FRONT COVER: Can this grizzly bear cub tickle its own feet? Turn to page 6 to discover more about grizzlies and other bears.
PHOTO BY SUZI ESZTERHAS

BACK COVER: If you’re a hungry great blue heron in the Galápagos Islands, a baby marine iguana would be a great catch.
PHOTO BY TUI DE ROY/MINDEN PICTURES

PAGES 2–3: No wonder this spot in the Pacific island chain of Palau is called Jellyfish Lake. Here, you’re surrounded by big batches of golden jellyfish. Don’t worry—their sting is harmless to people.
PHOTO BY BRANDON COLE
Dear Ranger Rick,

Hawk Helpers

My family and I were hiking in the woods when we came across a red-tailed hawk. It had an injured wing, so it couldn’t fly. We carefully captured the bird and kept it safe while we waited for a Department of Natural Resources officer to arrive. Here’s a photo of my brother, Luke, and me with the officer before he took the hawk to a rehabilitation center (above).

Weston B., Ohio

Tell Us!

On pages 14–17, you can learn about life in a pond. Is there a pond or lake near you? Or maybe a river or marsh? Tell us about the wildlife you see when you go there. Why not create a colorful drawing of your watery place, too? Send your letters and artwork 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.

He’s a Winner!

Meet Doug Gimesy, the winner of our 2021 Ranger Rick Photographer of the Year Award! Do you remember “Wild Roommates” in last August’s issue? He took all of the photos of the rescued baby wombats in that story. (You can check them out at RangerRick.org/wombats.)

Doug is Australian and focuses on the amazing animals that live in his country. Here he is with a dingo pup on his shoulder (above). He told us, “You don’t have to travel far from home to experience some incredible wildlife.” In 2019 and 2020, we featured some of his spectacular shots of other Australian animals: little penguins and bats called grey-headed flying foxes. Many of the species Doug photographs face terrible threats, such as climate change and habitat loss. But he hopes his pictures will inspire people to take action to protect these animals. Doug also has “advice” for anyone who wants to take photos of bats. He says, “I’ve had lots of bats poop on me. Just don’t look up at them in awe while your mouth is open!”

Congratulations, Doug!

Rate This Issue

What do you think about this month’s issue of Ranger Rick? Scan this QR code to take our survey.

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, 11100 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.

Change of address: Send both new and old addresses to Ranger Rick; National Wildlife Federation; PO Box 3056; Harlan, IA 51593-0120. Allow six weeks for change to take effect.
What kind of sneakers do male deer wear?  
Ree-BUCKS.  
Isabella M., Pennsylvania

What happened when the skunk wrote a book?  
It became a “best smeller.”  
Mara Y., Texas

Where do dogs leave their cars?  
In barking lots.  
Quincy S., Australia

What kind of sneakers do male deer wear?  
Ree-BUCKS.  
Isabella M., Pennsylvania

Who steals soap from bathtubs?  
A robber ducky.  
Sydney B., Illinois

What do you call a cow that does magic tricks?  
The Great Mooo-dini.  
Danny J., Vermont

Why was the bee fired from the barbershop?  
It only knew how to give BUZZ cuts.  
Kipp V., Arizona

What’s a pirate’s favorite animal?  
An arrrrrr-madillo.  
Alex B., Virginia

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; 11100 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.
A bear is a bear is a bear, right? Not quite!

It’s true that all bears have certain things in common, such as furry bodies, huge claws, short tails, and long snouts with a great sense of smell. Also, most of them are omnivores (AHM-nuh-vorz), which means they’ll eat both plants and animals.

But bear species also have differences from each other, whether it’s how they look, where they live, or what their very favorite foods are. There’s no such thing as an average bear!
A grizzly bear, also called brown bear, is one of the biggest bears. When one stands up on its hind legs like this, it can be twice as tall as you are! Bears sometimes stand to pick up a scent or get a better look at something.

