May 2021  ** Award-Winning Fun **

What does an elephant do with its trunk?
Submit your drawings and photos online at RangerRick.org/digitalsubscription.

Or mail them to Ricky’s Mail
11100 Wildlife Center Drive
Reston, VA 20190

Include your name, address, and age on the back of your drawing or photo.

Use a QR reader to see more photos and drawings online.

Volunteer opportunities can be fun from the get-go!

Making a brightly colored gecko can be fun from the get-go!

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A kiwi can’t fly.

A naked mole rat can dig through ground that is as hard as concrete.

A sloth goes to the bathroom once a week.

Cape buffaloes have poor eyesight but a good sense of smell.

Some seahorses are as small as grains of rice.

Apes do not have tails.
What do you call a lizard with bumpy skin, great big eyes, and grabby toes?

There are many kinds of geckos. This one looks like the branch it is crawling on.

Mossy Leaf-Tailed Gecko

Turn the page to find out why geckos are amazing.
Geckos are the only kind of lizard with a voice. They “talk” to tell other geckos to stay away. Geckos chirp and bark. Some even say, “Gecko!”

Most geckos don’t have eyelids. They wipe their eyes clean with their tongues.

Watch it!

The largest gecko isn’t much bigger than a ruler.

Some geckos are tiny. This baby gecko will still fit on a finger when it is full grown.
Many geckos have special toes built for climbing. The ridges on its toes help this gecko cling to a wall.

Different kinds of geckos are different colors. This lets them blend into the many places they live. Blending in helps geckos hide in plain sight.
It was a sunny spring day in Deep Green Wood. Ricky Raccoon, Flora Skunk, Bizzie Beaver, and Mitzi Mink were talking about who was the bravest.

“I’m brave enough to sleep without a night light,” Ricky said.

“I’m brave enough to watch a really scary movie!” said Mitzi.

“How about you, Bizzie?” asked Ricky. Bizzie thought a minute. “I guess I’m not really that brave,” he said. “Mostly I’m just hungry. Which reminds me—when’s lunch?”

The friends laughed. “We already had lunch, Bizzie,” said Mitzi.

“Oh, yeah,” said Bizzie. “I forgot. Or at least my stomach did.”

“OK, Flora,” Ricky said. “How brave are you?”

“I’m super brave!” said Flora. “That’s because I have a secret weapon. I zap anyone who bothers me with my spray.” Flora lifted her tail playfully.

“Don’t aim that at me!” Ricky said, laughing. “Are you brave enough to go down to Last Chance Pond? I’ve heard that a scary monster lives there.”

“No monster is too scary for me!” bragged Flora. She swished her tail around. “Let’s go!”

A short time later, the friends were standing in front of Last Chance Pond. They couldn’t believe their eyes.

“I don’t see any monster,” Flora said. “All I see is a big mess.”

She was right. The pond and the ground around it were full of trash! There were old bottles and cans, plastic bags, food wrappers, used tires, and other garbage.

Suddenly, a big snapping turtle poked its head out of the water, snapping its sharp beak at Ricky and his friends.


“No trespassing!” the turtle hissed. “This pond may be a mess, but it’s mine! And I don’t like company.”
“Uh, OK, mister,” said Ricky. But then he had an idea. “Could we just stay long enough to clean up the pond?”

“Clean up the pond?” the turtle asked. “You’d do that for me?”

“Sure!” the friends all answered.

“It would be nice to live in a clean pond again,” said the turtle. “But when you’re done, you’ll have to leave.” The turtle disappeared under the water.

“That turtle isn’t much of a monster,” said Mitzi.

“But he sure is grumpy,” Bizzie added.

“Maybe that’s just how snapping turtles are,” said Flora. “Let’s get started!”

The four friends went to work. Bizzie and Mitzi swam around gathering trash that was in the water. Ricky and Flora picked up trash from the ground.

“Look!” Flora said, pointing. “There are flowers growing here. With all this trash, it was hard to notice them.”

When the friends were finished cleaning up, they all stood back to look at what they had done.

“It looks great!” said Ricky.

The snapping turtle popped his head out of the water. He looked around at his clean pond. He looked at the pretty flowers. And for a moment, he looked happy. “Thanks,” he said gruffly.

“You’re welcome,” said Mitzi.

The friends turned to leave. As they passed the sign that said, “Last Chance Pond,” Bizzie got an idea.

“Wait a minute,” Bizzie said. He went over to the sign and started gnawing at it with his front teeth. Then he stood back to show his friends his work.

“Second Chance Pond,” read Ricky. “You’re right. We have given the pond a second chance. Great idea, Bizzie!”

“I thought so, too,” Bizzie said with a grin. “Plus, I was hungry.” The friends laughed all the way home.
Animals that live near people need the same things as animals that live in the wild: food, water, and a safe place to stay. 

Most coyotes live far from people. But this one finds everything it needs on city streets.
Pigeons find water to drink from a fountain in a city park.

A backyard flowerpot makes a good home for a brown rat.

A raccoon dines on garbage it finds.
A frog can find the water it needs in this city park.

A falcon can see everything from its perch high above the city.

What wild animals have you seen in the city?

A bighorn sheep roams through a neighborhood looking for plants to eat.
Many sharks let small fish eat food scraps left on their teeth. Watch it!

Sharks don’t have to worry about cavities because they grow new teeth all the time. When one tooth falls out, another one takes its place.

Ever
WONDER?
Do sharks get cavities?

Bonnie and Chester were playing hide-and-seek one beautiful spring day.

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 . . .

Are you in the tree, Chester?

Are you hiding in the tall grass?

I thought I heard someone sawing a log.

No, I’m just hiding in one.

ZZZZ

THE END
Find 15 animals in the city.

Take Another Look
Look for the letter "P." How many can you find?
We live in a... **DESERT**

The desert we live in is in Africa. It is very hot and dusty here.

- **Aardvark** sniffs for ants.
- **Springbok** nibbles on grass.
- **Lion** walks through the desert.

**I live in a desert, too. Guess who I am.**

1. I like to eat little lizards.
2. I’m only as tall as a ruler when I stand on my tippy toes.
3. Members of my family take turns watching for enemies.

Turn the page to see who I am.
A little meerkat is always on the lookout for danger. If it sees an enemy, the meerkat will bark or whistle.
What does an elephant do with its trunk?