



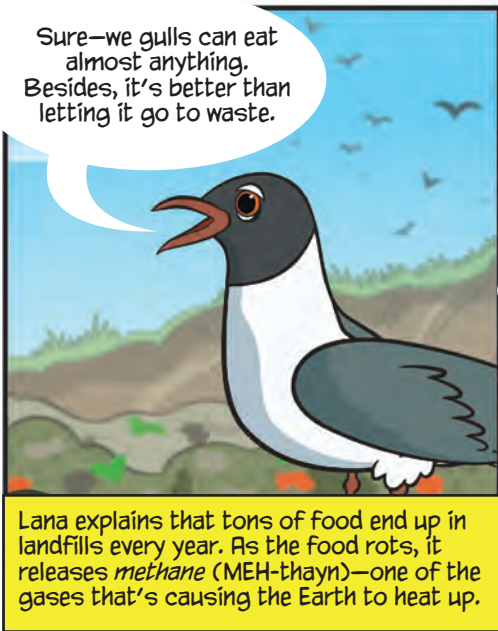
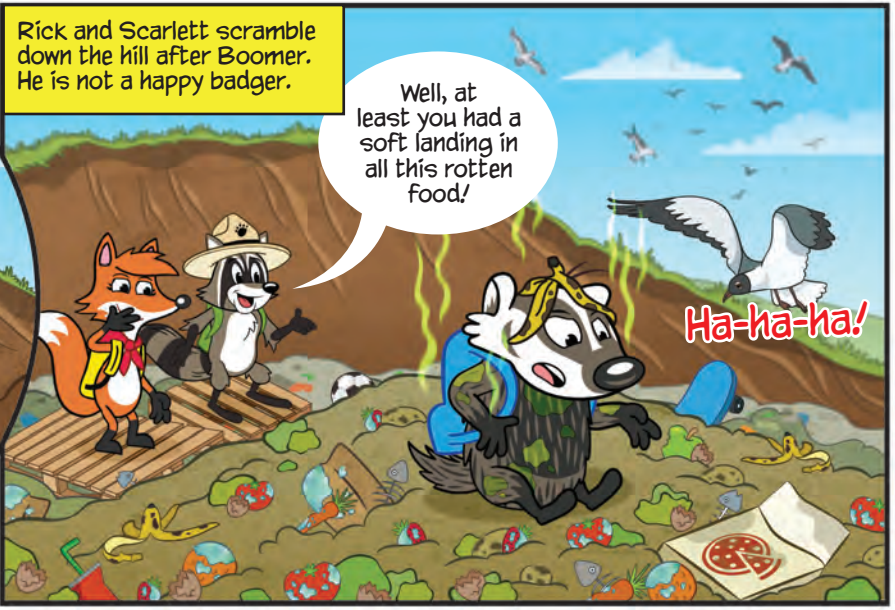
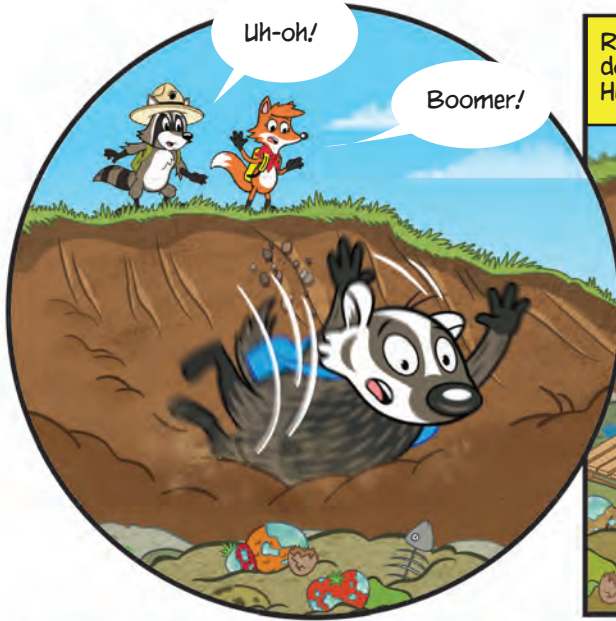
# RANGER RICK ADVENTURES

# Food for Thought

STORY BY JODY MARSHALL; ART BY THE CHARACTERSHOP

Boomer Badger is in the mood to do some spring cleaning! His first project: the refrigerator.





Lana explains that tons of food end up in landfills every year. As the food rots, it releases *methane* (MEH-thayn)—one of the gases that's causing the Earth to heat up.



