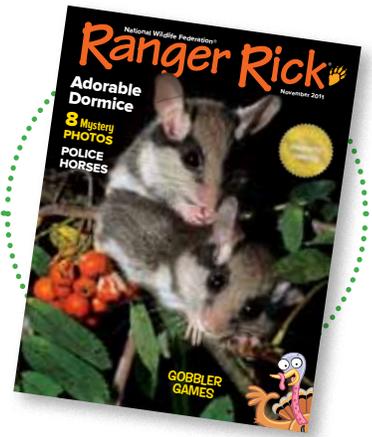


Educator's Guide



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

RED ALERT

Ask students to look at the photo of the milkweed grasshopper on **pages 2-3** and read the explanation in the left column. Discuss why the photo is titled “**Red Alert.**” Then list other examples of red acting as a warning color—in nature as well as in the built environment.

STORYBOOK ANIMALS

Read “**Adorable Dormice**” (**pages 6-11**) and point out the passage from *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* in which the sleepy dormouse is used as a cushion. Ask students to explain how the story’s dormouse is similar to a real dormouse. Then delve into other storybooks with animal characters (such as *Winnie-the-Pooh* by A.A. Milne or *The Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Grahame). Have students write about how the characteristics of real animals help shape those of the storybook ones.

BEE CONVINCING

Read about how bees choose a site for a new hive in “**The Buzz**” (**pages 12-13**). Communicating through a waggle dance, a bee tries to convince the others that a certain location is best. Have students try the same procedure, using movement (no talking) to persuade the group to move from one place to another. Afterward, discuss the process. How did students negotiate and convince without words?

BIG-BRAINED BIRDS

“**The Buzz**” (**pages 12-13**) explains a new finding that birds with the largest brains for their body size adapt best to city life. Take students on a quest to spot birds using buildings, signs, and other “city fixtures” in your neighborhood.

Then research other interesting examples of city adaptations (such as hawks nesting on tall buildings and crows placing nuts where cars will crack them).

VULTURE CULTURE

After reading “**Boning Up on Vultures**” (**pages 14-19**), check a field guide to learn about the vultures that live in your area. Note characteristics that will help you identify them. Then look for them soaring overhead. Vultures are large birds that are not difficult to identify by silhouette when flying, and it’s exciting for students to be able to point them out.

SNAG STUDY

In “**Snug in a Snag**” (**page 30**), you learn that snags are important places for wildlife. Go out and look for snags, as well as the fallen, rotting logs that they become, noting any animals or signs of animals you see. Have students draw a picture of a snag and cut out flaps, then paste drawings of animals behind the flaps to reveal what’s hiding under the bark, inside hollow sections, or in carved-out cavities. Students can number the flaps and write explanations about the animals they have drawn.

TRAINING TIPS

“**Police Horses**” (**pages 32-36**) tells why these hard-working horses need a lot of training to do their jobs and remain calm in unfamiliar settings. Invite someone who works with horses—a student, parent, or community member—to talk to your group about how horses are trained (or visit a facility where training takes place). Encourage students to prepare questions ahead of time and, afterward, discuss what they learned.



Do You Know Dormice?



Read "Adorable Dormice" (pages 6-11). Then use what you learned in the story to fill in the blanks below.

A dormouse isn't really a _____. It is more similar to a _____.

Most dormice live in _____. Some are also found in _____ and _____.

You can identify a *garden dormouse* by its _____ ears, _____ eye markings, and _____ tail tassel.

Dormice spend most of their time in _____. That's where they find _____, build _____, and hide from _____.

Mama dormice usually have between _____ and _____ babies at a time. It takes more than _____ for the babies' eyes to open.

A full-grown dormouse is about the size of a _____. It can live up to _____.

Dormice face several threats. Their predators include _____. A bigger problem is when they lose their _____ as people cut down forests.

Tasty meals for dormice include creepy-crawlies such as _____ and _____. They also eat _____ and _____. They feast in summer, eating so much that their weight may _____.

In winter, dormice go into a deep sleep called _____. Their body temperature gets very _____, and their heart rate _____ down.

In _____, they wake up and start eating again!

Fine Ferrets



In "Ranger Rick's Adventures: Focus on Ferrets" (pages 20-23), Ranger Rick and his friends learn about black-footed ferrets. Read the story and then answer the following questions about these rare members of the weasel family.

Why do black-footed ferrets depend on prairie dogs? Give two reasons.

Why did black-footed ferrets nearly become extinct?

Why is the population of black-footed ferrets on the rise today?

Use the following facts to make a graph of the black-footed ferret population over time. Plot the three points on the blank graph below and then draw a line to connect them.

- In 1981, scientists found a colony of 100 ferrets in Wyoming.
- Five years later, disease struck and only 18 ferrets remained alive.
- Today, there are 1,000 ferrets in the wild.

