



Ranger Rick®

Educator's Guide

Educational extensions for the May 2008
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GUIDE TO CATERPILLARS

After you read “A Catalog of Caterpillars” (pages 6-13), research local species of caterpillars. Have each student create a field guide page for a chosen species, including a photo or drawing and information about its habitat, diet, and life cycle. Then compile the pages into your own “Catalog of Caterpillars.”

SPEAKING OF FERRETS

As you learned in “Who Are These Masked Bandits?” (pages 16-19), the survival of black-footed ferrets is closely tied to that of prairie dogs. Assign students various roles for a discussion about the comeback of ferrets and prairie dogs. Is it good news or bad? Roles could include a ferret, a prairie dog, a scientist, a rancher, and other stakeholders.

ART IN THE GARDEN

Want to see a photo of the giant butterfly in “Ranger Rick’s Adventures” (pages 20-23)? Check it out at pollinator.org/Crop_art_update.htm. Why not have some fun making your own “garden art”? For example, you might use flowers to spell out the initials of your school or create your own picture or pattern. For help in choosing plants that will attract different kinds of pollinators, read “Pollination Station” on page 24.

WHAT'S THAT?

How did you do on the quiz in “What’s Going On Here?” (pages 25-27)? There are interesting—and strange—sights to see in any natural place. If you have access to cameras, take students on a nature walk and ask them to snap photos of their oddest observations. Then have them research what they photographed and write an explanation. Make a booklet or bulletin board of the students’ photos paired with their explanations.

WOODCOCK WATCHING

You can read about woodcocks in “Quick Bits” (pages 30-32). Do they live near you? Show students how to use a field guide to find the winter and summer ranges of these birds. Then determine whether they nest in your location. If so, scope out some woodcock habitat and see if you can hear the sound of their “peents” or catch a glimpse of their amazing courtship display!

EXPLORING CAVES

Exploring a cave is a great adventure. After you read “Cave Kids” (pages 34-39), go exploring yourselves—in the library! Read a variety of books about caves and cave life. Then ask students to discuss whether or not they would like to explore a cave—and why.

CELEBRATE ENDANGERED SPECIES DAY

Endangered Species Day is May 16. (See “Fun on the Run” on pages 40-43.) It’s a time to celebrate the successes of the Endangered Species Act and learn how people are helping species that are still in trouble. Find more information, activities, and local events at stopextinction.org.



ANIMAL SAYINGS

In “Puntoons” (page 33 in the May 2008 *Ranger Rick*), you’ll see some funny drawings based on phrases about ants. There are lots of sayings with animals in them: “It’s raining cats and dogs.” “Busy as a beaver.” “Don’t count your chickens before they hatch.” Can you think of others?

1. List some animal sayings you have heard. _____

2. Pick a favorite saying from your list above and illustrate it.

Note: To find lots more funny animal sayings, look for the book *There’s a Frog in my Throat* by Loreen Leedy (Holiday House, 2003).



POLLINATOR HUNT

Pollinators are animals such as butterflies, moths, bees, and hummingbirds that drink flowers' sweet nectar. As they feed, they carry pollen from one flower to another. Is your schoolyard or neighborhood a good place for pollinators? Read "Pollination Station" (page 24 in the May 2008 *Ranger Rick*). Then take a walk and look for flowers in bloom. Fill in the chart below with your observations.

Flower's Name (if you know it)	Drawing of Flower	Color	Shape	What Kind of Pollinator Might Visit?	See any pollinators? If yes, what kind?

Would you say this area is a good place for pollinators to find food? Why or why not?