We should go, too, so SOMEone can take a bath as soon as possible!



A few weeks later, the friends get a surprise visitor.

Hi, guys! What's happening?

Lana! Nice to see you again!

We've set up a compost bin. It was Boomer's idea!

I read up on it. Making compost is one way to recycle old food so it doesn't end up in the landfill.

Boomer tells Lana that, by composting kitchen scraps, leaves, and other natural stuff, you can create a rich material that's great for garden plants.



Wow, that's so cool!

I bet we'll have some awesome veggies in the garden this summer!



But I have a question.

What's that?

### RANGER RICK'S FIELD NOTES

- In the United States, more than 1/3 of all food ends up getting thrown out.
- Food waste takes up more space in landfills than any other kind of trash. Some of it comes from households, and some comes from restaurants, grocery stores, farms, schools, and other places.
- Not everyone can set up a compost bin. But there are many ways to keep food waste out of landfills. To learn more, check out [kids.earth.org/climate-change/ways-to-reduce-food-waste](http://kids.earth.org/climate-change/ways-to-reduce-food-waste).
- To hear a laughing gull "laugh," visit [allaboutbirds.org/guide/Laughing\\_Gull](http://allaboutbirds.org/guide/Laughing_Gull) and click on "Listen."



Can I have that apple? It looks delicious!



kidding!

Ha-ha-ha-ha!



# Gone Fishing

STORY BY KATHY KRANKING ■ ILLUSTRATIONS BY CHRISTIAN SLADE

Ricky Raccoon, Bizzie Beaver, Mitzi Mink, and Flora Skunk were headed to Clear Lake to go fishing.

“This will be fun,” said Bizzie. “I bet I’m going to catch a lot of fish!”

“Maybe we should have a contest to see who catches the most,” said Mitzi.

“Yes!” the others agreed.

Soon they got to the shore of Clear Lake, where their little rowboat was waiting. They put their fishing poles into the boat and climbed in. Ricky used an oar to push off the shore.



“Here we come, fishes!” said Flora as the boat slipped into the water.

They paddled along until they found a spot they liked. Then, while the boat bobbed gently in the water, they got their fishing poles ready. “Did you bring the bait, Bizzie?” asked Ricky.

“Sure did,” said Bizzie. He pulled a bag out of his backpack.

“Are those marshmallows?” Mitzi asked.

“Yup,” said Bizzie, with a toothy grin. “I couldn’t find any worms. But I think the fish will like these marshmallows.”

“Let’s find out,” said Ricky. They each poked a hook into a marshmallow.

When they lowered their hooks into the water, they didn’t know that someone else was planning to go fishing that day. A bird called a kingfisher was sitting in a tree near the lake. It was watching the water with its dark eyes.





“Let the contest begin!” said Ricky.

The four friends waited ... and waited. A dragonfly buzzed lazily past them. A soft breeze ruffled their fur. Time ticked by, but no one got a bite.

Bizzie sighed. “Maybe fish don’t like marshmallows after all,” he said.

Just as he spoke, Mitzi’s eyes opened wide. “Look!” she whispered. “A fish is coming.”

The fish swam a little closer. But then, something sped past the boat like a rocket. As the friends watched in amazement, a bird plunged into the lake. It grabbed the fish in its bill and burst back out of the water. Then it flew to a branch in a tree and ate the fish.

“What was that?” Bizzie gasped.

“I think I know what it was,” Ricky said with a grin. “It was a bird called a kingfisher.”

“It stole our fish!” said Bizzie.

“Well,” Flora said, “I guess that bird was hungry!”

“Now that you mention it, I’m kind of hungry, too,” said Bizzie.

“The kingfisher may have scared off some of the fish,” Ricky said. “Let’s have our lunch now, and maybe by the time we finish, the fish will be biting.”

“Good idea!” said Mitzi. She reached into her backpack and pulled out sandwiches and fruit for everyone.

As the friends munched on lunch, they talked about the kingfisher. “It sure was fast,” Ricky said.

Flora found a picture of a kingfisher on her phone. “Look how pretty it is,” she said. “It says kingfishers swallow their fish headfirst.”

After they finished eating, the friends dipped their hooks back into the water. Bizzie squinted at the trees along the shore. “Maybe the kingfisher flew away,” he said.

But the kingfisher was still watching and waiting from its branch. And it was still hungry.

Just then, Bizzie spotted a fish coming toward them. “Hey, guys,” he whispered. “Over there!”

They all saw the fish swimming along. But before it could come any closer... *kersplash!* With lightning speed, the kingfisher grabbed the fish and flew off.

