How many pages have birds on them?
Make an adorable animal pouch to store coins and other treasures.

RangerRick.org/Pouch-Pals

Submit your drawings and photos online at RangerRick.org/ridysmail.

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.

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Pandas eat almost nothing but bamboo.

A giraffe’s feet are as big as dinner plates.

A baby echidna is called a puggle.

Each kind of hummingbird makes a different humming sound.

Salamanders have poison in their skin.

An ibex can jump six feet straight up without a running start.
Everyone knows koalas and kangaroos. Meet eight Australian animals you might not know.

Cassowary (KASS-uh-wair-ee)
This huge bird lives by itself in the forest. It can’t fly, but it will kick anything that comes too close.
**echidna**
(ih-KID-nuh)
This funny little animal with a long nose is covered with sharp spines.

**Tasmanian devil**
This animal has one of the most powerful bites in the world. It will eat anything.

**laughing kookaburra**
This bird makes a call that sounds like a cackling laugh. **Listen!**

**platypus**
(PLAT-uh-pus)
This odd animal has a bill like a duck’s and a tail like a beaver’s.
frilled lizard
This lizard has a flap of skin on its neck that pops open to scare enemies away.

wombat
This roly-poly animal looks like a small bear. It lives in holes it digs with its claws.

rock wallaby
This animal lives in rocky areas where it hops from one rock to another.

Which Australian animal do you like best?
“Oh, yeah,” said Bizzie. “I’ve heard about them. If something scares or surprises them, they just collapse and lie still for a while.”

“That’s why I said you were playing possum when you were pretending to be knocked out,” said Flora.


“Opossums live right here in Deep Green Wood,” said Ricky.

“Then why haven’t I ever seen one?” asked Sammy.

“Because they come out mostly at night,” said Flora. “Lots of animals are up at night. They sleep during the day.”

“Hey, that gives me an idea,” said Ricky. “We should go on a night hike!”

“Cool!” said Bizzie. “Then we can see some night animals.”

Once it was dark, the friends all met back at Ricky’s house. Stars twinkled in the sky above the trees. They each held a light.

“This is so exciting,” said Sammy. “And a little bit spooky.”

“Wow, that was a fast recovery,” said Ricky, laughing.

“What did you say, Flora?” Sammy asked. “I was playing what?”

Flora smiled. “I said you were ‘playing possum.’ That’s an expression about an animal called an opossum.”
The friends started walking through the woods. Around them here and there they heard rustling noises, but they couldn’t see what made them. Then suddenly they heard a soft flapping sound go past them. Ricky shined his light up. In the beam of the light, they saw two bats flying around.

“What—what is that?” asked Bizzie nervously.

Suddenly a “Hoo-hoo, hoo, hoo,” rang out in the darkness.

“Oh, it’s an owl!” said Sammy, just as it took off to fly away.

In another instant the bats were gone. Ricky and the others kept shining their flashlights around.

“Look!” Sammy gasped. The others looked to where he was shining his light into the darkness. They saw two glowing yellow eyes watching them.

“Bats! How cool!” said Flora.

After they had walked a little longer, Ricky said, “Hey, look what I see,” as he shined his light on a nearby branch.

As they all looked, Flora said, “Oh, Sammy, it’s an opossum!”

The opossum turned its head to look at them. Its eyes glowed red in the light. As the friends watched, the animal slowly climbed away up the tree.

“Doing a night hike is fun,” said Ricky. “But it’s getting late.”

As they headed back, Sammy yawned. “I’m glad I got to see an opossum,” he said. “But I’m ready for bed!”
Tag Along with Elephant Seals

Elephant seals leave the sea and come ashore once a year. Let’s find out why.

These seals get the “elephant” in their name from their big, funny noses.

Female elephant seals don’t have big noses—only the males do.
The males bump chests to see who will be in charge of the beach.

When the females come ashore, they gather together in a big group on the beach.

Each female gives birth to one pup.
The pups grow quickly. A month-old pup is nearly as big as its mom.

The adults go back to sea when the pups can take care of themselves.

The pups stay on the beach for another month. Then they will be strong enough to swim out to sea and live on their own.
The spines on a cat’s tongue are made of the same material as your fingernails and toenails.

A cat’s tongue is the “purr-fect” tool for getting clean lickety-split. It is covered with backward-facing spines. When a cat licks its fur, these spines work as a hairbrush.

Bonnie and Chester were enjoying their last picnic of the summer.

That bird’s feathers are beautiful. I love the color red.

I love these juicy red tomatoes.

And I love these cute red ladybugs.

Before long the leaves on this tree will be turning red.

I’ll be more excited when these green apples turn red. I’m hungry.
Imagine an animal with a toucan’s bill, a kangaroo’s legs, and a leopard’s spots.

Imagine an animal with a rabbit’s ears, an elephant’s trunk, and a giraffe’s legs.

Imagine an animal with a rhinoceros’s horn, a porcupine’s spines, and a monkey’s tail.

What’s a kangaroo’s favorite type of music? **Hip hop!**

What’s a kangaroo’s favorite game? **Jump rope!**

Now imagine a name for your silly animal.

**__________________**
We live in the... **OCEAN**

The large body of water we call home is salty. Seaweed and sea grasses grow here.

**Octopus** swims through the water.

**Seahorse** wraps its tail around seaweed.

**Dolphin** leaps out of the water.

I live in the ocean, too. Guess who I am.

1. **My skin is as rough as sandpaper.**

2. **My head is shaped like a hammer.**

3. **I weigh as much as a piano.**

Turn the page to see who I am.
1, 2, 3 Eyes on Me!

A hammerhead shark can see up, down, and all around—except for right in front of its nose.

This shark’s eyes are located on the sides of its super-wide head.
What are these little woodpeckers looking for?

Watch RangerRick.org/WoodpeckerChicks