

# Showing Off

Some birds need to stay hidden, but others need to show off. The male *hummingbird* below is putting on a show that can't be missed. He flares out the **shimmery** feathers on his throat, which catch the light in just the right way. The feathers flash a fiery-bright signal. To other males the signal says, "Back off, buddy—this place is mine!" And to females it says, "Aren't I handsome? Want to be my mate?"





# I'm Molting! I'm Molting!

When feathers become worn out and damaged—or are no longer needed—they fall out and get replaced. This is called **molting**.

For example, the young *gentoo penguin* on the left wore only down feathers for warmth while growing up on land. But soon it will need to dive into the cold ocean to find its own food. So it's replacing its fuzzy baby feathers with **sleek**, waterproof adult feathers.

Many other kinds of birds exchange drab feathers for colorful ones as mating season arrives. And some, like the *willow ptarmigan* below, shed brown summer feathers and grow winter-white ones that blend in with snow.

summer



winter



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# Let's Get Ready to Read!

Dear Parents and Educators,

*This guide will help your reader explore, examine, and engage with the nonfiction book Fantastic Feathers. The included activities will strengthen their reading comprehension skills and provide them with opportunities to write and talk about the text. Your reader will delve into the text and analyze it in a more structured and detailed way. Help your reader on their reading journey by working alongside them as they read the book. Ask and answer questions, and offer guidance and support, as needed. Be sure to read through pages 4–5 for helpful instructional ideas.*

*On this page, you will find information about Blue Star Education's partnership with Ranger Rick and the National Wildlife Federation as well as some fun activities to help foster your reader's love of reading!*

## Just 4 Fun!

- Work with other parents or teachers to arrange a book club meeting so your reader can discuss the book with peers. Provide a comfy, cool setting and some yummy treats!
- Set up a book nook! Find a quiet corner. Add a few blankets and pillows. Maybe grab a beanbag chair or poof! Be sure there is a lamp or overhead light and—*voila!*—you have a nifty nook any reader would love.
- Challenge your reader to conduct further research on the topic mentioned in the book. Ask them to display what they have learned from their research in a creative way, such as an infographic, collage, or theatrical skit.

## The Partnership

Blue Star Education's proud partnership with the National Wildlife Federation and Ranger Rick has made possible the creation of products that combine reading, writing, and science in an exciting and unique way meant to help enrich knowledge and appreciation of the natural world.

## The National Wildlife Federation & Ranger Rick

The National Wildlife Federation (NWF) strives to unite all Americans to ensure that wildlife thrives in a rapidly changing world. It believes that healthy water, clean air, and public lands are a birthright of all Americans. From the tiniest of insects to the largest of mammals, the NWF wants to ensure the legacy of America's wildlife for future generations.

In January 1967, a new conservationist came on the scene. Knowledgeable, small, and furry, this little leader was ready to foster a healthy and life-long appreciation of nature in children. His name: Ranger Rick! More than 50 years later, Ranger Rick continues to entertain and educate children about the natural world through various media, including the highly successful magazine series.





Name: \_\_\_\_\_

ACTIVITY 3

# Bird Behavior

**Directions:** Look at each illustration. What is the bird doing? Write a photo caption that explains what each bird is doing. Include as much information as you can. Be sure your photo caption is a complete sentence. Use the words below to help you get started.




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molting

preening

puffing

dust bathing

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