



Ranger Rick EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

EDUCATIONAL EXTENSIONS FOR THE APRIL 2015 ISSUE OF RANGER RICK® MAGAZINE

COYOTE CHARACTERS

Several Native American cultures tell stories about a coyote “trickster”—a clever prankster who frequently gets into trouble but always bounces back. After students have read about real coyotes in **“Wily Coyotes” (pages 6–11)**, check out a trickster tale from a local library and have a group of students take turns reading it to the class. Ask students how the mythological character is like a real coyote and how it is different.

Then ask students if they are familiar with the cartoon character named Wile E. Coyote. If not, play one of his cartoons for the class. (Some are available for free viewing on youtube.com.)

Now have students compare and contrast this coyote character with the real thing. Conclude the discussion with these questions:

- Why is Wile E. Coyote a good name for a coyote?
- What would be some other good names for a coyote character?

MULTIPURPOSE SNAGS

In this month's **Adventures of Ranger Rick (pages 28–30)**, students learn that snags (dead trees that are still standing) make good homes for flying squirrels. Actually, snags are important places for more than 1,000 wildlife species nationwide. Go outside with the class and look for snags—as well as for the fallen, rotten logs they become—noting any animals or signs of animals you see. Point out that animals use nearly every part of a dead tree in every stage of its decay for things such as these:

- **A Place to Live:** Many animals—including birds, bats, and raccoons—make nests in cavities and crevices.
- **A Food Source:** By attracting insects, mosses, lichens, and fungi, deadwood becomes a gourmet restaurant for wildlife looking for a snack.

- **A “Crow’s Nest”:** Higher branches make good lookouts for raptors searching for prey.
- **A Hiding Place:** The nooks and crannies in deadwood are good places for squirrels and other wildlife to store food.
- **A Soil Refresher:** Decomposers such as mosses, lichens, and fungi all grow on snags and aid in the return of vital nutrients to the soil.

While students are still outside exploring snags, have them complete the “Study a Snag” Student Page in this month's Nature Notebook. After you return to the classroom, ask students to draw a picture of a snag and cut flaps in it. Then have them paste drawings of animals behind the flaps to reveal what's hiding under the bark, inside the hollow sections, or in carved-out cavities. Students can number the flaps, and on a separate sheet of paper, write explanations about the animals they have drawn.

LOCAL ODDITIES

How did your students do on the quiz in **What's Going On Here?** (pages 32–36)? There are interesting—and strange—sights to see in any natural place. If you have access to cameras, take students on a nature walk and ask them to snap photos of their oddest observations. Then have them research what they photographed and write an explanation for each. Make a booklet or bulletin board of the students' photos paired with their explanations.

HAPPY EARTH DAY!

Stage your own Earth Day celebration on April 22 using the activities in **“Get Earthy on Earth Day” (pages 20–21)** as inspiration. Your class celebration might also include taking the Ranger Rick pledge (see nwf.org/rrgreenzone/map.aspx) or having students compose their own similar pledges of environmental commitment.





GOBS OF GARTER FACTS

Read "Gobs o' Garters" (pages 14–18). Then in each of the snake spaces below, write one new fact you learned about garter snakes.

1



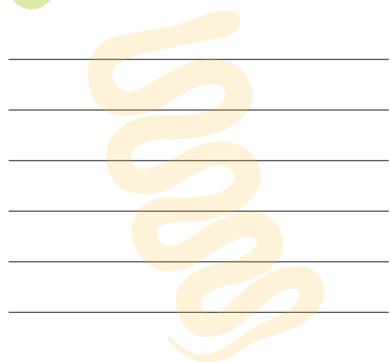
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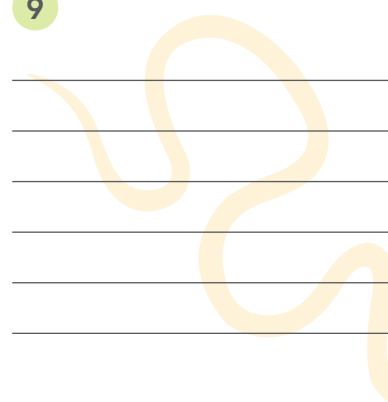
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8



9





WOULD YOU BELIEVE...

Read "Surprising Shrimps," pages 22–27. Then read the following sentences. They describe astonishing facts about shrimps, but only some sentences are 100% true. Circle **T** for those that are totally true or **F** for the others. Rewrite the **F** sentences to make them totally true, too.

T or F Some shrimps are as colorful as jewels, and some are see-through.

T or F Shrimps do interesting things, such as run cleaning services and cook food.

T or F The *pistol shrimp* acts as a seeing-eye shrimp for its cousin, the *goby*.

T or F *Harlequin shrimps* can flip a sea star onto its back and pin its arms to the ocean floor.

T or F Most shrimps eat algae, plant bits, and tiny humans.

T or F A female *mantis shrimp* uses her claws to hold eggs and wave to male mantis shrimp.

T or F Shrimps outgrow their shells and shed them.

T or F A dancing shrimp enjoys music.

