WHAT'S UP, MEERKATS?

TIPTOE INTO TIDE POOLS

BAT BRIDGE ADVENTURE • MEET SOME POKÉMON CRITTERS
Ranger Rick (ISSN 0738-6656) is published monthly, except January and July, by the National Wildlife Federation, a nonprofit corporation; 11100 Wildlife Center Dr.; Reston, VA 20190-5362. Periodical postage paid at Herndon, Virginia, and at additional mailing offices.

Membership: Ranger Rick is available as a benefit of junior membership in the National Wildlife Federation; annual dues: $24.95 (10 issues). Add $15 for addresses outside the United States. Send check to address that follows, or email RRKcustserv@cdsfulfillment.com.

Occasionally, we make our subscriber list available to carefully screened organizations whose goals and programs might interest you. (We do not release children’s names.) If you would like to be excluded from this service, please write: Ranger Rick; P.O. Box 3056; Harlan, IA 51593-0120.

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Printed in the USA.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Ranger Rick; P.O. Box 3056; Harlan, IA 51593-0120.

Photo taken under controlled conditions
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Look! Up in the sky! It’s a bird! It’s a plane! It’s . . . a bird! Meerkats know to keep a lookout for hungry hawks—especially when the pups are around. Find out more about life with meerkats, starting on page 6.

PHOTO BY SUZI ESZTERHAS

You’re looking at the eyestalks of a queen conch (KONK) hiding in its shell. This conch is a warm-water sea snail that can grow to be the size of a football!

PHOTO BY SHANE GROSS/NATUREPL.COM

This Cranwell’s horned frog appears to be all head! It has a mega-mouth that can clamp down hard on any meal it catches—maybe even a smaller frog. Its “horns” are just pointy eyelids.

PHOTO BY VINCE BURTON/NIS/ MINDEN PICTURES ©
Dear Ranger Rick,

FUNNY BUNNY
Every month, I look forward to your “Reader Riddles.” I like to read them out loud to my pet rabbit, Twitch. He’s a great listener!

Misha D., Mississippi

LIZARD FOR LUNCH
My brother and I were playing in our backyard when a hawk swooped down and landed in the grass. It was only a few feet away from me, and I saw its feathers glistening in the sunlight! All of a sudden, it snatched a lizard from the ground. Then we watched the beautiful hawk fly away into the clouds.

Annalisse M., Florida

FEARSOME FELLOW
I liked the article about venomous ocean animals in your October 2021 issue. Here’s an even more fearsome creature I imagined—the Aquatis occupo. It has pink spikes to fend off predators. And it has two poison sacs under its eyes. When it feels threatened, venom shoots out of its mouth. (See my drawing below.) Nobody should mess with this guy!

Gavin N., Tennessee

COOL CATERPILLAR
My sister thought she saw a snake in our yard. But it was actually a luna moth caterpillar! We gently picked it up and placed it in a large jar, along with some leaves. Soon after, it wrapped itself in a cocoon and stayed there for a few more weeks. Then my brother noticed a moth flying around in the jar! We took it outside and watched the moth fly off. It sure was cool!

Veronica S., Alabama

Send your letters and photos of you reading our magazine to Ranger Rick
11100 Wildlife Center Dr.
Reston, VA 20190-5362
E-mail: rick@nwf.org

We enjoy reading everyone’s letters. We wish we had room to print them all! All letters, drawings, and photos become the property of the National Wildlife Federation.

Tell Us!
Misha told us that he looks forward to our Reader Riddles page every month. What is YOUR favorite part of Ranger Rick magazine? Which pages do you usually read first?

Rangers: You can read our “Nobody Bothers Me!” article from last October. Scan this QR code or go to RangerRick.org/venom. –R.R.

Ranger Rick is printed by Quad in Sussex, Wisconsin. Pre-press by Quad Imaging. Ranger Rick is indexed in the Children’s Magazine Guide, which is available in libraries.

Editorial offices: Readers’ letters and other correspondence should be sent to Ranger Rick; 11000 Wildlife Center Dr.; Reston, VA 20190-5362. Please note: Ranger Rick magazine no longer accepts unsolicited article queries or manuscripts. Photographers and artists wishing to send unsolicited portfolios should first write for our photo and art guidelines. Any unsolicited material sent to us will be returned only if accompanied by a valid courier account number or a self-addressed envelope with sufficient postage. We accept no liability for damage or loss of any unsolicited material.

