Educator's Guide

Educational extensions for the August 2008 issue of *Ranger Rick*® magazine

PUFFIN POWER

Want to learn more about puffins after reading the story on pages 6-11? For good news about a successful reintroduction project in Maine, check out the Web site of Project Puffin (**projectpuffin.org**) or read *The Puffins Are Back!* by Gail Gibbons (Harper Collins, 1991). To find out how kids in Iceland help baby puffins, read *Nights of the Pufflings* by Bruce McMillan (Houghton Mifflin, 1997). Then investigate the puffin's talented bill with a class competition. Purchase a few tins of slippery sardines. Divide students into teams to make model puffin bills. The models should be approximately the size of real puffin bills, about 2.5 inches (6 cm) high. Which team's bill can grip the most fish? Can any come close to the puffin record? Don't let the fish go to waste when you're done: Send it home as a healthy treat for students' pet cats or dogs.

TREASURE TREKKING

"Treasure Trek" (pages 12-16) is an introduction to geocaching. This sport and its low-tech cousin, letterboxing, are great ways to explore nearby natural areas and build students' wayfinding skills. Visit **geocaching.com** and **letterboxing.org** to look up local "treasures" for which you can hunt as a group. Also check out Earthcaches (**earthcache.org**), geocaches designed as teaching tools for earth science education. Alternatively, you could create your own treasure hunt. Write clues leading to a hidden prize outdoors, tailoring the clues to subjects that students have recently studied. (For instance, you could base a treasure hunt on tree identification skills or navigating with a compass.)

RECORD REPTILES

The drawings in "Super Scalies" (pages 22-27) show parts of some record-setting reptiles at actual size. Using the measurements in the story, find ways to represent the animals' whole bodies at actual size. For instance, students could trace an outline in sand or soil, or arrange a rope in the shape of the animal. Then compare the reptiles with the sizes of familiar things. How many students lying end-to-end equal an anaconda? Would a leatherback fit through the door of your classroom?

ANIMAL TEACHERS

In "The Elephant Whisperer" (pages 30-33), you meet Marie Galloway, a zookeeper who has a strong bond with "her" elephants. Is her relationship unusual among people who work closely with animals? Challenge students to find out! Arrange interviews with staff at a zoo or other animal facility near you. Brainstorm questions related to job responsibilities, relationships with the animals, and lessons learned from interacting with them. Afterward, ask students to compare the interviewees' animal relationships with Marie Galloway's.

JELLIES ON DISPLAY

After you read "Jellyfish Q & A" (pages 34-39), visit an aquarium to see some beautiful jellies firsthand. Or have students turn your classroom into a jellyfish gallery. Make three-dimensional jellies out of tissue paper, using the photos in *Ranger Rick* as inspiration, and hang the creatures from the ceiling for an underwater mood.

NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION

SUPER DISCOVERY

"Super Scalies" (pages 22-27 in the August 2008 *Ranger Rick*) features some record-setting reptiles. Imagine you just discovered a new super-size reptile—one nobody has ever seen before. Report your amazing discovery below by answering these questions:

- What kind of reptile is it?
- Where did you find it?
- How big is it?
- What's special about it?
- What should be done now that you have discovered it?

SOMETHING FISHY

A jellyfish has a body that's very different from most other animals' bodies. Read "Jellyfish Q & A" (pages 34-39 in the August 2008 *Ranger Rick*) and answer the questions below about this unusual undersea creature.

1. Why is "jellyfish" not a very helpful name for this creature?

2. If you could give it a new name, what would you call it? Why?

3. Describe a jellyfish's body. What shape is it? What body parts does it have?

4. How does a jelly move around?

5. How does a jelly capture its food?

6. What's the most interesting thing about jellyfish that you learned from this story?