You may have seen photos of grizzly bears feasting on salmon in rivers. Fish is a favorite of grizzlies, but there are lots of other things on their menu, too. They’ll eat everything from plants to small mammals to insects!
A giant panda is easy to recognize. With its black-and-white fur, it looks very different from other bears.

If a panda made a to-do list, it would look a lot like this: *Eat bamboo. Sleep. Eat more bamboo.* Bamboo grows in the panda’s mountain forest home and is the bear’s main food. To get enough nutrition from bamboo, a panda needs to spend 10 to 16 hours a day eating it. The bear’s back teeth are flat to crush the plant’s leaves, shoots, and stems.
The name *sloth bear* might confuse you. Is the animal a sloth? Is it a bear? Turns out, it’s all bear. But when it was first discovered, a scientist thought it was related to a sloth because it has shaggy fur and long claws and sometimes hangs out in trees.

But a sloth bear isn’t anything like a slow-moving, sleepy sloth. It spends a lot of time busily—and noisily—searching for and eating food. A sloth bear’s year-round favorite meal is insects, especially termites, and the bear is built for eating them. Its claws are perfect for digging into termite mounds. And it has a gap between its two front teeth, so it can slurp up termites without teeth getting in the way.

Unlike other bear moms, a sloth bear mom carries her young on her back most of the time. The babies cling to an extra-shaggy “saddle” of fur that grows there. There’s nothing like a “beary-back” ride!
Cozy in the Cold

A polar bear is right at home in a world of ice and snow. It can keep warm in temperatures as low as 30 degrees below zero! Under a polar bear’s skin is a super-thick layer of fat. It’s like a built-in blanket that holds in heat. The polar bear also has two layers of fur: an outer layer of long hairs and a thick undercoat.

A polar bear stays warm in icy water, too. It’s a good swimmer that can paddle for miles. This snow-white bear hunts for food both in the ocean and on the ice. Its favorite meal? A plump seal!

Talented Tongue

The sun bear is the world’s smallest bear. If it stood up, it would be only a little taller than you are. Probably the most interesting thing about the sun bear is its 10-inch-long tongue. It’s a handy tool for lapping up one of the bear’s favorite foods: honey. First it rips open a tree to get to a bee nest. Then it uses its super-long tongue to reach the honey inside. Maybe its name should be “honey bear”!
Can you imagine taking a nap in the branches of a tree? This black bear finds it perfectly comfy. It even uses a branch as a pillow! As its name says, a black bear is usually black. But some may come in other colors, such as brown, cinnamon, blonde, gray, or even white.

Black bears aren’t just good at climbing. They’re also good swimmers and can run pretty fast. And when it comes to food, they aren’t picky at all. They’ll eat anything, from plants and insects to fish and mammals.

And that’s the end of this look at some not-so-average bears!
Quinn Reed (12) from Minnesota loves wildlife, and she’s always been especially interested in snakes. Last spring, Quinn helped with a snake survey in a prairie near her home. During a five-mile hike, she was able to capture three *bullsnakes* and to record information about their size and markings. The biggest one was seven feet long!

Quinn loves to help snakes, but snakes have helped Quinn, too. When she was little, she was fine just with her family. But when around other people, she would “freeze,” unable to speak or even move. Her parents discovered that this was something called *selective mutism*. After a therapy program and lots of hard work, Quinn now feels much less anxious around others. She also discovered that snakes help her feel especially calm and happy. She volunteers at a nature center near her home, where she helps take care of two snakes and some other animals.

Last year, Quinn spent a day giving a presentation about snakes to all seven of her school’s sixth grade science classes. It was a big deal for someone who once couldn’t even speak in class!

Quinn has helped many people understand snakes better. People think Quinn is brave to handle snakes, but she finds that snakes bring out the bravery inside of her.

**Scarlett’s Superstars**

Kids like you can make a difference for wildlife and the environment. Meet some inspiring young heroes at [RangerRick.org/superstars](http://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.
In Great Britain, the number of hedgehogs has been falling fast. One of the reasons: Hedgehogs are running out of room to roam. Each night, a hedgehog travels up to a mile on its short legs as it searches for food or seeks a mate. The problem is that many people’s yards and gardens have fences and stone walls around them, forcing hedgies to travel on dangerous roads. That’s why hedgehog lovers across Great Britain have come together to build “hedgehog highways.” They cut small holes in their fences and walls so hedgehogs can move safely from one yard or garden to the next.

