**WILDLIFE BIG AND SMALL**

After reading “Big Blue,” pages 14–19, have students complete the Facts About Big Blue student page. Then ask children to share what they wrote about the size of blue whales (fact #1 on the student page). Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of being a super-big animal. Then evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of being super small. Wrap up the lesson by assigning the Searching Big and Small activity page in this month’s Nature Notebook on the Ranger Rick website.

**ANIMAL TEAMWORK**

As a prereading exercise, walk students through pages 22–27 of “Teamwork!” stopping at each photo for children to speculate on what the animals are doing. (You may want to suggest that some sort of teamwork is involved in each photo.) After the class has read the article, use the following as discussion or writing prompts:

- Why do animals use teamwork?
- What teams do you and members of your family belong to? What is the purpose of those teams?
- What works to keep human teams functioning well?
- What works to keep animal teams functioning well?

**STORY MAPPING**

After students read “Mystery Egg,” pages 29–31, have them map out the basics of the story using the Mystery Story Map student page.

Review completed story maps with the class. Then invite students to use blank copies of the Mystery Story Map to plan Ranger Rick mysteries of their own—about whooping cranes or other animals that could use our help. Once students have mapped out their mysteries, ask them to use their ideas to write complete stories.

**LOCAL ODDITIES**

How well did your students do on the quiz in “What’s Going On Here?” pages 32–36? There are interesting—and strange—sights to see in every natural place. If you have access to cameras, take students on a nature walk and ask them to snap photos of their oddest observations. Then have children research what they photographed and write explanations for “what’s going on” in the photos. Make a booklet or bulletin board of students’ photographs paired with their observations.

**WILD CITY GUIDE**

Have students complete the games in Just 4 Fun, pages 37–39. (The theme of these games is city wildlife.)

Next, engage children in a brainstorming session about the many kinds of wildlife in your city or town (or one nearby). List all the animals you’ve seen there (e.g., squirrels, rabbits, pigeons, sparrows, hawks, ducks, geese, frogs, turtles, insects, worms, etc.). Match the animals with specific places where they can find what they need to survive. Then use the list as a springboard to create a field guide to local wildlife. For each entry, include (1) an illustration or photo of the animal and its tracks; (2) tips for identifying the animal; (3) information such as what it eats, what eats it, where it finds shelter, and if/how it takes care of its young; and (4) the best nearby place to see it. Share completed copies of your Wild City Guide with your community by distributing it through your local public library, community center, or nature center.
BIG BLUE

by Kathy Kranking

Make way for the blue whale—
the most gigantic animal on Earth!

Blue whales spend a lot
of time feeding out of
sight underwater. But
at times, they hang
out near the surface,
as the people on this
boat were lucky
enough to see!

BRANDON COLE (14); CHASE DEKKER/MINDEN PICTURES (15B)

Its body is as long as three school buses.
Its tongue weighs as much as an elephant.
And its heart is more than 640 times
heavier than yours. No doubt about it—

a blue whale
is
beyond
big!

This amazing whale lives in all the
world’s oceans. Its body is shaped like
a submarine, which helps the whale

glide smoothly through the water.
It moves its tail—which is about
as wide as a giraffe is tall—up
and down to swim. And it uses
its flippers to steer.

But there’s a lot more to
the blue whale than its size.
Keep reading for a whale
of a story.

14

15

Read “Big Blue,” pages 14–19. Then use what you learned about
blue whales to write a “blue whale” fact for each topic below.
Be sure to use complete sentences.

SIZE

DIET

SWIMMING SKILLS

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

FAMILY LIFE

MIGRATION
Ranger Rick, Scarlett, and Boomer are in a crawfish pond in Louisiana. The other day, people came with brooms and shooed us off our nest. Something’s up with our eggs, and we’re not sure who we can trust. This looks like the place.

Psst! It’s me, Willa. And this is Wyatt. Why all the sneaking around? After that, we noticed that the egg looks different. What’s up with that? Just before the chicks hatch, we’ll return the eggs to their nests and take back the fake ones.

These whooper eggs are coming along. I think I found where we should look next. It’s in New Orleans. That’s not far. Let’s go!

There! That egg’s just not right! Hmmm.

Willa, Wyatt, my investigative powers will get to the bottom of this!

Later...

Fill in the empty boxes to outline a mystery story.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DETECTIVES</th>
<th>OTHER CHARACTERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SETTINGS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHERE DOES THE STORY TAKE PLACE?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MYSTERY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHAT IS THE MYSTERY THAT NEEDS TO BE SOLVED?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLUES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CLUES (IN ORDER)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONCLUSION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HOW IS THE MYSTERY SOLVED?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>