

## Educator's Guide



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

### SPOOKY ANIMALS

In this Halloween issue of *Ranger Rick*, you'll find bats, spiders, and owls—all animals that fit the mood of this holiday. What characteristics make them seem “spooky”? Which animals are associated with other holidays? Why? Engage students in a discussion around these questions. Ask them to consider which aspects reflect the animals' true nature and which are based on myths.

### WHISTLES AS NAMES

In “**The Buzz**” (pages 12-13), you learn that dolphins use whistles to identify themselves to other dolphins. Ask each student to come up with his or her own signature whistle. Then have students introduce themselves to the group using their whistles. Together, review the whistles a few times and practice making each one. Then see who can remember everyone's new “names.” Would you be able to communicate as dolphins do?

### COLOR EXPERIMENT

An experiment reported in “**The Buzz**” (pages 12-13) found that zebras' black-and-white stripes attracted fewer flies than the solid colors of horses. Colors and patterns can affect many things, such as the amount of sunlight absorbed, visibility or camouflage, and responses from people or animals. Have students work in groups to design their own experiments to test the effects of color or pattern on phenomena that interest them.

### SOLVING TRAFFIC TROUBLE

“**Ranger Rick's Adventures: Turtle Tunnel**” (pages 14-17) shows how the Lake Jackson Ecopassage solves a major problem

for wildlife needing to cross a busy Florida highway. Where are the biggest conflicts between wildlife and vehicles in your community? As a class, investigate this question using maps, interviews, and firsthand observation. Once students have identified the problem areas, invite them to devise potential solutions and present them to the class or, better yet, to city officials.

### WHO'S WHO OF BEARS

“**Meet the Sloth Bears**” (pages 18-23) explains that sloth bears are different from other bears in several key ways. Make a large wall chart with categories for various bear characteristics, such as where in the world they live; their habitat, diet, and physical traits; and how they take care of their young. Have each student research a different bear species (black, grizzly, polar, spectacled, panda, etc.). Ask them to fill in the chart with their bear's information. Then use the chart to discuss the similarities and differences that students discover.

### SEED DISPERSAL INVESTIGATION

Read about the ways that seeds travel to new places in “**Seeds Get Around**” (pages 24-25). Then take students outside to look for various types of seeds. Have them collect samples and use what they find to create a field guide or mini-museum that illustrates and explains the different seed dispersal strategies.

### ARMORED ANIMALS PUT ON A SHOW

This month's “**Just for Fun**” games (pages 36-39) feature armored animals. Many animals use armor for defense. Provide craft supplies for students to make puppets of a variety of armored animals. Then invite students to write and perform a fun skit that depicts how each animal employs its armor to protect itself from danger.





# Pterrific Pteranodons



Read "Ptop Pten Pteranodon Facts" (pages 26-28). Then answer the questions below to "ptest" your knowledge about pteranodons.

1. Pteranodons were: birds / dinosaurs / reptiles that weren't dinosaurs. (circle one)

2. Pteranodons lived \_\_\_\_\_ million years ago. At that time, how was the central part of North America different from the way it is today?

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3. What did pteranodons eat? How did they get it?

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4. A pteranodon's wings, when spread open, could be up to \_\_\_\_\_ feet wide. To cover that distance, about how many kids your height would need to lie down head to toe in a line? \_\_\_\_\_ kids

5. Scientists believe a pteranodon could fly as fast as \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ miles per hour.

6. Pteranodons were big, but their \_\_\_\_\_ made them light enough to fly.

7. Is a pterodactyl the same thing as a pteranodon? Explain.

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8. The shells of pteranodons' eggs were probably:  
a) Hard, like birds' eggs  
b) Soft and leathery, like the eggs of reptiles today

9. Why is it harder to find pteranodon fossils than dinosaur fossils?

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10. What else would you like to know about pteranodons?

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