Some people add stairs or ramps to help the hedgehogs reach the holes, as well as cute signs. In addition to making these “highways,” people are helping hedgies in other ways. They leave piles of leaves and logs for nesting and hibernating, and they build compost piles to attract insects and worms (which hedgehogs eat).

As many as 100 communities have created more than 12,000 holes to help the prickly little creatures get around—with hopes that more and more will turn up in gardens all over Britain.

The fluffy, snow-white animals here are a Svalbard reindeer mom and her two calves.

Reindeer live in the northernmost parts of North America, Europe, and Asia. (The ones in North America are called caribou.) Svalbard reindeer live only in a group of islands near the North Pole in Scandinavia. They are the smallest of all reindeer. In fact, you may stand just as tall as a fully grown Svalbard reindeer’s back!

We received lots of postcards with the correct I.D. The five we picked “out of a hat” were from Matisse Enjalbert, Rosa Mueller, Paul Spivack, Piper Vogel, and Henrietta York. Each winner will receive a copy of Into the Arctic Ice, the new book by the 2020 Ranger Rick Photographer of the Year, Esther Horvath.

Congratulations to everyone who found the right answer, even if your name didn’t get picked. You are all winners!
If you visit a pond, you might notice a few animals on, around, or above the water. Here, you can see underwater, too! Try to find all these pond critters in the scene.

**Answer key on page 39.**

*Many flying insects get their start underwater as nymphs (NIMFS) or larvae (LAR-vee).*

- **Dragonflies** hold their wings straight out.
- **Damselflies** hold their wings along their backs.
- **Yes, fishing spiders** can catch fish!
- **Caddisflies** are mothlike insects with long antennae (an-TEN-ee).
- **A predaceous** (pruh-DAY-shuss) diving beetle breathes underwater by carrying an air bubble.
- **It's easy to tell a backswimmer** by how it swims upside down!
- **A water boatman** has powerful "oars."

**Search**

- **Pickerelweed**
- **Water lily**
- **Green frog**
- **Duckweed**
- **Pondweed**
- **Green heron**

**Terminology**

- **Predaceous diving beetle**
- **Backswimmer**
- **Water boatman**
- **Pickerelweed**
- **Water lily**
- **Green frog**
- **Duckweed**
- **Pondweed**
- **Green heron**
Giant water bugs are big-time pond predators.

Don’t get dizzy watching whirligig beetles whirl!

Scuds are tiny shrimplike creatures. Can you guess why they’re also called side-swimmers?

Tadpoles grow up to be frogs or toads.

Water scorpions use the long tubes on their rear ends as snorkels.

You can tell a damselfly nymph by the three gills on its back end.

Dragonfly nymphs have wider bodies than damselfly nymphs do. And their gills are hidden.

Many kinds of caddisfly larvae live in cases they make from sand, pebbles, shells, leaf bits, or twigs.

Turn the page to find out how to peek into a real pond.
1. SCOPE IT OUT
Approach slowly so you don’t scare away creatures near the water. How many can you see? What are they doing?
Are any flying over the water? Wading? Skittering across the surface? Swimming in the water or moving along the bottom? For a clear underwater view, use a face mask, goggles, or a homemade water scope. Search along plant stems and look under rocks and logs near the water’s edge.

2. SCOOP ‘EM UP
Fill the pan and containers with pond water and set them in a shady spot. Next, use your net or strainer to catch small fish, insects, and other tiny creatures. Try these super scooper tips:
- Scoop and skim in different places—at the surface, along the shore, across the bottom. Check for wiggly creatures in the muck as the water runs out.
- Hold the net just under the water’s surface. Have a buddy hold a rock or branch found underwater over the net and gently shake or swish off any clinging creatures into the net.

