



Ranger Rick

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

EDUCATIONAL EXTENSIONS FOR THE NOVEMBER 2021 ISSUE OF RANGER RICK® MAGAZINE

HOME OF THE BRAVE

Reading “Talkin’ Turkey” on **pages 6–11**, it’s clear that turkeys are certainly fascinating! In fact, American Founding Father Benjamin Franklin believed that the turkey, not the bald eagle, should have been chosen as the symbol of our country.

Ask students to imagine they’ve gone back in time and have the chance to choose a bird for a national symbol. Have the class research the characteristics of both turkeys and bald eagles and compare them as potential national representatives.

- Split the class in half and have each group prepare to debate why their bird is the best choice and their opponent’s choice is not.
- Then ask students to brainstorm and discuss what other animal they feel would have been a good choice as a national symbol and why.

RETURN OF THE LIVING DAED

In “**Lost—And Found!**” on **pages 14–17**, we learned about animals and plants—unseen for years or even decades—that resurfaced alive and well. With increased awareness, protection, and (in some cases) responsible tourism, many threatened species may live to see another day. Allow students to choose one of the options below for further investigation.

1. Have students visit the [U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Endangered Species website](#) and plug in their state to access a list of endangered species in their area.

Pick a local endangered species and explore what threats that species faces, what habitat features are essential for its survival, and what protection and recovery efforts are occurring.

2. Have students research a plant or animal that has been declared extinct in the past ten years. Give students the following assignments: Pretend you are a field researcher: Where would you search for this species? What habitat features could you look for that might attract this species? Now imagine you discovered it was not extinct. Develop a plan to protect it and encourage its recovery.

STORMY SEAS

In “**Shelter from the Storm**” on **pages 26–28**, Rick, Scarlett, and Boomer have a close call with a ferocious storm while exploring a beach. As storms become increasingly intense and sea levels rise due to climate change, coastal habitats and communities are at significant risk. Have students use the [NOAA Sea Level Rise Visualization Tool](#) to explore sea level rise.

- Click “Get Started.” Then add a local zip code (or choose another location near tidal water). Using the slider on the left, adjust the sea level rise to see what happens to different parts of the map.
- Discuss the impact of this sea level rise on beaches, communities, and wildlife in this location. How should this affect decision-making now about land use?
- Explore efforts to restore and increase the resilience of shorelines and communities near tidal water. Are there nearby opportunities for citizens to get involved?





DINOS AMONG US

In the article **“Dino Fish”** on pages 20–25, we learned about sturgeons, an ancient group of fishes that have been swimming the seas for over 140 million years. The Age of Dinosaurs ended with a mass extinction event approximately 66 million years ago. However, there are still quite a few living descendants and relatives of ancient animals roaming the Earth today! Connect the fun fact with the **“living fossil”** it matches.



BEE

Believe it or not, this barnyard bird shares much of its DNA with *Tyrannosaurus rex*.



CHICKEN

Ancient relatives of this slippery creature started slithering around more than 160 million years ago.



COCKROACH

Some extinct ancestors of this beloved shelled sea creature measured 16 feet wide, flipper to flipper.



SHARK

Cousins of this toothy fish have swum the seas for 400 million years! One ancestor, *Megalodon*, was the size of a blue whale.



SNAKE

These familiar friends have been buzzing from flower to flower since *T. rex* roamed the wilderness.



GREEN SEA TURTLE

Ancient cousins of these creepy crawlers were **TWICE** the size of the ones we see today.

PHOTOS: BEE: DASWEBWEIB/FICKR; COCKROACH: PATRICK KAVANAGH/FICKR; SNAKE: TONYPARKIN67/FICKR; CHICKEN: KRISTINA SAVIC/FICKR; SHARK: ELIAS LEVY/FICKR; GREEN SEA TURTLE: CLAIRE FACKLER/NOAA/NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARIES/FICKR





SEEING IS BELIEVING... OR IS IT?

In "Animal Illusions" on pages 34–36, tricky photos made us do double takes to figure out what was really going on! Try your hand at creating an optical illusion by taking a photograph or making a collage, using plants and animals as your subjects. Remember: Look, but don't touch! As you wait for that perfect shot, do not disturb your wild subjects. Cut out the frame below and arrange your photos for display.