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What did the Jedi say to the tree?
“May the forest be with you.”
Jasmine O., Florida

Why did the chicken cross the basketball court?
The referee called, “FOWL!”
Fatima G., Pennsylvania

Who gives eye exams to kangaroos?
A hop-tometrist.
André C., Georgia

What fish always has a sore throat?
A sea-hoarse.
Atlanta T., Illinois

What did the Jedi say to the tree?
“May the forest be with you.”
Jasmine O., Florida

What do you call a big, gray mammal that wears a mask?
The Elephantom of the Opera.
Charley A., Texas

WANT TO JOIN THE FUN? Submit your favorite nature riddle to RangerRick.org/jokes or send your riddle with your full name and address to Reader Riddles; Ranger Rick; 1100 Wildlife Center Dr.; Reston, VA 20190-5362; E-mail: rick@nwf.org. We like reading all the riddles from our readers. We’re sorry, but there’s room to print only some of them. All submissions become the property of the National Wildlife Federation.
Hi! I’m Baruti, and I’m looking after my younger brothers and sisters. Caring for meerkat babies, or pups, keeps us adults busy!

Meerkat Daycare

Lunchtime! No sippy cups here, though. My mom and aunt hang out while a new batch of pups nurses.
GUIDING

Instead of strapping them in a car seat, this is how WE safely move the kids around!

PROTECTING

Meerkats don’t have electronic alarms around their homes as some people do. So watching for enemies, such as birds of prey, is a big part of our job.

BY BARUTI THE MEERKAT, AS TOLD TO ANNE CISSEL
PHOTOS BY SUZI ESZTERHAS
Team Parenting

Meerkat pups are very helpless. At birth, their eyes and ears are closed, and they each weigh about as much as a pencil! Lucky for them, they have a squad of adults ready to meet their every need.

Our home is in the deserts and grasslands of the southern part of Africa (see map on page 10). It’s hot and dry, and enemies such as jackals and eagles threaten us every day. We live in groups of up to 50 meerkats, which are called mobs. Mob members band together to find food, watch for predators, and care for the pups. It’s teamwork that keeps us alive!

One male and one female meerkat are the leaders—and are usually the only ones to have pups. The rest of us know that we’d better keep the bosses’ kids healthy and safe.

Meerkat Mealtime

Healthy pups need to have full bellies. At first, mom—and sometimes aunts—will nurse them. But soon, solid food is on the menu. Most of the day, we adults run around foraging, which

All the grown-up meerkats take turns bringing food to the pups.

This little pup is multitasking: digging and eating! Digging with its sharp claws is an important skill to learn.
means searching for food. The pups can’t keep up with the mob yet, so one or two babysitters watch over them while the rest of us chow down.

We love to munch on beetles, spiders, scorpions, and other creepy-crawlies. We also sometimes eat small reptiles, eggs, fruit, plants, and other treats. Our sensitive noses sniff out food in the dirt and under rocks. We get most of our water from the food we eat.

We take turns bringing tasty morsels home to the pups. Sometimes, we’ll bring a still-alive insect to a pup, so it can practice trying to catch moving prey. One day, the pups will forage, too, still under the watchful eyes of the group.
Early on, the pups stay safe below ground in burrows, which are networks of underground tunnels. Burrows aren’t just for pups, though. We adults dart down into them to escape predators and to keep cool. We also sleep there at night. Our burrows can have two or three levels, be six feet deep, and have up to fifteen entrances!

Even at birth, pups have long, curved, sharp front claws that are specially made for making burrows and digging for insects. We all have special coverings for our ears and eyes to keep out dirt while digging.

It’s usually very dry where meerkats live. But when it does rain, meerkats may have to deal with gooey mud—or deep water! Good thing the pups are born knowing how to swim (circle).

Meerkats eat mostly insects, but this pup went for a bigger meal: a frog!

Soon, the pups will need to learn to stand on their own two feet—really! We always have to be on the lookout for trouble: hungry predators and other meerkat mobs that want to take

AFRICA
where meerkats live
over our territory. So when we are out foraging, one or two of us will stand on hind legs and swivel our heads back and forth, looking for enemies.