The friends looked at each other in surprise. Then they all began laughing.

“Something tells me we aren’t going to catch any fish today,” said Flora.

“And now we know who won the fishing contest,” added Ricky with a grin. “It was the kingfisher!”





# RANGER RICK ADVENTURES

# Something's Fishy!

STORY BY JODY MARSHALL; ART BY THE CHARACTERSHOP

Boomer has invited Ranger Rick Raccoon and Scarlett Fox to his place on a crisp winter day. He told them he has a surprise!



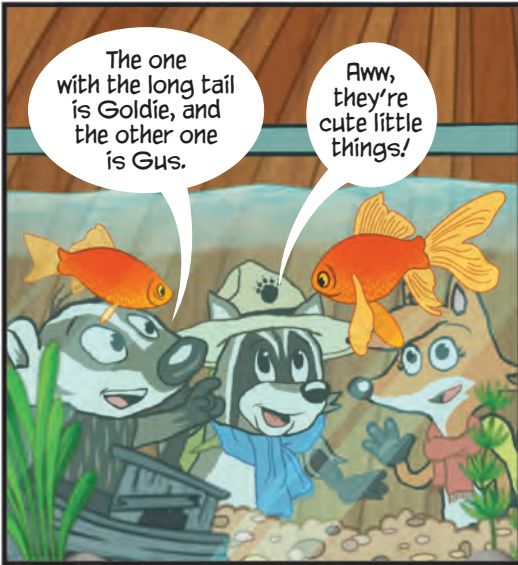
Rick! Scarlett! Wait till you see what I got!



Ta-da!

You got a fish tank!

Cool!



The one with the long tail is Goldie, and the other one is Gus.

Aww, they're cute little things!

As the cold winter days wear on, Goldie and Gus keep Boomer company. But by the time spring comes, he mostly forgets about them!



Then, one beautiful spring day...

Hey, Boomer, want to go camping with us up at Big Blue Lake?

You bet! We haven't been there in a long time!

Go grab your stuff!

Cannonball!



POOF!

Oh, wait—I have to stay home and take care of Goldie and Gus.



Sorry you can't come!

We'll send you a postcard!

Gee, thanks!

When they get to Big Blue Lake, Rick and Scarlett take in the view.

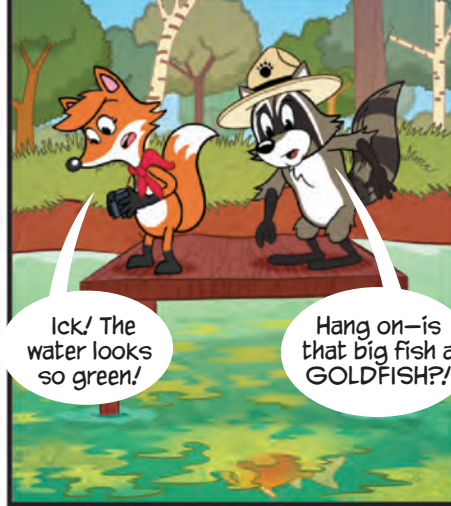


Wow, look at that!

Let's set up camp and then go for a swim!

click!

But soon the friends realize something's not quite right.



lick! The water looks so green!

Hang on—is that big fish a GOLDFISH?!

Then, as Scarlett and Rick watch in amazement, more and more big goldfish appear.



How did they get here?

I don't know, but one thing's for sure: They don't belong in Big Blue Lake.

click!  
click!

You got that right! Hi, I'm Ellie Otter.



Good luck, Fishy!

Ellie explains that some people get rid of unwanted goldfish by releasing them into ponds, lakes, creeks, and rivers.



But goldfish can have a lot of babies. Over time, even a few released fish can lead to thousands of them!

