



# Educator's Guide

Educational extensions for the June-July 2010 issue of *Ranger Rick*® magazine

## SLEEP UNDER THE STARS

The Great American Backyard Campout is **June 26, 2010**. You can join the fun wherever you are. Find details about the event at [backyardcampout.org](http://backyardcampout.org). Then plan to participate in the campout to connect your students with night-time nature, build their skills and confidence, and enjoy the thrill of camping.

## FOLLOW BEE!

In "Dear Ranger Rick" (page 4), a reader describes how a beekeeper relocated a swarm of honeybees by moving the queen, who was then followed by all the other bees. With your students, discuss the importance of honeybees and learn more about their social behavior. Then work with students to create the rules for a running game that casts one person as the queen bee and the rest following as a swarm. When you've agreed on the rules, play the game!

## SCIENCE NEWS

Several new scientific discoveries are featured in "The Buzz" (pages 12-13). Have individual students or small groups each choose an item to investigate. After they dig up more details about how the discovery was made and why it is significant, invite them to present the highlights to the rest of the class.

## FEATURE A CREATURE

"Creature Features" (pages 17-25) shows off some amazing examples of animals' eyes, ears, noses, and mouths. Point out to students the "Critter Crackups" illustration (page 26). Then ask students to choose an animal feature that they would like to have for a day. Ask students to draw a picture of themselves with the animal feature and write a story about their adventures.

## BLUE NEAR YOU

Read about bluebirds in "True Blue" (pages 28-31) and learn how people have created "trails" of nest boxes in "On the Trail" (page 32). Are there any bluebird trails near you? Contact a local birding club to find out. If so, arrange a visit or invite a volunteer to come and talk to students about the work. Want to involve students in helping bluebirds? Consider building nest boxes for the schoolyard and then monitoring them each year.

## DARK SKIES

After reading "Ranger Rick's Adventures: Firefly Magic" (pages 34-37), investigate the problem of light pollution. Show students a satellite map of the world at night (such as the one at [geology.com/articles/satellite-photo-earth-at-night.shtml](http://geology.com/articles/satellite-photo-earth-at-night.shtml)). Then have students conduct a survey of the schoolgrounds, surrounding neighborhood, or another area at night to investigate the local situation. If you find light pollution problems, take action to install some dark-sky-friendly features (downlights, timers, etc.). Have students create informational signs explaining the benefits and post them nearby.

## TOGETHERNESS TIPS

In "The Gang's All Here" (pages 38-43), you learn that meerkats are "totally into togetherness." As a writing prompt or small-group discussion topic, have students consider group dynamics and teamwork. Ask them to describe groups to which they belong. What works to keep their groups functioning well? What works for the meerkats? How are these "togetherness tips" similar and different?



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# MANATEE MATTERS

Read “Love Those Manatees!” on pages 6-11 in the June-July 2010 issue of *Ranger Rick*. Then read the statements below. You’ll quickly see that they’re all wrong! Rewrite them to tell the true story about manatees.

1. Manatees don’t sleep much because they must come to the surface often to breathe.

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2. Manatees eat fish, shrimp, and other small water animals.

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3. Seals and walruses are some of the closest relatives of manatees.

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4. Baby manatees are usually born with lots of brothers and sisters.

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5. If you watched manatees interacting, you’d get the idea that they aren’t very friendly and would rather be left alone.

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6. Manatees have many natural enemies, including sharks and whales.

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7. In manatee sanctuaries, boating, swimming, and diving aren’t allowed. That’s to keep people safe from these dangerous animals.

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# CREATURE FEATURE COMBO

Read about amazing animal eyes, ears, noses, and mouths in “Creature Features” (pages 17-25 in the June-July 2010 issue of *Ranger Rick*). Then mix and match some features from the story to create a whole new animal.

My animal is called a: \_\_\_\_\_

It has eyes from a: \_\_\_\_\_

It has ears from a: \_\_\_\_\_

It has a nose from a: \_\_\_\_\_

It has a mouth from a: \_\_\_\_\_

Draw a picture of your animal's face in the box below.

What can your animal do with each of its features? Describe its special talents.

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