If we spot something scary, we let out alarm calls that might sound to you like chirps and barks. To us, one call could mean, “Bird of prey approaching fast!” Another might be saying, “Enemy meerkats coming this way!” To escape danger, we hide in dead-end tunnels called bolt holes. The word “bolt” means to run as quickly as possible, which is exactly what we do! We build these bolt holes all around our territory so there’s always one close by.

These pups are play-fighting. It will help them learn how to fight real enemies when they grow up.

But we don’t always run and hide. We have sharp teeth and sharp claws, and we can sometimes scare away a bigger animal because there are so many of us.

The pups have a lot to learn about meerkat life. But the full-service daycare makes sure they’ll soon be ready to forage, dig, guard, and fight on their own!
Scientists have discovered a new kind of millipede that can have more than 1,000 legs. The word *millipede* is Latin for “thousand feet.” But until now, no millipede had been seen that truly deserved the name. The leggiest millipede scientists knew of before this discovery had “only” 750 legs.

Scientists found the super-leggy millipede about 200 feet underground. That’s about as deep as a 20-story building is tall! All those extra legs help the millipede push its way through the soil.

The newly discovered millipede is named after Persephone (pur-SEF-uh-nee), a Greek goddess. In an ancient myth, Persephone moves to the “underworld.” Scientists think that this species may have evolved from millipedes that lived on the surface long ago. But then, over millions of years, they might have moved underground when the surface became too dry for them. You’d think something with that many legs would be really long. But this millipede is only about as long as a grownup’s pointer finger!

Tasmanian devil babies (also called “joeys”) were recently born in the wild. This hasn’t happened there in more than 3,000 years!

Tasmanian devils used to live all over Australia but were wiped out by *dingoes*. (The dingo is a type of wild dog brought to Australia by early human settlers.) After that, Tasmanian devils could be found only in Tasmania, an island off Australia’s coast where dingoes don’t exist. They did well there for a while. But now many Tasmanian devils are getting sick with a terrible disease, and they’re at risk of disappearing altogether.

To help this endangered species, conservationists brought some Tasmanian devils back to mainland Australia. They live in a sanctuary, away from cars, dingoes, and other dangers. And now they’ve had babies!

Tasmanian devils are important because they eat dead animals, keeping the environment clean and free of disease. They also help protect other native wildlife by eating animals brought to Australia by people, such as feral cats and foxes. Since they’re so helpful, maybe we should call them Tasmanian *angels*!
A Walking Whale

When you think of a whale, you may imagine flippers and flukes—not legs, right? But in Egypt, scientists have discovered the fossil of a whale never seen before—and it had four legs! Other fossils of semi-aquatic whales have been found. (*Semi-aquatic* means that the whale could live both on land and in water.) But this brand new species is one of the earliest “walking” whales found in Africa.

This newly discovered whale species lived around 43 million years ago. It was 10 feet long and weighed around 1,300 pounds. That’s smaller than most of the whales swimming in our oceans today, but it had big, sharp teeth to catch large prey. Modern-day whales evolved from deer-like mammals that lived on land for over 10 million years. So, as whales gradually moved completely into the ocean over millions of years, their front legs turned into flippers and their back legs . . . disappeared!

Buckle Up, Goldfish!

Scientists at a university in Israel recently taught goldfish how to drive a small fish tank on wheels. That’s right—a goldfish can move a rolling aquarium around a room just by swimming around in it! The fish even avoids obstacles and can reach a target on a wall. Once it gets to the target, scientists give the fish a treat. The “car” moves in a certain direction, depending on where the fish is in its tank. The fish seems able to steer this way—as long as it knows there is a treat at the end!

A person usually practices driving for about a year before getting a license. But it took the goldfish only a few days of training to learn how to drive to the target. Scientists say that a goldfish driving in this experiment is more like a kid driving a small toy car. A child that can reach the pedals will learn very quickly how to move the vehicle. Still, goldfish may be smarter than we think—or at least very good at getting to food!

Kids like you can make a difference for wildlife and the environment. Meet some inspiring young heroes at RangerRick.org/superstars.

Do you have a story to share about helping wildlife and the environment? Email us at buzz@nwf.org. We love hearing everyone’s stories, but we are able to feature only a few of them. All submissions become the property of the National Wildlife Federation.
A rocky shore can hold a world of wild surprises!

by Kathy Kranking

The ocean rushes in. Waves crash against the rocks. And the shoreline is covered with seawater. That’s what happens at high tide. But at low tide (left), things look very different here. As the tide goes back out, some water stays behind in hollows, cracks, and low spots among the rocks. And that creates cool places called tide pools. A tide pool is like a wild aquarium, where lots of different ocean animals live together (small photo).