SAFETY TIPS
- Tell an adult where you’re going.
- Take a buddy along.
- Stay near the water’s edge unless an adult is watching out for you.
- Watch your step! There could be deep spots, slippery rocks, or thick muck.
3. SORT ‘EM OUT
Empty whatever you find into the pan or containers. Here’s how to see them better:

Fill an ice-cube tray or plastic egg carton with clear pond water. Next, transfer the creatures from the collecting containers to the tray or carton. An eyedropper or paintbrush works well to gently pick them up, one at a time. Put each kind of creature in a separate section of the tray. Now see if you’ve captured something that:

- has no legs
- has six legs
- has claws
- has a shell
- has a tail
- is red
- is black
- wiggles
- swims sideways
- swims upside down
- stays on the bottom of the tray
- stays at the top of the water

Note: Check pages 14-15 and a pond life field guide to ID what you’ve caught.

4. LET ‘EM GO
Gently lower the containers to the pond water and let the creatures swim or float out on their own.

Come back at different times of the year to see what’s new or changed. Make sure to keep the area clean, too. Carry out any trash or litter you find.

Want to find out how to make your own water scope? Go online to RangerRick.org/water-scope for details.

Water Explorer’s Kit
- strainer, dip net, or aquarium fish net
- shallow white plastic pan
- small white plastic containers
- white plastic ice-cube tray or plastic egg carton
- eyedropper
- Small paintbrush
- hand lens or magnifying glass
- nature journal and pencil
This amazing lizard, a gecko, can climb walls and hang upside down. How? Its toe pads are covered with millions of tiny bristles, called setae (SEE-tee). The setae allow the gecko’s feet to cling to a surface, then peel right back off. These fantastic feet inspired a kind of tape and a wall-climbing robot with gecko-like feet!

Shellfish called mussels (above) stick to rocks with flimsy-looking threads that don’t break even when rough waves smash them. Scientists are studying the sticky stuff at the ends of these threads. They hope it will help them make a waterproof glue that doctors can use during surgery.
Spiders, whales, and lots of other animals—and plants—have inspired some incredible inventions.

**HARD HEAD**
Some woodpeckers can peck at a tree 20 or more times per second. Do the birds get humongous headaches? Nope. Their beaks and skulls can absorb, or “soak up,” the force of each blow. By copying a woodpecker’s super-tough noggin, engineers think they can make stronger helmets, cars, airplanes—even spaceships!

**KEEP IT CLEAN**
Plants can inspire inventions, too! The lotus often grows in muddy ponds, yet its leaves stay clean. Tiny bumps on each leaf’s surface keep water from sticking to it. The water forms droplets that roll right off, taking dirt with them. Scientists designed a paint that acts in the same way. If the paint is on the outside of a building, dirt simply runs off the walls every time it rains!
SLEEK SKIN

Navy ships had a problem: barnacles! Barnacles are shelled sea creatures that often stick to the bottoms of boats in large numbers. This makes boats heavier and slower, which means they use more fuel. In the past, the Navy used harmful chemicals to remove barnacles. But now the Navy has a better option: a coating for ships that works like the skin of a shark! Shark skin has tiny, tooth-like scales called denticles (circle). Denticles make it hard for barnacles and other sea life to get a grip. Now the ships use less fuel, which is better for the environment!
**SHINY WINGS**

The wings of the South American blue morpho butterfly are iridescent (ee-ruh-DESS-ent). That means they reflect light in a way that makes the colors shimmer and shine. Scientists have figured out a way to put the morpho's special iridescence on paper money (circle). In the future, countries may print their money this way. That'll make it hard for someone to make fake bills. Step aside, Spider-Man! It’s a butterfly that might stop bad guys in real life.
QUIET DIVER

When Japan’s super-fast “bullet” trains were built, they had a noisy problem. Whenever one sped into a tunnel, it pushed air in front of it. As the train zoomed out of the tunnel, the air blasted out and created a giant sound wave. BOOM! A scientist saw that a bird called a kingfisher barely made a splash when it dived into water. He redesigned the train’s front to be as pointed and sleek as a kingfisher’s head and beak. The train slid through the air instead of pushing it—with no BOOM!
WEB WINDOWS
Millions of birds die or are injured each year when they fly into windows. They don’t see the glass! Scientists noticed that birds don’t usually fly through orb-weaver spider webs. It turns out that these webs reflect ultraviolet light, a type of light birds can see but humans can’t. A glass maker made a coating for window glass that is invisible to us but looks similar to a spider web to birds. And it works—birds steer clear.

