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1. CAPTAIN PLANET FOUNDATION

Remaining 2006 Application Deadlines: June 30, September 30, December 31
Captain Planet Foundation awards are between \$500 and \$2,500 for schools and nonprofit organizations that develop innovative environmental projects for youth that promote cooperation, planning, and problem-solving skills.

<http://www.captainplanetfdn.org/appProcess.html>

2. RIMFIRE SPORTER MATCH

The Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP) is promoting their Rimfire Sporter Match at the 2006 National Matches at Camp Perry. The CMP is a supporter of the 4-H shooting sports program, and would like to get 4-H more involved in this smallbore event. The 4-H competitors that participate in their State 4-H Rimfire Sporter Match are invited to attend the National Matches Rimfire Sporter Match on 23 Jul 06 at Camp Perry, OH. The CMP will waive the entry fees for any 4-H competitor at the National Matches at Camp Perry. Any of the club leaders that want to enter teams/individuals for the 23 Jul 06 event, should contact either Sheri Judd at sjudd@odcmp.com or Melissa Fox at mfox@odcmp.com

3. SAFE FIREARM STORAGE

Summer vacation from school is right around the corner, a time when children may be home unattended. Project ChildSafe reminds parents that a carelessly stored firearm and a curious child are an unsafe combination. There is no better time than right now to review safe Storage options for your firearms. Teach your children not to handle firearms without adult supervision. Be sure they understand that if they find a firearm at home or at a friend's home, they should leave it alone and tell an adult right away. Read "Firearms Responsibility in the Home," an important safety brochure from the National Shooting Sports Foundation, administrator of Project ChildSafe, and discuss the firearms responsibility contract with your children and other members of your household. And be sure to visit www.projectchildsafe.org often to review important firearm safety rules or to find out more about Project ChildSafe in Alabama.

4. INSECT POSTERS AND EDUCATIONAL BROCHURES AVAILABLE

The Entomological Foundation has brought together the talents of two highly respected individuals to produce an Insect Diversity poster created by Charley Harper and subtitled by Dr. E.O. Wilson: Celebrating the Little Creatures of the World. The Insect Diversity poster and accompanying educational brochure is a great resource for teaching about insects to younger students. The poster depicts 24 insects (14 different insects and 6 orders of insects). Proceeds from the sale of these posters support the educational initiatives of the Entomological Foundation in educating young people about science through insects. To learn more go to <http://www.entfdn.org/print.php>. All posters are produced on high-quality acid free paper and sale for \$34, which include S&H.

5. "FOSTERING SUSTAINABLE BEHAVIOR" LISTSERV

The "Fostering Sustainable Behavior" listserv provides the opportunity for program managers to easily dialogue with one another regarding a wide range of behavior change programs that support sustainability. To subscribe: email web@cbsm.com with "Subscribe" in the subject line. Online searchable archives available.

<http://www.cbsm.com/forums/search.lasso>

6. LEARN AND SERVE AMERICA

Learn and Serve America, a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service, supports and encourages service-learning for students throughout the U.S. to make meaningful contributions to their community while building their academic and civic skills.

<http://www.learnandserve.org/about/lisa/index.asp>

7. YOUNG PEOPLE'S TRUST FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

YPTE is working create a better future by inspiring young people to look after our world. Free information and resources for young people and teachers an a wide range of environmental topics and animal facts.

