

Educator's Guide



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

WILDLIFE SIGHTINGS

“Dear *Ranger Rick*” (pages 4-5) includes letters from several readers about wildlife sightings that wowed them. Have students write accounts of their own most memorable encounters with wild animals. Invite them to share their tales with the group.

HOME ON THE RANGE, REVAMPED

Have students read “Back Home on the Range” in “The Buzz” (page 12) about the reintroduction of bison in the American West. Sing or listen to the traditional song “Home on the Range” together. Then have fun writing new words (or just a new verse) for the song to describe this historic event.

SELF-PORTRAIT STUDY

Ask students to look closely at the macaque self-portrait in “The Buzz” (page 13). Then provide cameras and have them take their own self-portraits. Discuss the difference between taking a photo of someone or something else and photographing yourself. Ask students to reflect on their feelings and reactions as they look at both the macaque photo and their own portrait.

MASSIVE MOLAS

Look at the photo of the mola and diver on page 15 of “Mysterious Mola.” Growing to a maximum of nearly 5,000 pounds, molas are big fish! Have students look up the maximum weights of a variety of other animals and create a chart or drawing that shows the progression from smallest to largest. They could also add other familiar objects to the spectrum, such as a refrigerator and a car.

THE THINGS WE LEAVE BEHIND

The birds in “Use It, Then Lose It” (pages 18-23) discard certain body parts when they no longer need them. We humans don’t necessarily lose body parts, but we do leave a trail of other discarded items that no longer serve us. Ask students to draw or list items that they’ve outgrown (clothing, toys, books, electronics, etc.). What happens to these objects? How does their fate compare to the body parts described in the article?

BEAVERS, FOR REAL

The riddles in “Beaver Tail-Slappers” (page 27) are silly, but most of them are humorous because they refer to characteristics of real-life beavers. Discuss the behavior of beavers with students. Then ask them to explain the real characteristic (if any) of beavers to which each riddle refers.

SEED CREATIVITY

Take students outside to collect an assortment of seeds and other natural artifacts. Then follow the instructions in “Look Who’s Coming to Dinner” (pages 28-29) to create your own seed creatures. To extend the activity, have students write a skit about what happens to plants in the fall and use their seed creatures to act it out.

FAMILY TASKS

After reading “At Home with the Jackals” (pages 30-35), ask students to compare the jackal family described in the article with their own families. Discuss: How do the jackal parents and siblings divide up the work of raising young? How are necessary tasks divided in students’ own households?



The Dirt on Pigs



Read "You Think You Know Pigs?" (page 6-11). You might be surprised by how many different things can be true of pigs! But the statements about pigs below aren't true at all—except one of them. Rewrite each wrong one to make it right.

Pigs don't have a very good sense of smell.

Some pigs can be almost hairless while others are covered in scales.

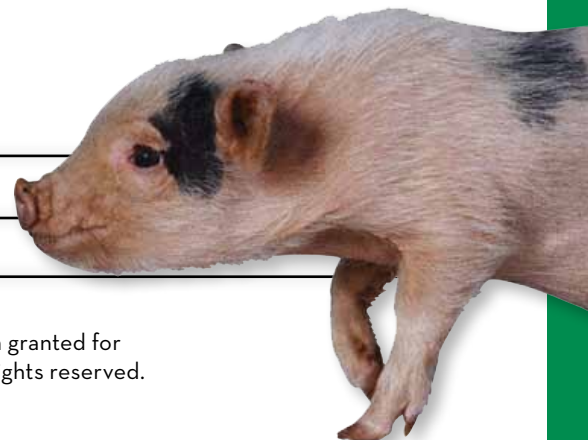
Pigs are pretty smart, but not as smart as dogs.

Pigs do everything they can to get as dirty as possible.

Pigs sweat profusely to cool off.

Pigs roll in mud to stay cool and to protect themselves from sun and insects.

Wild pigs in cities are trouble, because they are bad drivers and cause traffic accidents.



Bird Parts Here and Gone



Read "Use It, Then Lose It" (pages 18-23). Then choose five of the body parts described in the article and fill in the chart below. For each part, explain: (1) what the body part is, (2) how the bird uses it, and (3) why the bird then loses this part.

Bird and Body Part	How does the bird use this body part?	Why does the bird lose this body part? (Why is it no longer needed?)

Birds aren't the only animals that have body parts they lose when they no longer need them—some other animals do, too. The article lists one example. Describe one more example below.

