



Ranger Rick

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE



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

BATTY POETRY

Call students' attention to the photo of the *lesser long-nosed bat* on **pages 2–3** and ask:

- How would you describe this bat?
- What do you think it is doing? (Confirm students' answers by having someone read aloud the photo's description on page 2.)

Next, distribute copies of the “Two Batty Poems” student page. Read the poems aloud and have children compare the two using these questions as guidelines:

- What feelings did you get from each poem?
- How are the poems different? How are they alike?
- Which poem agrees most with how you feel about bats?
- Do you think both poems are scientifically accurate? Why or why not?

As a follow-up, invite students to write their own bat poems, focusing on one species or on bats in general. Suggest that children illustrate their poems and read them to the rest of the group.

CREATURES OF THE NIGHT

Invite students to learn more about animals that are active at night by reading “**Life After Dark,**” **pages 6–11**. Help students increase reading comprehension by having them complete the “Night Senses” student page as they read the article. Then wrap up the lesson by asking the class to describe different ways nocturnal animals use their special features to sense things in the dark.

If you can arrange it, head outside one night for a group walk in the moonlight. Click off your flashlights for a few minutes while you look and listen for nighttime animals.

TARANTULA TRUTHS

After students read “**Ta-r-r-rantula,**” **pages 14–19**, reinforce their comprehension of the article with “The Truth About Tarantulas” student page.

HAND-Y ART

Give students time to admire the amazing art in “**Handimals,**” **pages 24–26**. Then suggest children take a closer look at their own hands. What shapes can they make with them? Do any of the shapes remind them of animals? Turn off the lights and use a flashlight to make animal shadows on the classroom wall. Now encourage students to use the animal shapes they discovered through this exercise to help them design and paint handimals from their own imaginations. Or follow the instructions on page 26 to paint flashy monarch handimals.

FISHY FISH

After students read “**Freaky Frogfish,**” **pages 30–35**, ask:

- How are frogfish different from what you think of as a typical fish? (Possible responses: They're lumpy and warty, have large body flaps, change color, and walk on the seafloor with their fins.)

Encourage students to learn about other fish that seem kind of “fishy.” Below are a few types of fish they may wish to explore and report on to the class:

- *lungfish*: lives out of water (in a burrow) for months at a time
- *mudskipper*: hops across the ground on its fins
- *flying fish*: appears to “fly” through the air
- *four-eyed fish*: climbs onto mudflats in Brazil to feed on insects

TWO BATTY POEMS

Read and discuss these two poems as a class.



BEHOLD THE BAT

Bats are ugly, ugly, ugly,
 Grotesque little faces,
 Warty snouts,
 Tiny teeth in alien mouths.
 Friends of witches, friends of trolls,
 Wrinkled parchment wings unfold,
 Stretched-out finger bones and skin,
 So very, very bat-like thin.
 Darkness makes bats come alive,
 Hairy bodies, piercing eyes.
 Darting, swooping, diving demons.
 Of caves and graves and hidden dens,
 Moonlight madness, high-pitched beeps,
 Bats give human beings the creeps.

BAT WATCHING

Some people are horse fans,
 Others love cats,
 And some like snakes and their kin.
 But I love bats,
 With their furry snouts,
 And stretched-out wings of skin.

Can you imagine
 How hard it would be
 To catch thousands of darting flies,
 Or nab tiny moths
 On the wing in the dark
 Without ever using your eyes?

Or think about hanging
 All day by your feet,
 With your body turned upside down.
 The world must look different
 From a bat's point of view,
 With everything twisted around.

But hanging around
 Is only for days,
 'Cause when twilight fades into night,
 Many bats hit the skies
 In search of flies
 And other insect delights.
 So while most other people
 Are fast asleep,
 With their cats and dogs cuddled tight,
 I'm out walking,
 Late at night,
 Watching bats swoop around at a light.

NIGHT SENSES



As you read "Life After Dark," pages 6–11, use what you discover about nocturnal animals to complete the following chart.

NAME OF ANIMAL	SPECIAL NIGHT FEATURE	HOW THIS HELPS THE ANIMAL SENSE THINGS IN THE DARK
Tarsier		
Barn Owl		
House Cat		
Silk moth		
Rattlesnake		

THE TRUTH ABOUT TARANTULAS



Read "Ta-r-r-rantulas," pages 14–19. Then read the statements below. You'll quickly see that they're all wrong! Rewrite them to tell the true story about tarantulas.

1 There are almost 90 species of tarantulas.

2 Tarantula bites are deadly to insects and mammals.

3 Tarantula hairs are soft and sticky.

4 Tarantulas eat mostly plants.

5 A female tarantula lays her eggs in a leafy nest.

6 A goliath birdeater is the size of a postage stamp.

7 Tarantulas can live in super-cold regions as well as super-hot deserts.

8 Tarantulas squirt lemonade through their fangs.
