

Ranger Rick's ADVENTURES

RANGER RICK RACCOON, SCARLETT FOX, AND BOOMER BADGER ARE HIKING IN FLORIDA, HEADING TOWARD THE COAST. THEY'RE GOING TO SPEND A FEW DAYS AT THE BEACH. TO PASS THE TIME, THEY'RE TELLING JOKES.

Here's a good one: Why did the chicken cross the road?

Oh, Boomer. That joke is so old, the answer must be: "To get to the old chickens' home."

OK, how about this one: Why did the RUBBER chicken cross the road?

I don't know. Why?

She wanted to stretch her legs! Everyone knows that joke, too!

Boomer, I'll bet you don't know why the cow crossed the road.

No, why?

To get to the udder side!

Hey, look!

It's a gopher tortoise!

And look at that!

Wow! A red-cockaded woodpecker—a rare and endangered species!

There sure are a lot of wild creatures around here!

Yeah, but what's that up ahead?

A FEW MINUTES LATER...

Looks as if the wildness has come to a quick stop.

But maybe this road heads to the beach!

Maybe—but that snake is headed for TROUBLE!

Sorry, Boomer, but I need this—NOW!

SCREEEEEEECH

Stay back, little buddy—that's far enough for you!

Hi—I'm Sid. And by the looks of that hat, you must be the famous Ranger Rick!

Hi, Sid. And this is Scarlett, and that's Boomer.

Why were you trying to cross that busy road?

I was just looking for a new place to find food.

You never would have made it, I'm afraid.

So, what's a snake to do?

Your answer may be down there.

THE FRIENDS CHECK OUT A TUNNEL THAT ALLOWS WATER TO FLOW UNDER THE ROAD.

Pretty dark and gloomy in there.

Looks almost as scary as that road!

But it's the only way. Follow me!

I'm REALLY creeped out!

Hang in there, Boom—we're almost through.



Whew— there just has to be a better way for animals to get across a highway!

OK, Sid, you can be on your way.

Thanks, Rick! Bye!

I'm really glad we were able to save Sid.

Me, too. But think of all the animals that try crossing roads and aren't so lucky. It's very sad.

AFTER ANOTHER HOUR OF HIKING . . .



Whoa! Now we're seeing DOUBLE the trouble.

No way to make it across THIS highway alive.



Got that right. Check it out!



Let's walk down this way.



Looks like a parade!

Let's see where they're headed.



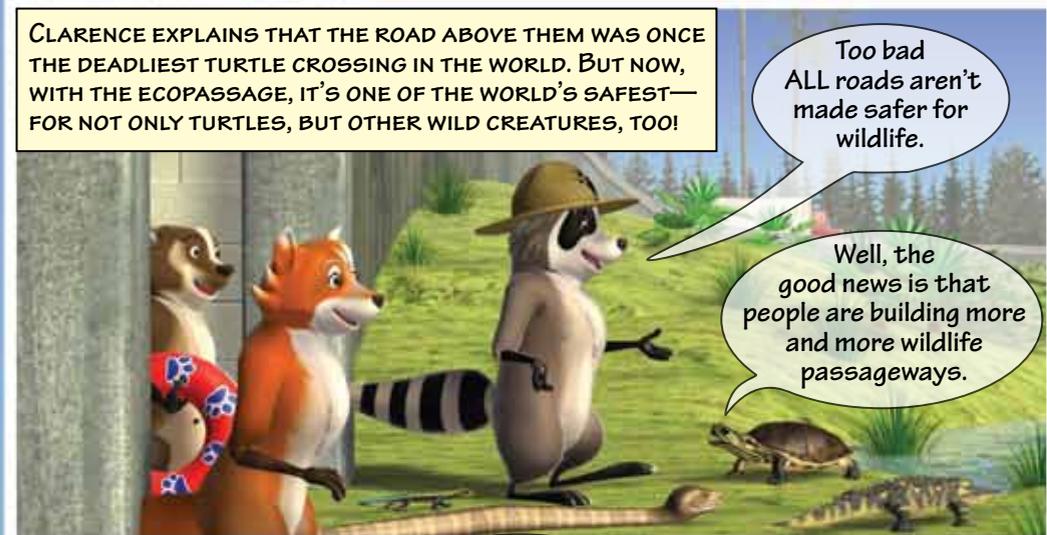
Hey, cool—it's Ranger Rick and the gang! I'm Clarence. You guys going under, too?

Well, I guess so.



Wow! It's an underground highway!

A highway built just for ANIMALS. Welcome to the Lake Jackson Ecopassage!



CLARENCE EXPLAINS THAT THE ROAD ABOVE THEM WAS ONCE THE DEADLIEST TURTLE CROSSING IN THE WORLD. BUT NOW, WITH THE ECOPASSAGE, IT'S ONE OF THE WORLD'S SAFEST—FOR NOT ONLY TURTLES, BUT OTHER WILD CREATURES, TOO!

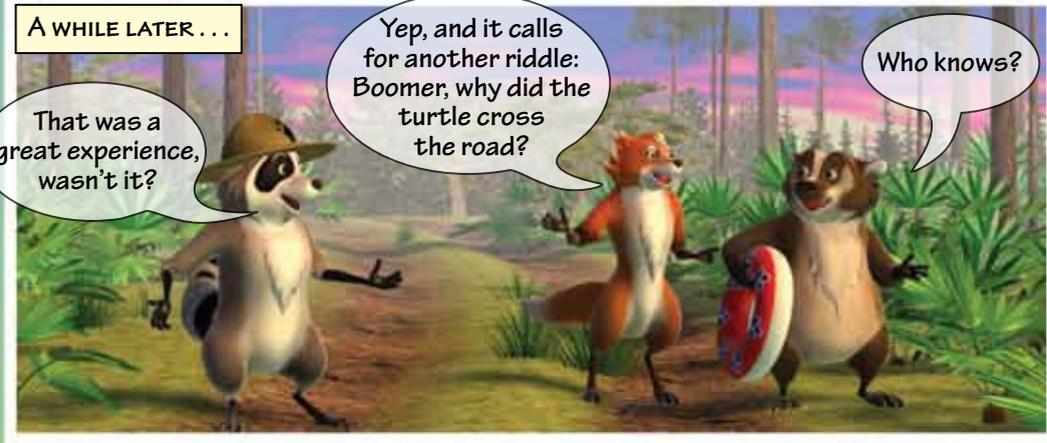
Too bad ALL roads aren't made safer for wildlife.

Well, the good news is that people are building more and more wildlife passageways.



That IS good news, Clarence. We'll be sure to tell our readers about it.

Please do! Everyone should know how important the passageways are. Well, gotta go. Have a great time in Florida!



A WHILE LATER . . .

That was a great experience, wasn't it?

Yep, and it calls for another riddle: Boomer, why did the turtle cross the road?

Who knows?



It didn't—it took an ecopassage instead!

Good one, Scarlett!

MORE FACTS

- Most U.S. highways slice through wildlife habitat. Animals in the areas must cross the highways to get from one part of their habitat to another.
- Every year, millions of wild creatures are killed on highways by cars and trucks. People also may be injured or killed in crashes caused by hitting—or trying to avoid hitting—wildlife.
- Some people are trying to help by building wildlife passageways. The passageways may go over highways the way bridges do or pass under them as tunnels. Walls or fences stop animals from walking onto the roads and funnel them toward the passageways.
- Florida's Lake Jackson Ecopassage was completed in 2010. Since then, it has been saving the lives of thousands of turtles, frogs, and many other animals.

