



Ranger Rick

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

EDUCATIONAL EXTENSIONS FOR THE FEBRUARY 2016 ISSUE OF RANGER RICK® MAGAZINE

BANDING CHICKS (AND KIDS)

After reading “**Flamingo Roundup**,” pages 6–11, ask students to explain why volunteers in Mexico’s Yucatán Peninsula band baby flamingos. As a class, discuss the major steps volunteers take to band the chicks and the information that appears on the bands.

Students might enjoy making their own color-coded identification bands. Provide each with a piece of yarn that fits around his or her wrist. Different color beads can represent each student’s life story. For example, the bead placed in the middle of the bracelet could represent date of birth (e.g., green for before 2007, red for 2007 and after). White beads placed on either side of the center bead could stand for the number of states visited. And blue beads placed on either side of the state beads could represent the number of countries visited.

FLAMINGO VALENTINES

Make flamingo valentines this month! Visit:

<http://www.nwf.org/kids/family-fun/crafts/flamingo-valentine.aspx>.

CATS: WILD AND TAME

How do scientists learn about wildcat behavior? By observing wildcats for many hours. Why not turn students into wildlife biologists on a mission to learn more about the behavior of the house cat? Have students observe a house cat at regular intervals (every 10 minutes for an hour or two, for example) and record its behavior at each interval. Students who have pet cats can observe their own; students who don’t could partner with a cat-owner friend or observe another kind of pet.

After reading “**This Cat Is Wild**,” pages 14–19, ask students to compare the appearance and actions of the cat/pet they observed with the appearance and actions of the

African wildcats in the story. Then have students complete The Truth About Wildcats student page.

WHALES ON THE MOVE

Read “**How to Make Friends with a Whale**,” pages 20–24.

On a large classroom map of the world, show students the spring migratory route that the gray whales in the story take: Place your finger on Baja California, Mexico (whale birthing grounds), and as you move your finger upward along the North American coastline, point out major landmarks, including California (United States), Canada, and Alaska. When you reach the Bering Sea, point out Siberia to the left, the Bering Strait, and the Bering and Chukchi Seas. Gray whales use waters in these areas as their summer feeding grounds. Tell students the trip takes two or three months and that in the fall the whales will follow the same route back to their birthing grounds in Mexico. The “Whale Watch” student page explores this migratory route and helps students learn to read bar graphs.

LEAP IT UP!

This year is a leap year—the perfect time to celebrate animals that leap. Jump-start your celebration by having students read “**Happy Leap Year!**” pages 30–35. Afterward, ask children to identify at least five reasons animals leap. Then have each student choose one of the leaping animals in the article and research its leaping abilities. As a class, determine which animal leaps the greatest distance, as well as which one leaps farthest relative to its size. Then do some leaping of your own. How far can individual students leap, and how far can the class go if students add all of their leaps together?

This is also a good time to explain why there is a leap year (and a Leap Day) every four years. (Visit [nwf.org/rangerrick/leap](http://www.nwf.org/rangerrick/leap) for a clear explanation.)

THE TRUTH ABOUT WILDCATS



Read "This Cat Is Wild," pages 14–19. Then read the following sentences about wildcats. Only some of these 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 Ancient Babylonians were among the first people to bring African wildcats indoors as pets.

T or F African wildcats tend to have shorter legs and longer tails than house cats. These wildcats also have special spots on their tails.

T or F An African wildcat can leap 10 feet to catch its prey.

T or F Baby wildcats don't have many predators.

T or F Adult wildcats live mostly on their own.

T or F The biggest threat to the wild life of African wildcats is the jackal.