GRABBY GADGET
An elephant’s trunk has thousands of muscles and can lift hundreds of pounds. The trunk’s skin is so sensitive, the elephant can feel an object and judge how tight it needs to hold it. Scientists have now invented a trunk-like robot arm that is strong, bendy, and sensitive. It might be used for jobs such as picking fruit or rescuing someone trapped in a tight space.
A humpback whale is at least as big as a school bus but is surprisingly graceful. It can turn in tight circles to snag the tiny sea creatures it feeds on. Strangely enough, those bumps on its flippers (above) help the whale move around more easily. Now scientists are using this idea on windmills, so the windmills can produce more clean power, more quickly. What a whale of an idea!

TONY WU/NATUREPL.COM (24T); ASHLEY COOPER/NATUREPL.COM (24B); INGO ARNDT/NATUREPL.COM (25TR); COURTESY MICKPEARCE.COM (25B)
Some kinds of African termites build towering chimneys out of mud to make sure their underground nests stay comfortable. Just as we do, the termites need oxygen and to keep their home at the right temperature and humidity level. The chimney works as an air conditioner. How? It carries air from the bottom to the top, using natural air currents to make a kind of “lung.” It gets rid of stale air and keeps the nest at a steady temperature and the air fresh. An architect designed a building in Africa that copies the termite towers. It stays at a comfortable temperature and uses way less energy than a similar building next door. That means less pollution, too!
Ranger Rick and Scarlett Fox are headed to Sunny Meadow for a picnic. They want Boomer to come but are having trouble convincing him.

The friends finally convince Boomer to go with them. But he’s still nervous.

The flowers are all so pretty.

Sure, I would. No bees? Yes, please!

Do you really mean that?

Sure do—HEY, what are you doing?!

Well, you said you wanted to live in a world without bees. Without bees, there would be no raspberries to make the jam on the sandwich.

Fine, I’ll just have an apple—what?!

Nope, no apples either.
C'mon, Boomer! Why won't you come with us? The flowers are all so pretty. Oh, I don't think you would like that, Boomer. Ugh, you know what? I wish there were no bees in the world at all!

Boomer, relax! That was just a fly. Yikes!

The Buzz on Bees

Ranger Rick and Scarlett Fox are headed to Sunny Meadow for a picnic. They want Boomer to come but are having trouble convincing him. The friends finally convince Boomer to go with them. But he's still nervous.

Normally, bees won't bother you if you don't bother them. Do the bees know that? Boomer, that was an accident—you sat on the bee!

That's the problem! Flowers mean bees. And bees mean stingers! Remember that I got stung by a bee last summer?

Yeah, the meadow will be so pretty with all the wildflowers blooming.

Nope, no apples either. Fine, I'll just have an apple—what?!

Well, you said you wanted to live in a world without bees. Without bees, there would be no raspberries to make the jam on the sandwich.

Sure do—Hey, what are you doing?!

Sure, I would. No bees? Yes, please!

Do you really mean that?

Oh. Well, I guess bees ARE pretty important.

We sure are!

Hi! I'm Bitsy Bee. Don't worry, I won't hurt you.

Hi, Bitsy. I'm Rick, and this is Scarlett and Boomer.

What happened?

Nice to meet you all. I'm new in the neighborhood. I had to move here after what happened in Blossom Hollow.

Follow me. I'll show you.

Bees are one of the animals that help plants make fruits.

Ranger Rick explains that plants need pollen from other plants to make seeds and fruits. When a bee lands on a flower to drink nectar, some pollen sticks to the bee. As the bee moves from flower to flower, it spreads the pollen. That's called "pollinating."