Life in a pool sounds relaxing, doesn’t it? Well, it isn’t always. At high tide, waves batter the rocks. Animals there have to have ways of hanging on so they aren’t washed away. At low tide, the animals may be exposed to air and the hot sun, as well as predators. Many have hard shells or other ways of protecting themselves. Tide-pool animals are tough!

Ready to take a peek into a tide pool? Just turn the page!
TOUGH MAMA

Why is this feisty green crab rearing up and raising her claws? She’s sending a message to the photographer taking her picture. “Back off, buster!” she says. The crab is protecting her orange eggs, which you can see tucked under her body. Later, her eggs will hatch, and the larvae (LAR-vee), or young, will float off with the waves on their own.

“COUSIN ITT”? 
Can you imagine peeking into a tide pool and seeing this shaggy thing? You might wonder whether it’s an animal or a plant. It’s actually an animal called a nudibranch (NOO-duh-brank). It gets its rose color from the pink, coral-like creatures it eats. Many of those creatures contain poisons, but the nudibranch isn’t bothered by them. Instead, the poisons get into its own body. And that makes it taste bad to animals that might want to eat it.
GREEN SPACE
A tide pool isn’t just a home for animals. Many seaweeds, such as this bright green surfgrass, live there, too. The seaweeds can be food, places to hide or have young in, or damp places to shelter in during low tide.

“FLOWER” POWER
This giant green anemone (uh-NEM-uh-nee) looks like a delicate flower “blooming” in a tide pool. But it’s not a flower at all. It’s a predator! All those finger-like tentacles are covered with stinging cells. If a small fish or other prey touches the tentacles, the stingers paralyze the prey. Then the anemone moves it to its mouth—the circle in the center of its tentacles.

THE HOLE STORY
A purple sponge grows on rocks, forming a thin crust. Though it looks as if it’s just lying there, this sponge is actually quite busy. See those little holes? Those are pores, which the sponge uses to take in water all day long. It filters tiny food bits from the water, then pumps it back out.
Prickly purple sea urchins move around slowly on tiny tube-like “feet,” which work as suction cups for holding on. A sea urchin uses its mouth, which is on the bottom of its body, to scrape tiny bits of food off rocks.

Colorful bat stars get their name from the webbing between their arms, which looks kind of like the webbing of a bat’s wings. When a bat star finds food, it has a super trick: It pushes its stomach right out of its mouth! The stomach surrounds the food, and special juices digest it. Then the sea star pulls its stomach and the food back into its body.

Here, a group of blue mussels and sea snails are grouped together in a tide pool. The mussels stay attached to the rock with “glue” that they ooze from their bodies. When the tide goes out, the mussels and snails may be exposed to air if they are higher on the rocks. They stay inside their closed shells to keep from drying out.
**FISH OUT OF WATER**

This tidepool sculpin fish looks as if it might be in trouble. The tide went out, and it was stranded. But don’t worry—this is “business as usual” for the sculpin. While it’s out of the water, it can breathe air. And it can still move around by wiggling its body. When the tide comes back in, it just swims away.

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**CHOW DOWN!**

For this snowy egret and other predators, a tide pool is like a big bowl of food! And when the tide goes out, tide-pool animals may be easier for predators to catch. The egret has snatched a yummy fish for dinner.

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*Turn the page for some tips for exploring tide pools.*
In the United States, tide pools are found up and down the West Coast, along the rocky shores of New England, and in Hawaii and Alaska. If you go tide-pooling, here are some tips to keep you—and the tide-pool creatures you find—safe.

1. Never go alone.
2. Go at low tide. As you explore, keep an eye on the tide and on the waves. An incoming tide can leave you stranded.
3. Never turn your back to the ocean. Waves move fast and can quickly knock you off your feet.
4. Wear shoes with soles that won’t slip. Walk slowly and carefully on slippery rocks.
5. It’s OK to gently touch some creatures. But don’t pick any up or take them home.
6. Try not to step on any creatures.
7. Move rocks gently to look under them. Then be sure to put them back as they were.
8. Many coastal places have rules for exploring nearby tide pools. Read the rules and obey them.

