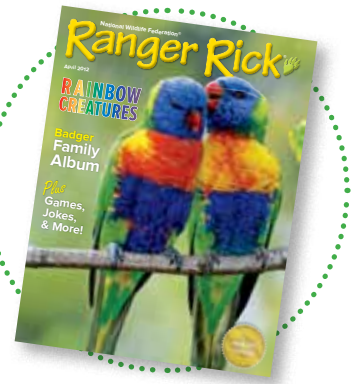


Educator's Guide



Educational extensions for the April 2012 issue of *Ranger Rick*® magazine

FROG CHORUS

When you read “**The Froggie Band**” (page 5), can you connect the words in the poem to the sounds of real frogs calling in spring? Take students outside to hear these calls for themselves (or play recordings). Then make your own frog band! For example, blow across a pop bottle (bullfrog), pluck a rubber band (green frog), run a finger up a comb (chorus frog), and shake some jingle bells (spring peeper). Stage a performance!

MAKE RAINBOWS

Read “**Living Rainbows**” and “**Chasing Rainbows**” (pages 6–11). Then discuss with students how white light is split to create rainbow colors. Experiment to make your own rainbows with a garden hose and other objects (such as a prism or a clear glass filled with water). Conclude your rainbow study by playing Rainbow Bingo (page 11) as you search for all the colors of the rainbow outside.

ON THE OTHER HAND

In “**The Buzz**,” read “**Left-Pawed, Right-Finned**” (page 13). Then ask students to devise a method to test the “handedness” of a class pet or another accessible animal. For example, you could observe fish in an aquarium at school, or students with pet cats could conduct an experiment at home and share the results. Follow the steps of the scientific method, forming a hypothesis, testing it, and drawing a conclusion.

ANIMAL WORDS

In “**Boomer’s Brag Book**” (pages 14–19), Boomer mentions that the word “badger” can mean pester or bother. Brainstorm a list of other common words or

phrases derived from animals. For example, consider “horse around,” “clam up,” “wolf down,” “pig out,” “outfox,” “eagle-eyed,” and “bull-headed.” Discuss how the words’ descriptive power comes from our understanding of the animals’ characteristics. Encourage students to use these kinds of words to enhance their own writing.

WE ARE FAMILY

In “**Woo-Hoo . . . Whoopers!**” (pages 24–28), readers learn that whooper swan families stick together and even migrate as a group. Ask students to discuss or write about the concept of family. How does family togetherness help the whoopers? How do the members of students’ own families help each other? What activities do they do together? What does it mean to be a family?

SURVIVAL STRATEGY: TRICKERY

Read “**Fakers and Foolers**” (pages 30–35). Ask students to research other animals that survive using similar tricks. Have them share their examples with the group. Then use these examples to discuss how camouflage and mimicry are adaptations that help animals avoid predation and/or hunt successfully.

SIGNS OF SPRING

Can you spot some signs of spring in the “**Fun on the Run**” games (pages 36–38)? How about in your own neighborhood? Start a phenology monitoring project in which you create records of key seasonal events that you can track from year to year. You might also want to add your efforts to a citizen science program such as the USA National Phenology Network (usanpn.org) or Project Budburst (neoninc.org/budburst).



Badger Bragging



Boomer Badger has some new baby badger cousins. Read "Boomer's Brag Book" (pages 14-19) to find out all about them. As sometimes happens with bragging, though, the truth got s-t-r-e-t-c-h-e-d in some of the sentences below. Use what you learned in the story to rewrite the false ones to make them true. If a sentence is already correct, just write "true."

1. A mama badger usually has around 13 babies at a time.

2. Baby badgers grow up quickly. They're ready to be on their own just a few weeks after they are born.

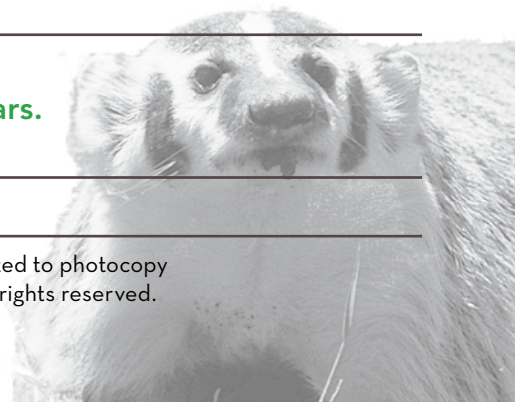
3. Baby badgers love to dig in the dirt. It's good practice, because someday they'll need their digging skills to catch their food.

4. Badgers dig burrows that can be up to 100 feet long and 30 feet deep.

5. One badger might use hundreds of different burrows.

6. A mother badger may move her babies to a different burrow every day.

7. Badgers catch and eat snakes, rodents, antelope, and small bears.



Who Do You Think You're Fooling?



Read "Fakers and Foolers" (pages 30-35). Then use what you learned in the story to put the undersea animals into categories. There are three categories of tricks. Choose the animal that matches each description and write its name on the blank line. All the animals are listed in the box. You'll use some of them more than once.

- | | | |
|---------------|---------------|----------------------|
| Sea star | Mimic octopus | Saber-toothed blenny |
| Butterflyfish | Frogfish | Sea cucumber |
| Pufferfish | | |

Animals That Look Like Other Animals

Looks like something harmless _____

Looks like something helpful _____

Can look like lots of different animals _____

Animals That Use Surprise As a Defense

Squirts guts

Squirts ink

Animals That Can Recover from an Attack

Has a fake eye to prevent attacks to its head _____

Can grow back guts after squirting them out _____

Can grow back a missing arm—or a whole body from one arm _____

Which of these tricks would you most like to have?

How would you use it?