Bees are one of the animals that help plants make fruits.

Well, I know I can at least have some pie— Oh, come on!

No blueberries to make the pie, sorry!

Rick explains that plants need pollen from other plants to make seeds and fruits. When a bee lands on a flower to drink nectar, some pollen sticks to the bee. As the bee moves from flower to flower, it spreads the pollen. That's called “pollinating.”

Oh. Well, I guess bees ARE pretty important.

We sure are!

Hi! I'm Bitsy Bee. Don't worry, I won't hurt you.

Hi, Bitsy. I'm Rick, and this is Scarlett and Boomer.

What happened?

Nice to meet you all. I'm new in the neighborhood. I had to move here after what happened in Blossom Hollow.

Follow me. I'll show you.
Now that I know how important bees are, I’ve changed my mind. Hey, you said you wanted a world without bees, remember? Well, diseases are harming us. And so are pesticides that people spray. Even climate change hurts us, by changing when flowers bloom. I have an idea for how we can help. We can find a sunny spot near Blossom Hollow and plant a garden full of plants that bees love! That would be great. Thank you! That’s a good idea, Rick! Hey, you said you wanted a world without bees, remember? Now that I know how important bees are, I’ve changed my mind. I used to want to tell bees to “buzz off.” Now I want to tell them, “Thank you.” Well, diseases are harming us. And so are pesticides that people spray. Even climate change hurts us, by changing when flowers bloom. This is terrible, Bitsy.

Well, goodbye, everyone. It was nice meeting you.

Bye, Bitsy!

RANGER RICK’S FIELD NOTES

- Bees aren’t the only animals that pollinate plants that are important to people. Bats, butterflies, moths, hummingbirds, and other animals are pollinators, too.

- Bees and other pollinators need habitat: places to find food, water, nesting places, and shelter. People take over habitat that pollinators need by clearing land for towns, roads, and farms.

- National Pollinators Week this year is June 20-26. You can celebrate by helping pollinators in your own yard. Visit RangerRick.org/pollinators to find out how. To order the best plants for pollinators in your area, have your parents visit GardenforWildlife.com/rr.

Huh? Why is it called Blossom Hollow? I don’t see any blossoms. Where there used to be blossoms there are now buildings. That’s why I had to move.

This is terrible, Bitsy.

Like what?

Well, goodbye, everyone. It was nice meeting you.

Bye, Bitsy!

The friends follow Bitsy until they come to the top of a hill that overlooks Blossom Hollow.

Well, diseases are harming us. And so are pesticides that people spray. Even climate change hurts us, by changing when flowers bloom.

Huh? Why is it called Blossom Hollow? I don’t see any blossoms.

Where there used to be blossoms there are now buildings. That’s why I had to move.

This is terrible, Bitsy.

Well, goodbye, everyone. It was nice meeting you.

Bye, Bitsy!

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Omari carefully removes a cone-flower from its pot. After he plants it, its nectar will feed visiting bees and butterflies. Later, birds will eat its seeds.
In 2019, some people in the community created this “nature play space”: a healthy, welcoming spot for city wildlife. Just as important for the kids who live nearby, it is also a safe, fun place to play.

At first, the space was just an empty lot, littered with trash that people had dumped. “When we first started the project, we took twenty mattresses out of there—and a bunch of car tires,” says Anthony Pressley. He was the head of the Druid Heights Community Development Corporation, the neighborhood group that wanted to fix up the space.

Local wildlife needed a place to live. Local kids needed a place to climb, run, and explore. So the community came up with a plan to build something that would be both!

A busy, bustling city can be a tough place for birds, butterflies, and other wildlife to survive. Connected houses and businesses may stretch for blocks and blocks, with no green spaces between them. Animals struggle to find food or shelter.

But visit Druid Heights—a neighborhood in Baltimore, Maryland—and you’ll find a surprise in bloom. Tucked between four-story buildings is a wildlife oasis!
Let’s Get Planting!

