JUST SO STORIES
Rudyard Kipling’s Just So Stories are fanciful tales that pretend to explain animal characteristics, such as how the camel got its hump, why cats won’t do as they are told, and how the leopard got its spots. Read aloud one of Kipling’s stories (other than “How the Leopard Got Its Spots”). Then ask students to write their own Just So Story to explain how the jaguar got its spots. Before children begin to write, have them (1) read “Water Cat,” pages 6-11; (2) take a good look at the photos in the article; and (3) jot down basic information about the jaguar’s physical features, behaviors, and habitat. Encourage students to weave information from their photo observations and reading notes into their story, but also to create a far-fetched and entertaining explanation of how the jaguar got its spots.

Set aside time for the students to read their stories to the class. Then read aloud Kipling’s “How the Leopard Got Its Spots.” Have students compare and contrast their spotted-coat explanations with Kipling’s.

ANIMAL GROUPS
What happens when animals of the same kind gather in a group? Sometimes they get a silly group name! As a class, review the examples in “A Crackup of Critters,” pages 14-15. Encourage students to illustrate a magazine spread of other official—but amusing—animal groups. Possible examples include parade of elephants, parliament of owls, army of frogs, shiver of sharks, cauldron of bats, tower of giraffes, cloud of grasshoppers. Or maybe students would like to invent their own group names and illustrate them!

BAT MOTHERS & OTHER SUPERMOMS
Have students read “Bat Hospital,” pages 16-21. Then ask the class to look at the baby bat on page 16. Point out that this little orphan is in good hands, but caring for a baby bat is a big job for workers at Tolga Bat Hospital. Ask students to explain how the workers stand in for bat moms. List the tasks on a board or chart.

Tell the class that bats are mammals, and that all baby mammals depend a great deal on their mothers for survival. Have each student investigate the tasks of a different mammal mother and report his or her findings in a one-page summary to share and discuss with the class.

BAT MYTHS
Many people have incorrect ideas about bats—about fruit bats like the ones in “Bat Hospital” (pages 16-21) as well as about insect-eating bats. Ask students to complete “The Truth About Bats” student page to determine how well they really know bats.

THANKSGIVING PLAY
In this month’s Ranger Rick’s Adventures, pages 23-25, Boomer Badger learns how easy it is to waste food. But he also discovers that a few simple practices can greatly reduce food waste, especially at Thanksgiving time. The dialogue in this comic adventure has been converted into a play with roles for five students to perform. Interested in performing it? Go online at nwf.org/rangerrick/play for the script. An optional encore section provides up to six more speaking parts.

WILD WALK
After the class has read “Feet Are Neat,” pages 26-31, take a walk outdoors (or visit a local zoo) to observe actual animal feet in action. Ask students to identify the different animals you come across. What kinds of feet do they have? How are the animals using their feet at the moment? How else might they use them? Have students use this month’s Nature Notebook page (“Find the Feet”) to record their observations. Then discuss how the animal feet they just observed compare to the ones they read about in “Feet Are Neat.”
THE TRUTH ABOUT BATS

Many people have incorrect ideas about bats. Below are common statements about them. For each one, circle T for true or F for false. Rewrite the false statements to make them true.

1. T or F All bats have rabies.

2. T or F Some bats eat mosquitoes and insects that destroy crops.

3. T or F Fruit- and nectar-eating bats scatter fruit seeds.

4. T or F Bats often get tangled up in people’s hair.

5. T or F Bats are blind.

6. T or F Some bats pollinate plants.

7. T or F Bats are flying rodents.

NOT SURE WHAT’S TRUE ABOUT BATS?
Learn more by visiting online at nwf.org/Kids/Ranger-Rick/Animals/Mammals/Bat-Myths.aspx
In “Feet Are Neat,” pages 26–31, you discovered that many animals have “footwear” that helps them to survive in their habitat. Complete the foot chart below that shows how neat these feet can be.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOOT FEATURES</th>
<th>NAME AN ANIMAL IN THE ARTICLE THAT HAS THESE.</th>
<th>SKETCH ONE FOOT (OR MORE).</th>
<th>WHAT DO THESE FEET HELP THE ANIMAL DO?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PAWS WITH SHARP CLAWS</td>
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<tr>
<td>SHOVEL-LIKE CLAWS</td>
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<tr>
<td>EXTRA-BIG, EXTRA-WIDE FEET</td>
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<tr>
<td>BRISTLY FOOT PADS</td>
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<tr>
<td>FLIPPERS</td>
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