



Educator's Guide

Educational extensions for the October 2010 issue of *Ranger Rick*® magazine

ANIMAL MASCOTS

"Dear Ranger Rick" (page 4) mentions the idea of animal mascots. Does your school have one? If so, discuss with students what the animal represents and how its qualities could translate into something a school would want to emulate. If not, invite students to make a case for why a particular animal would make a good mascot.

CAT CAMO

"Spot the Cats" (pages 6-13) offers an opportunity to compare the coat patterns of various wild cats. After a close look, investigate how the patterns help the cats blend in. Collect a variety of clothing or pieces of fabric, including some with spots. Have students wrap themselves in the fabric and play an outside game of hide and seek. Then discuss which colors and patterns were hardest to spot.

WINDOW ON THE PREHISTORIC

"Monsters of the Sea" (pages 14-19) describes prehistoric reptiles that lived in an ocean somewhat similar to today's oceans but different in key ways. Engage students in creating a "window" into this earlier time in the form of a mural or diorama that shows the ocean habitat and some of its inhabitants. Also check out the fascinating way in which James Gurney, the story's illustrator, assembles prehistoric models to paint from at [gurneyjourney.blogspot.com/search/label/Ranger Rick](http://gurneyjourney.blogspot.com/search/label/Ranger%20Rick).

"LEGEND OF THE GUARDIANS: THE OWLS OF GA'HOOLE" MOVIE

In theaters September 24th, 2010, *Legend of the Guardians: The Owls of Ga'Hoole* is an animated, 3D film from director Zack Snyder based on the beloved books by Kathryn Lasky. It follows Soren, a young owl who loves to hear his father's epic stories of the Guardians of

Ga'Hoole. Soren, along with some unlikely friends, soon embarks on his own daring adventure to find his heroes and save all of owlkind. National Wildlife Federation has teamed up with the film to extend its lessons and inspire kids and families to learn about wildlife and protect habitat. Find owl activities for kids, parents, and teachers at nwf.org/owls.

DISCUSS "THE BUZZ"

In small groups, have students choose one of the topics in this month's "The Buzz" (pages 22-23) to discuss. They can start with a question, such as: "Why try to grow a record-breaking pumpkin?" "How could a robo-fish be used?" "Do people, like orangutans, do things to make themselves seem bigger or more impressive than they might otherwise appear?"

HARVEST PARTY

Check out the ideas in "Harvest Party" (page 28). Then celebrate the delights of fall by throwing a class harvest party or planning one for families or a group of younger students.

BLOOD BATTLE

After reading "Got Blood?" (pages 30-36), hold a role-play debate about the merits of blood as a food source. Have each student draw a card from a set on which you have written the names of various blood-sucking animals, as well as animals that are preyed on by bloodsuckers and animals that simply eat other things. Include some relevant information on each card or have students research their animals. Then open up the floor for discussion, with each role-playing student adding thoughts to the debate about whether blood is a food source like any other or somehow different.



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KNOW YOUR SPOTTED CATS

Read "Spot the Cats" (pages 6-13 in the October 2010 issue of *Ranger Rick* magazine). Then see how well you know your spotted cats by answering the questions below.

1. There are nearly 40 species of wild cats in the world. Of these, how many species have spots?

2. Why might a spotted coat be helpful to a wild cat?

3. What are the three largest cats in the world? List them and describe their coat patterns.

4. Cats are hunters. What kind of spotted cat would most likely be doing the following:

Hunting and eating a monkey _____

Chasing prey at a speed of more than 60 miles per hour _____

Stashing prey in a tree _____

Catching a bird in mid-air _____

Fishing in a stream _____

5. The cats in the story live in lots of different habitats. Describe where each of the following cats lives and something special about it that helps it survive there:

MARGAY. Habitat: _____

What helps it survive: _____

SERVAL. Habitat: _____

What helps it survive: _____

SNOW LEOPARD. Habitat: _____

What helps it survive: _____





NIFTY NECKS

In the October 2010 issue of *Ranger Rick* magazine, you can read about a prehistoric reptile, the elasmosaur, with a very long neck in “Monsters of the Sea” (pages 14-19). You can also read about another animal with a nifty neck—the owl—in “Ask Rick” (page 20). Stretch your neck knowledge a little more with the questions below.

ELASMOSAUR. Number of neck bones: _____

Describe an elasmosaur’s neck and how the animal used it.

OWL. Number of neck bones: _____

Describe an owl’s neck and why this kind of neck helps an owl.

HUMAN. Number of neck bones: _____

Describe your neck and how it helps you.

GIRAFFE. When you think of nifty necks, you might think of a giraffe. Giraffes are the tallest land mammals, and their necks alone can be 6 feet long. But a giraffe’s neck has just seven bones. Explain why you might expect a giraffe to have more neck bones.