A landscape architect came up with a design for the lot. Local groups—including the National Wildlife Federation, the group that publishes Ranger Rick—helped raise money to pay for the project. Then people got to work! They built a walking path, a wooden bridge, and a spiraling stone labyrinth. In another spot, they added a row of uneven tree stumps: a perfect place for kids to have fun.

Volunteers also planted native plants—ones that grow naturally in the area. Those plants aren’t just beautiful. They also make good food and shelter for the local birds, bees, butterflies, and other animals. At the lowest part of the lot, people planted a rain garden to collect water that runs off nearby streets and roofs. There, the polluted water soaks into the soil, rather than flowing out to the Chesapeake Bay.

Soon, the project was complete! The planners named it the Elijah E. Cummings Nature Play Space, after a famous civil rights leader and U.S. congressman. Last fall, volunteers from the neighborhood, a local university, and the National Wildlife Federation gathered in Druid Heights. The play space was two years old, and it was ready for a spruce-up! People picked up...
Kayla plants black-eyed Susans along a wall that borders the play space. The bright flowers make great food for hungry bees and birds.

Visitors to the play space can walk this labyrinth made of spiraling stepping stones.

Purple asters seem to glow in the setting sun at the Elijah E. Cummings Nature Play Space.

litter, added new signs, and planted 50 more native plants. (The photos in this article are from the cleanup day.)

Now, the once-empty lot is full of flowers and fun. With rows of houses towering over it in every direction, the blooming play space feels like a secret garden in the city!
Lying back in the cool grass, a mother *bonobo* (buh-NOH-boh) gives her baby a playful toss in the air. Bonobos are great apes—members of the same group as chimpanzees, gorillas, and orangutans. Scientists once thought bonobos were small chimpanzees. But now we know they’re a species all their own. These African primates are famously friendly and playful.

What do you think Mama Bonobo is saying here? And what is her baby saying? Send your funny ideas to

Say What?
Ranger Rick
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These six piggies are having fun making a giant pizza. Use the clues to figure out who's who. Write each piglet's initial on its shirt. (S is already on Squealer’s shirt.)

**Clues**
- Squealer is straight across from Oinker.
- Grunt is on Squealer’s right (not your right) and next to Yelpy.
- Hoggy is straight across from Yelpy and next to Piggy.
Why do pigs wallow in mud?

To find out, copy the words for each puzzle piece where they fit on this wild boar. Then read the message.

WORD WIZARD

Help Pigwiz change a hog and pig into other animals. For each one, start at the top and change one letter at a time to make new words. The clues will help you.

H O G
- - - not cold
- - - to spoil
- - - large mouse cousin

P I G
- - - deep hole
- - - soup pan
- - - small bed
- - - animal that gives milk
All pigs have bendable snouts with flat ends. But not all pigs look alike.

Check out these amazing wild pigs! Fit the red part only of each one’s name into the puzzle below. Careful—some names fit in more than one place, so use the letters already in the puzzle to help you find the right places.

Use the numbers in the puzzle to crack the code and write the name of this wild pig.
What do you get if you cross a pig with a toad? (It’s one of the animals in the game at left.)

What do you get if you cross a pig with a centipede? (Cross off the letters in the word PIG and write the leftover letters in the blanks below.)

What do you get if you cross a pig with a tree? (Cross off the letters in the word HOG and write the leftover letters in the blanks to the right.)

There are many different breeds of farm pigs. Here’s how to find out the name of this all-American breed: Each number in the code below stands for a missing letter in the alphabet. Fill in the blanks with the correct missing letters.

ANSWER KEY FOR POND SEARCH (PAGES 14–15)
1 predaceous diving beetle
2 dragonfly
3 damselfly
4 fishing spider
5 caddisfly
6 pond snail
7 water strider
8 whirligig beetle
9 water scorpion
10 backswimmer
11 water boatman
12 giant water bug
13 leech
14 scud
15 tadpole
16 damselfly nymph
17 dragonfly nymph
18 caddisfly larva
Iguana eat you!