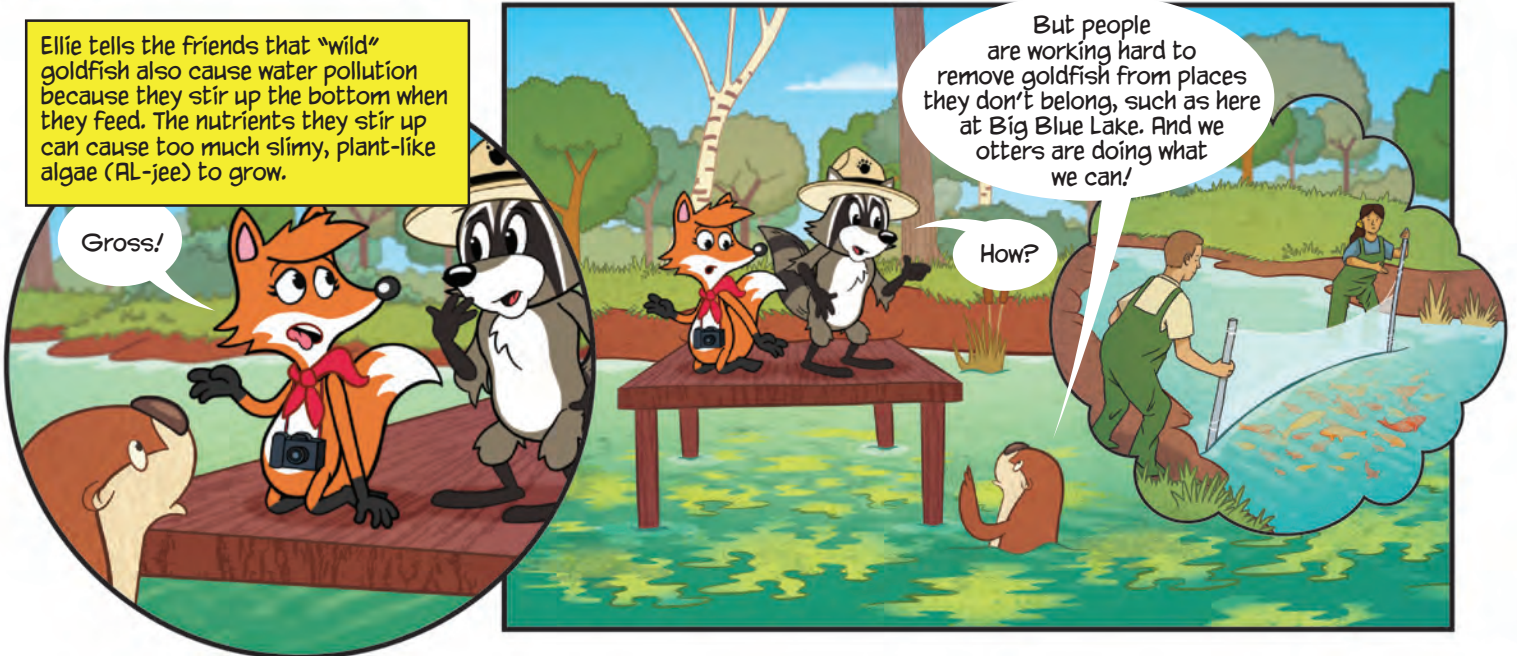
Why are these so much bigger than pet ones?



Goldfish stay pretty small when they're in a fish tank. But they can get huge out in the wild, where there's more room to grow.

People have caught some that are as big as footballs!

Ellie tells the friends that "wild" goldfish also cause water pollution because they stir up the bottom when they feed. The nutrients they stir up can cause too much slimy, plant-like algae (AL-jee) to grow.



Gross!

But people are working hard to remove goldfish from places they don't belong, such as here at Big Blue Lake. And we otters are doing what we can!

How?



Otters eat lots of fish. Well, time to hunt for dinner! Bye!

Meanwhile, back in Deep Green Wood, Boomer hatches a plan...



Hmm, I have an idea. It'll be the best solution for everyone!

...and Rick and Scarlett get home just in time to see him putting it into action!



Whoa, Boomer, what are you doing?

I'm setting Goldie and Gus free. They'll be much happier.

No, wait!

But it's too late. The two goldfish hop out of the aquarium and into the stream.



Oh, no! Maybe we can catch them!

Huh? Why?

We'll explain later.

A school group downstream is catching water critters to study, when suddenly...



Hey, look! I caught a couple of goldfish!

Let's put them in our aquarium back in the classroom. They don't belong out here!

Later, Scarlett and Rick explain what they learned from Ellie Otter.



...and we saw a bunch of giant goldfish right there in the lake! Some were as big as footballs!

No way!

It's true—see, I took pictures.



Wow! It's a good thing you have proof. Otherwise I'd say your story is a little fishy!

### RANGER RICK'S FIELD NOTES

- People who let their unwanted goldfish (or any unwanted pet) go may think they're being kind. But released pets often don't survive. And when they do, they can create big problems in the areas they're released into.
- With too much algae on the surface, sunlight can't reach underwater plants that other animals depend on. And as the layer of algae dies and rots, it uses up the oxygen that other water life needs. The water may then become a stinky, slimy "dead zone."