Ranger Rick
EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

ONE MOMENT IN TIME

The winning photos in **"Your Best Shots" (pages 4-5)** all capture fleeting wildlife moments. These photographers happened to be in the right place at just the right time to notice something extraordinary. Have students look at the photos for inspiration. Then go for a walk outside. Take a camera, or just use your eyes. Reflect on what you saw simply because the timing was right.

TALKING WITH A TREE KANGAROO

"Look Who's Up a Tree!" (pages 6-11) describes tree kangaroos, animals that live a life quite different from their ground-dwelling cousins. What special features do they have that help them succeed in the trees? Ask students to write an imaginary conversation between a tree kangaroo and a ground kangaroo in which they discuss their similarities and differences.

INVENT A WILDLIFE-DETERRING DEVICE

"The Buzz" (pages 12-13) reports on a boy in Kenya who invented a flashing-light system that keeps lions away from his family's cattle without harming them. There are many other instances in which wild animals cause problems for people. Ask students to brainstorm some of these scenarios. Then challenge them to choose one situation and sketch a concept for an invention that could solve the humans' problem without hurting wildlife. Invite students to present their ideas to the group for critique.

FEATHERS AS SYMBOLS

In **"Fantastic Feathers" (pages 14-19)**, you learn about the many ways that feathers help birds. Feathers can be useful to people, too—they're often used as symbols or metaphors in art and literature. For instance, consider the poem "Hope" by Emily Dickinson ("Hope is the thing with feathers/That perches in the soul") or the drifting feather that appears throughout the film "Forrest Gump." Feathers also have significance in the legends of many cultures. Lead a discussion in which students think about what feathers mean to them. Then explore examples of feathers in art; together, analyze them and discuss how they connect to the personal themes that students identified previously.

T-SHIRT PROJECT

After reading **"Ranger Rick's Adventures: Growing 'Green' Cotton" (pages 20-23)**, involve students in the process of selecting t-shirts to order for a team, group, or event. Have students make a list of pros and cons regarding the choice between conventional versus organic cotton for the shirts. After they research the options fully, ask them to come up with a recommendation and explain their reasoning.

POND STUDY

Check out the amazing aquatic insects in **"Bug Out!" (pages 30-35)**. Then grab a net and some buckets and head for the nearest pond, where students should be able to catch a variety of creatures. Observe your finds carefully. Use the Ranger Rick article or a field guide to help you identify them.

SHELLS FOR SHELTER

The **"Just 4 Fun" games (pages 37-39)** focus on animals with shells. For some summer fun, head to a beach and challenge students to find as many kinds of shells as they can. Sort them into categories, classifying them according to their characteristics. Ask students to describe the animal that lives in each type of shell.

THE EARTH IS A BOAT

"Come Sail Away" (pages 24-29) poses the question "How is a sailboat like the Earth?" What do you think? What could a boat at sea have in common with a whole planet in space? Brainstorm some ideas and jot them down here.

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Now create a drawing, a poem, a story, or some other project with this question as its starting point. Use the ideas you listed above to help inspire you.
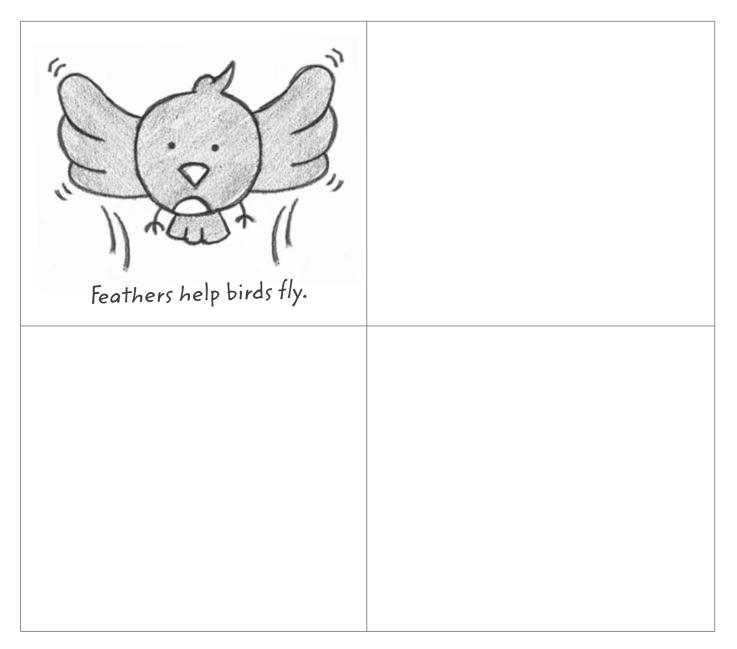
FUNCTIONS OF FEATHERS

Read "Fantastic Feathers" (pages 14-19), which is all about the different ways that feathers are helpful to birds. In each box below, do two things:

1. **Write one way that feathers help birds.**
2. **Draw a picture that shows an example of this "feather function" in action.**

Feathers help birds fly.

Now, if you like, turn your work into a picture book about all the things that feathers are good for.
Your first draft is already done!