If you can’t go to visit tide pools in person, maybe you can see them in one of the many aquariums that have tide-pool exhibits. Here are just a few:

- **New England Aquarium**
  Boston, Massachusetts
- **Shedd Aquarium**
  Chicago, Illinois
- **Monterey Bay Aquarium**
  Monterey, California
- **Oregon Coast Aquarium**
  Newport, Oregon
- **Alaska SeaLife Center**
  Seward, Alaska
- **Waikiki Aquarium**
  Honolulu, Hawaii
Hey, Rick, could you toss me another ear of corn?

Whoa! Look at all those bats!

Take it easy, Boomer. Bats eat bugs, not badgers.

Why would I, Bonita Bat, want to fly into someone’s fur?

Oh, where are my manners? Let me catch some big ol’ bugs for you, too?

The friends introduce themselves to Bonita Bat, who tells them that she was just trying to catch a moth. She explains that bats eat a lot of moths and other insects when they go out hunting each night.
The next day, Rick and Scarlett decide to go kayaking. Boomer tells them he wants to stay behind to rest. But instead, he heads straight back to the nearby cornfield.

"I’m so hungry, I could eat a whole field of corn!"

The farmers know that certain moths lay their eggs on growing ears of corn. The eggs hatch into caterpillars that nibble away at the corn and ruin it.

Meanwhile, back near the bridge...

"Help! My pup is trying to fly, but he’s not strong enough yet. If he falls in the water, he could drown!"

"Oh, thank goodness!"

The farmers move to help with the caterpillar problem.

"I hope lots of bats move into this! Then they can help us with our caterpillar problem."

"Me, too."

"Yuck!"

Oh, no—someone’s coming!

This looks like a good spot.

It’s perfect!

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"Me, too."

"Yuck!"

Oh, no—someone’s coming!

This looks like a good spot.

It’s perfect!
Hmm… how could ANYONE believe something so silly?

So those people really thought you had rabies?

Yeah, can you believe it? And they thought sweet little Bobby might fly into their hair!

That thing is foaming at the mouth! It must be rabid!

In the summer, hundreds of thousands of bats live under the Congress Avenue Bridge in Austin, Texas. People gather near the bridge in the evenings to watch huge clouds of bats coming out to hunt.

The bats under the bridge may eat more than 10,000 pounds of insects each night!

Some people are afraid of bats because they think all or most bats have rabies. But most bats do not have the disease, and those that do almost never pass it on to people. And bats do NOT fly into people’s hair!
There are almost 900 magical creatures in the Pokémon universe. You might know them from card games. Or you may have seen them in video games, TV shows, or movies—battling each other in special tournaments across an imaginary land. But did you know that many Pokémon are inspired by animals and plants that exist in the real world? Let’s meet a few of these real-life “pocket monsters”!

**Pikachu**

**Type: Electric**

**Inspired by: Pika**

*Pikachu* is a mouse-like Pokémon known for lightning-fast moves and an electric tail. The tail of a real-life *pika* (PYE-kuh) isn’t electric—and it’s completely hidden by fur. But this little rabbit relative is as tough as it is cute. It lives on high-up, rocky mountainsides in North America, Asia, and Eastern Europe. While Pikachu can often defeat flying-type Pokémon, pikas are sometimes caught by hungry birds of prey. But here’s one cool power pikas DO have: staying safe from fires. Scientists found the little animals can survive raging wildfires by hiding out in gaps between the rocks.
**Shellos**  
*Type: Water*  
*Inspired by: Sea Slug*

This brightly colored, super-sticky Pokémon is based on the ocean animals known as *sea slugs*. There are many different kinds of sea slugs, but *Shellos* may look the most like the one shown here. Both the real animal and the Pokémon have heads topped with earlike *rhinophores* (RYE-nuh-forz). The sea slug uses its rhinophores to “sniff” the water.

