _____
7. The sea turtle species that grows the largest is the _____.
8. Which two sea turtle species come ashore in large groups to nest?

   _____

   _____
9. Female turtles lay between _____ and _____ eggs in a hole in the sand.
10. Sea turtles have been swimming the world's oceans for _____ of years.