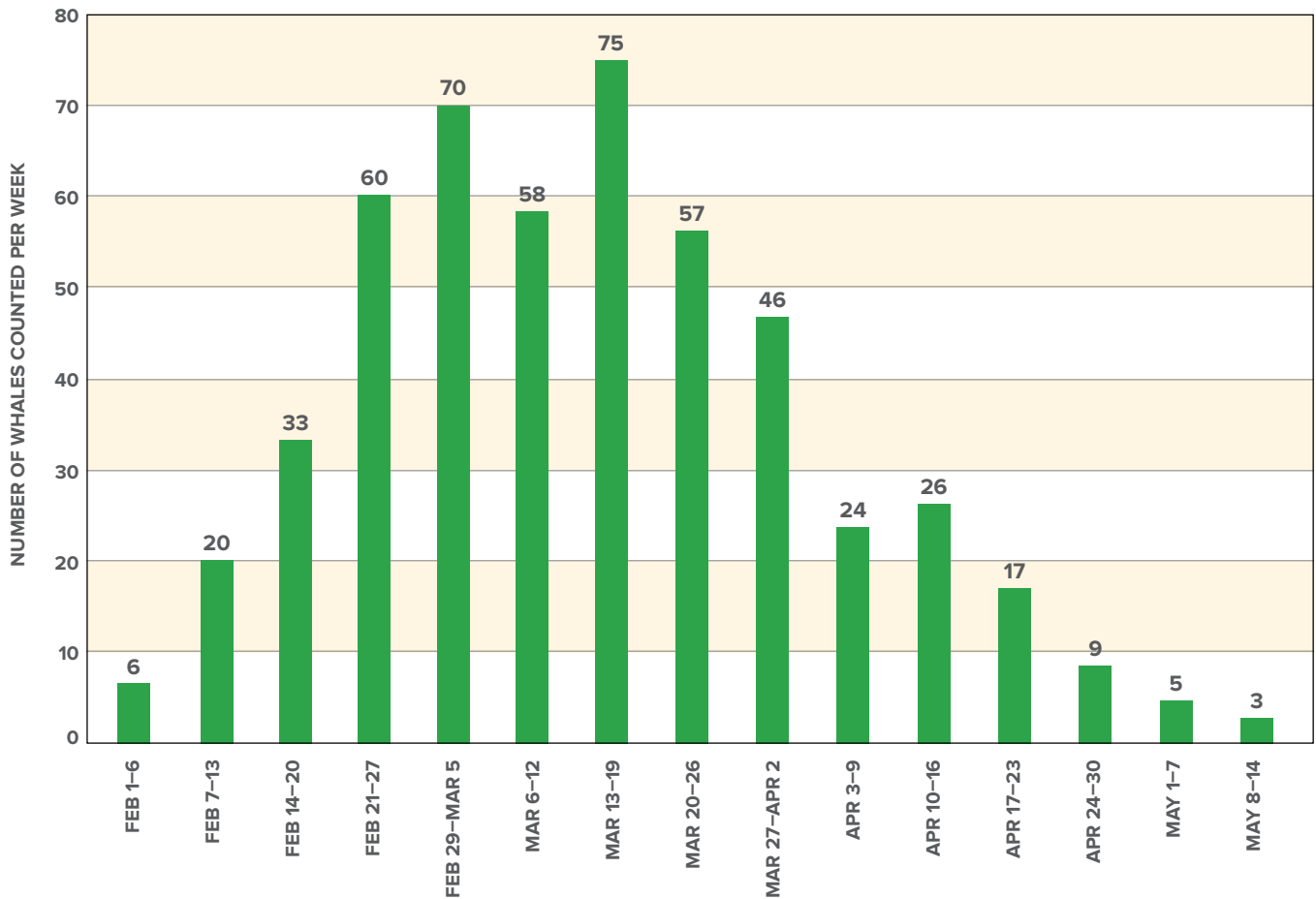
T or F Some people want to create shelters where African wildcats can raise their families with the help of humans.



WHALE WATCH

In "How to Make Friends with a Whale," pages 20–24, you learned that during winter, gray whales raise their babies in warm waters off the coast of Baja California, Mexico. In spring, the whales migrate north to feed in colder waters off the coasts of Alaska and Siberia. During spring migration, whale watchers living in Los Angeles, California, might spot the following numbers of gray whales pass by.

GRAY WHALE COUNT LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA



- When is the first northbound whale sighted?

- What is the peak migration week?

- How many whales are sighted during the peak migration week? _____
- What is the total number of whales sighted?

- What is the total number of days the whales were observed? _____
- What is the average number of whales observed per day? _____