**Drowzee**  
*Type: Psychic*  
*Inspired by: Malayan Tapir*

*Drowzee* senses dreams with its trunk-like nose. A *Malayan tapir* (TAY-pur) can’t sense your dreams as Drowzee does. But the tapir has a lot in common with the Pokémon, starting with its super-sized nose. The real-life mammal uses its longish, bendy snout to pick up food or as a snorkel to breathe when swimming. Drowzee’s look also seems to have been inspired by the tapir’s two-color fur coat.
**Sandslash**
*Type: Ground*
*Inspired by: Pangolin*

*Sandslash* is an expert fighter. But Sandslash’s real-world lookalike, the *pangolin*, would rather roll up than fight. Pangolins are scale-covered mammals found in parts of Asia and Africa. Their tough scales are made of *keratin* (KAIR-uh-tin), the same stuff that your hair and fingernails are made of. While Sandslash can shred opponents with its claws, most pangolins use their powerful front claws to tear open the nests of ants and termites to eat the insects inside. Another fantastic feature of a pangolin is its tail, which allows it to hang from a tree branch while it strips away bark in search of insects. The long tail also helps the pangolin to balance and walk on just its back legs, if necessary.

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**Victreebel**
*Type: Grass/Poison*
*Inspired by: Pitcher Plant*

*Victreebel* is often called the “flycatcher Pokémon,” and it’s based on the meat-eating *pitcher plant*. Like a pitcher plant, Victreebel can lure unsuspecting prey into its “mouth” with a sweet scent. And, once the prey is caught, the Pokémon digests the animal and turns it into food—just as a pitcher plant does. Both Victreebel and real-world pitcher plants live in tropical areas. But while Victreebel eats other Pokémon, pitcher plants stick to ants, flies, and other small critters.
Psyduck
Type: Water
Inspired by: Platypus

Don’t let the name fool you—Psyduck isn’t actually a duck. It wasn’t inspired by one, either. A platypus was the inspiration for Psyduck’s funny, duck-billed appearance. Psyduck’s psychic powers (which always come with a terrible headache) make it one of the oddest Pokémon. But the real-life animal is even stranger. Australia’s platypus is one of only two kinds of mammals that lay eggs! And unlike almost every other mammal on Earth, the platypus is venomous. Males make venom in glands that are connected to sharp, hollow spurs on their hind legs. They use those spurs to protect themselves and to battle other males during mating season. Ouch!

Chatot
Type: Flying
Inspired by: Yellow-Collared Lovebird

It has a music note for a head and a metronome (rhythm device) for a tail. But the rest of Chatot is all bird. And Chatot can mimic human speech as well as other sounds. Sound familiar? Yep—it’s a lot like a parrot! With its hooked beak and many-colored feathers, this Pokémon looks most like one particular member of the parrot family: a yellow-collared lovebird. But unlike some other parrots (and Chatot), lovebirds can’t imitate human speech.
Caterpie
Type: Bug
Inspired by: Caterpillar

Caterpie is a caterpillar in both name and appearance, so it’s no surprise that it was based on the *eastern tiger swallowtail* caterpillar. Both the Pokémon and the insect have markings that look like large, staring eyes. And Caterpie and the caterpillar each have an antennae-like *osmeterium* (oz-muh-TEER-ee-um). The special organ puts out a stinky smell that scares off predators. The similarities don’t end there! Eventually, the real-life caterpillar will form a *chrysalis* (KRIS-uh-liss) and become a butterfly. Caterpie evolves into a chrysalis-like creature called Metapod. And later, Metapod may turn into a winged Pokémon called Butterfree!

Fennekin
Type: Fire
Inspired by: Fennec Fox

Fennec foxes live in Africa’s Sahara Desert, and that region’s dry climate may have inspired Fennekin’s fire-based abilities. Both Fennekin and the fennec fox have very large ears. The real-world fox uses its big ears to draw warm blood away from its body to keep cool. It can also hear prey moving underground. But Fennekin uses its jumbo ears to puff scalding hot air at enemies!
The next time you see a Pokémon in a game or show, ask yourself: Where did it come from? Is it based on an animal, a plant—or something else?

**Krookodile**

Type: Ground/Dark
Inspired by: Gharial

A glance at those powerful jaws will tell you that Krookodile has a lot in common with the toothy reptiles known as crocodilians. This Pokémon was inspired by a strange-looking crocodile cousin called the gharial (GAIR-ee-uhl). Like Krookodile, a gharial has a snout that’s much narrower than a gator’s or a croc’s. The gharial spends more time in water than other members of the crocodile family and heads to land only to warm itself in the sun or lay eggs on the sand. Krookodile does have a few abilities that a gharial does not. For example, it has excellent eyesight and can stand on two legs!

