



Educator's Guide

Educational extensions for the July 2009 issue of *Ranger Rick*® magazine

NATURE'S FIREWORKS

In "Dear Ranger Rick" (page 4), a reader describes watching fireflies from her bedroom window. Summer is a great time to see lots of nature's light shows, from flashing fireflies to lightning storms, meteor showers, or moonlit waves. Encourage students to watch for these night-time sights. If they witness one, they could write their own letters to relatives or friends who'd appreciate hearing about it, or they could create something (a poem, a painting, a song or dance) inspired by the experience.

WONDERFUL WINGS

As you read in "Winging It Insect-Style" (pages 6-10), insect wings come in many styles and provide many benefits. Gather a selection of craft supplies and let students "go buggy" making insect puppets. Then have them create a skit with their puppets that demonstrates how wings are wonderful. Encourage them to look through the *Ranger Rick* article to find ideas for their skit.

HELPFUL HOUSEPLANTS

"The Buzz" (pages 14-15) explains that houseplants improve indoor air quality. Some of these "air cleaners" (such as spider plants, philodendrons, pothos, and snake plants) can be propagated from cuttings. Why not try starting some with students? They can learn data-recording techniques as they monitor growth rates. Then they can take the results home for holiday gifts or even sell them for a school fundraiser. Have students create tags that describe the plants' benefits. They could also decorate their plants by adding some cheerful "Buggy Buddies" like the ones on page 11.

COME TO MY CAMP

The girls in "City Cowgirls" (pages 18-25) came to this Wyoming ranch from a very different place: inner-city Washington, D.C. Ask students to think about where *they* live and imagine that kids will be visiting them from a place just as different from the students' home as Washington is from Wyoming. What would be new, exciting, or perhaps a little scary to these visiting "campers"? Have students brainstorm ideas for a one-week "camp schedule" for their visitors. Ask them to explain how each activity they choose would help the visitors experience, understand, and feel comfortable in this place.

ELEPHANT EQUIVALENT

Do you live near one of the beaches where elephant seals come ashore? (See "Back to the Beach" on pages 30-35.) If so, take students to see them! But if you can't visit these amazing creatures, there is surely some other interesting wildlife phenomenon in your area. Identify one—and then take students to see, learn about, and celebrate it. Perhaps, like the seals, it is also a success story. If so, you have even more reason to celebrate!

SOUNDS LIKE... FUN!

This month's "Fun on the Run" games (page 36-39) feature animal sounds. Discuss with students some reasons why animals make sounds (to attract mates, to communicate with family members, to warn away competitors or predators). Then challenge students to invent a game about animal sounds to share with their classmates. It could be a board game, a card game, an active running game, or any other creative idea they come up with.





UN-SEAGULLS

In “Mythbusters” (pages 16-17 in the July 2009 issue of *Ranger Rick*), you learn that not all gulls are seagulls. While many gulls live near the sea, other kinds live in different habitats. Could a gull live in a desert? In a tropical rainforest? On a volcano? It could in your imagination! Invent your very own gull by filling in the blanks below.

What is the name of your gull? _____

Where does it live? Describe its habitat.

What does your gull eat? How does it get its food?

Where does your gull make its nest? What is the nest made from?

In the box below, draw a picture of your gull in its habitat.





INSECT SKETCH

Check out “Winging It Insect-Style” (pages 6-10 in the July 2009 issue of *Ranger Rick*). Then, in the box below, try drawing an insect as a scientist might. Here’s how:

1. Catch a live, winged insect and put it in a jar to be your model. (A photo will do, too.)
2. Look carefully at the insect and draw each body part just as you see it.
3. Pay special attention to the wings. Does the insect have one pair or two? If there are two pairs, are they the same or different? What shape are they? How do they move? Make notes about the wings on your drawing.

Insect’s Name _____
(the real name if you know it, or just what you choose to call it)

