



# Ranger Rick

# EDUCATOR'S GUIDE



EDUCATIONAL EXTENSIONS FOR THE SEPTEMBER 2017 ISSUE OF RANGER RICK® MAGAZINE

## CELEBRATE CATS

Before reading “Every Day Is Caturday,” pages 6–10, ask students to help you define the word “Caturday.” Point out that it is a combination of “cat” and “Saturday,” and that people first used the word to represent the day of the week (Saturday) when they would celebrate cats by posting on special Internet sites lots of cat photos with funny captions.

After children have read “Every Day Is Caturday” ask them to explain what the author meant by the title. Then enhance students’ comprehension of the story by assigning the Which Cat Is That? student page.

Wrap up the lesson by celebrating “Caturday” for a week in your classroom. Encourage students to bring in photos of cats (wild and/or domestic), write funny captions for them, and post the results on a bulletin board.

## ZOOM IN ON BIODIVERSITY

After students read about marine plankton in “Super (Small) Heroes,” pages 14–19, search for some freshwater plankton in a body of water near your home. Collect a sample of water from your closest stream or pond and look at it together under a microscope or with a magnifying glass. What do students see? Can they find any plankton?

Plankton represent amazing biodiversity because there are so many different kinds. Investigate local biodiversity with something a little bigger and easier to count. For example, discover how many different species of trees there are in your schoolyard or a local park, using the tree shapes, differences in leaves and bark, and leaf buds specified in field guides.

## WHITE STORKS AND ALLIGATORS

Before students read “Up on the Rooftops,” pages 20–25, and “The Amazing Alligator,” pages 30–35, have them complete Part 1 of the White Storks and Alligators student

page. Then after students have read the stories, ask them to do Part 2.

Next, explain to students that an adaptation is something that helps an animal survive in the place, or habitat, where it lives. Emphasize that adaptations may be either physical (e.g., body parts such as feathers or strong jaws) or behavioral (e.g., actions such as building a nest high in a tree or basking in the sun to stay warm). Note that many of the interesting features students listed in Part 1 of their student pages are adaptations. Ask students to explain how these and other adaptations mentioned in the white stork and alligator articles help the animals live in their native habitats.

Then ask:

- What would happen if the animals switched habitats? (*Note:* White storks have adapted to wetlands, so the switch would not be as challenging for them.)
- Why is it important for animals to live in the habitats for which they are adapted?
- Why do efforts to help endangered animals often focus on conserving or restoring their habitats?

## GATOR CAFÉ

As students discovered in “The Amazing Alligator,” pages 30–35, gators eat lots of different things. Discuss how when they are young, alligators eat insects, snails, crustaceans, worms, and small fish. As they grow, they consume larger prey, including turtles, various mammals, birds, and larger fish. Then ask the class to help you design a menu for a family restaurant for alligators. Have students come up with creative names for items on the menu (including kiddie meals) and a name for the restaurant. They should also design an attractive menu. For a link with math, have students add prices to the menu items. Pretending to be hungry gators, they can order different combinations of food and then calculate their total bills.





# WHICH CAT IS THAT?

Each statement below describes a wild cat that you met in "Every Day Is Caturday," pages 6–10. Write the name of each cat next to its description. (The names of the seven cats are in the word box at right.)

## CAT DESCRIPTIONS

Can go without water for weeks at a time. \_\_\_\_\_

Is most likely to hunt and eat a monkey. \_\_\_\_\_

Catches a bird in mid-air. \_\_\_\_\_

Hunts and prowls during the day. \_\_\_\_\_

Has the densest fur of any cat. \_\_\_\_\_

Has pink skin. \_\_\_\_\_

Fishes in a marsh. \_\_\_\_\_

## WILD CATS

Black-footed cat

Caracal

Fishing cat

Jaguarundi

Margay

Pallas's cat

Sand cat



JACK DESROCHER

## CELEBRATE CATURDAY WITH THESE RIDDLES

What do you call a cat that drinks lemonade instead of milk?

**A sourpuss.**

What does a cat call mice on skateboards?

**Meals on Wheels.**

What's a cat's favorite cereal?

**Mice Krispies.**



# WHITE STORKS AND ALLIGATORS



This student page goes with two articles in the September issue: "Up on the Rooftops," pages 20–25, and "The Amazing Alligator," pages 30–35.

## PART 1: BEFORE YOU READ THE ARTICLES

Look at the photos of these two animals in the September issue. Make a list of what makes each animal interesting or different from other animals.

WHITE STORK FEATURES	AMERICAN ALLIGATOR FEATURES

## PART 2: AFTER YOU READ THE ARTICLES

A *habitat* is the place where an animal or plant lives and meets its survival needs. Answer these questions about two animal habitats:

1 What kind of habitat does an American alligator live in? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2 What habitats do the white storks in the *Ranger Rick* article live in? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