**Mudkip**

Type: Water
Inspired by: Axolotl

Mudkip looks so strange, you might think it came straight from someone’s imagination. But Mudkip is based on the very real—yet equally strange—axolotl (ax-uh-LOT-uhl). An axolotl is a type of salamander that keeps its gills and stays in water its entire life. (Many salamanders start their lives in the water, then move onto land as adults.) In the wild, axolotls are found only in one small part of Mexico. They’ve lost nearly all the wild waters where they used to live, and they are in danger of disappearing altogether. While Mudkip’s powers include speedy swimming and super strength, the best power an axolotl could have is survival.
When baby sea turtles come out of their beach nests, how do they know to head toward the ocean?

Ryan C., Georgia

The little turtles start crawling toward the brightest thing they see. Since water reflects light, including moonlight and starlight, the brightest thing is usually the ocean. But if houses and streetlights are near the beaches where the babies hatch, that causes problems. The babies get confused and often head toward the electric lights—and away from the ocean. They can’t survive if they don’t get to the ocean. So people who live along sea turtle nesting beaches can help by turning off any lights that shine toward the beach during nesting season.

How do ants find dropped crumbs so quickly at picnics?

Tommy D., California

Ants are always on the lookout for food. When one ant discovers something tasty, it gets excited and scurries back to its nest. As it walks along, it leaves behind a smelly trail of stuff that oozes out of its body. At the nest, other ants smell the trail and follow it back to the food. Once these new ants reach the food, they get excited, too, and leave more smelly trails. Soon, lots of ants are hurrying out from the nest. And, as you’ve noticed, in no time at all, those crumbs are covered with ants!

Where do all the mosquitoes go in wintertime?

Emily B., Michigan

Most mosquitoes die off before cold weather hits. But some females may crawl into protected places, such as under tree bark. They hibernate there until spring.

Many mosquito eggs survive through the winter, and sometimes larvae (young) do, too. Of course, in places where it’s warm in winter, mosquitoes may be out all year round. 🐝
Rock-a-bye, orangutan, in the treetops!
(But in a leafy nest—not a cradle!)

No need to lie down to rest. Sperm whales sleep floating heads up!

Otterly adorable! Sleeping sea otters hold hands so they won’t drift apart.

With no eyelids to shut, do snakes get any shut-eye? Only with eyes wide open.

Don’t worry! This croc is fast asleep!

Looks like it’s HALF asleep...
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Welcome to the Great Lakes: 5 large freshwater lakes on the border between the United States and Canada.
See map on next pages.

**MOOSE MATCH**
Moose live in forests and wetlands around the upper Great Lakes. Each one of these on the left has a twin on the right. Match them up by their antlers.

**WHEEL-Y FUN!**
Four Great Lakes animals are spelled out in these “letter wheels.” Can you name each one? Hint: Turn the page and look for these animals on the map.
MAP IT OUT

Check out these locations on the map of the Great Lakes. Match the circled pictures to their locations. The first one is done for you.

1. Isle Royale
2. Sheboygan
3. Manitoulin Island
4. Pictured Rocks
5. Niagara Falls
6. Sleeping Bear Dunes
7. Apostle Islands
8. Thunder Bay

A. Lake Huron, Michigan
B. Lake Michigan, Wisconsin
C. Lower Lake Superior, Michigan
D. Lake Huron, Canada
E. Upper Lake Superior, Michigan
F. Between Lake Erie and Lake Ontario
G. Lake Michigan, Michigan
H. Lake Superior, Wisconsin

Wheel-y Fun:
1. perch
2. marten
3. eagle
4. muskie

Great Lakes =
A-1, B-5, C-7, D-2, E-3, F-4, G-8, H-6

Moose Match:
1-D, 2-E, 3-A, 4-B, 5-C

Map It Out:
1-E, 2-B, 3-D, 4-C, 5-F, 6-G, 7-H, 8-A

The Great Lakes region is perfect for outdoor activities. Read the ones at left and match each to its circled picture. Check the map for clues.
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Here’s how to remember the Great Lake names by their initials:

HOMES (for lakes Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, and Superior)

Or use this silly sentence to remember them in order from west to east:

Sally Made Henry Eat Onions.

Map It Out:

1-E, 2-B, 3-D, 4-C, 5-F, 6-G, 7-H, 8-A

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HELLO?

Is anyone out there?

Want to tell Ranger Rick a story or joke or ask him a question? Visit RangerRick.org/submit-a-video.