<http://www.yptenc.org.uk/>

8. A FATHER'S DAY TOP TEN (ANIMAL FATHERS)

Lessons from America's animal kingdom in how to be a superdad:

TRUST EVOLUTION TO give the males of many species an excuse not to stick around and help with the kids. "Life's overriding goal is to get your genes out there with a minimum amount of invested energy and time," explains Les Kaufman, an evolutionary ecologist at Boston University's Marine Program. "The female's role usually forces her to put much more time into the parenting process. So she's choosier selecting a mate to avoid wasting this time and energy. The male uses less energy but also has less control over whether his genes make it into the next generation. So he hedges his bets by mating as much as possible." It only follows that the males of many species have adopted a "love 'em and leave 'em" strategy. But some animal fathers have taken other paths--shaped by such factors as severe living conditions that require effort from

both parents for the young to survive. Or unusual reproductive techniques like external fertilization (used by fish) that leave males the last ones present--and therefore stuck with the parenting duties. No matter the reason, various animal dads are out there plugging away and raising their young. Here's a Fathers Day recognition of 10 of our national best (unscientifically chosen, with admittedly human criteria)--as well as one winner of the worst-dad category.

****BEST TOUGH-LOVE DAD**

Long before the male red fox's love gets tough, he is an attentive, indulgent mate and father. For the first month after the birth of his young, his vixen must stay in her den, doubling as a food source and thermal blanket for their young. Dad's job is providing her with food every four to six hours until she can leave the den and start hunting as well. Researchers have seen fox dads exhibiting much excitement about their pups, playing with them endlessly. One father was even observed waiting for a watchful aunt to fall asleep and then quietly calling to his pups to come play with him. After three months, it's time for life's first harsh lesson: no more free meals. "Through years of observation, I've come to believe parents start reducing food as a tactic to get the pups moving away from the den," says David Henry, ecologist for the Canadian National Parks. "And it's the father that takes the lead with this strategy." Fox fathers don't just leave their young hungry, however, they help teach survival skills. They bury surplus food close to the den and disguise it with leaves and twigs. This technique, says Henry, teaches the pups to sniff and forage. Biologist Shelly Pruss (one of Henry's students) studied the closely related swift fox in a region where they were being killed by coyotes. There, she saw a male fox playing ambush with his offspring as if teaching them how to escape from predators.

****BEST AMPHIBIAN DAD**

Truthfully, there is not much competition. The male barking frog in the U.S. Southwest is the only North American frog known to pitch in with parenting. His contribution? He stays near the eggs until they're hatched, wetting them down with urine when they begin to dry out.

****MOST THOROUGHLY MODERN DAD**

The phalarope takes role reversal to extremes. The male makes the nest, incubates the eggs and cares for the young. His breeding plumage is also less colorful than his mate's, almost unheard of in the avian world. In this country, northern and red-necked phalaropes nest in Alaskan tundra, and Wilson's phalaropes nest in inland marshes in the West.

****MOST MULTITUD HOUSEHOLD**

While a female jacana guards her territory from predators, her harem bustles with more domestic tasks: As many as four male counterparts are each building their nests and rearing their individual clutch of eggs. Usually found south of the U.S. border, these long-legged and long-toed wading birds sometimes range into Texas.

****BEST FEMALE-IMPERSONATING DAD**

The male seahorse doesn't have a real pregnancy (because in human terms, at least, then he would be a she), but it comes pretty close. In fact, according to evolutionary ecologist Sara Lewis at Tufts University, "Seahorses are the champions of paternal care. They are one of the few animals where the males are morphologically specialized to take care of the young." Talk about role reversal. After an elaborate courtship that includes sunrise swims along the ocean floor, the female inserts a tube inside the male's brood pouch and "impregnates" him with eggs. While she swims off, the male knocks his body against a plant or rock to settle the now fertilized eggs in his pouch. Researchers speculate the lining of the male's pouch may function much like a mammal's placenta, helping supply nutrients and oxygen to the young. As these embryos grow (for 10 to 30 days depending upon the species), the male seahorse's belly swells great with child (actually, 10 to 300 offspring, depending upon the species). Come time for delivery, the seahorse doubles up to squeeze his swollen abdomen and pop out progeny. The process can take hours as the young spring free and clumsily swim to hook themselves on nearby grasses. The male will then go back to the same partner later that day to mate again. Seahorses can be found in all of the nation's shallow coastal waters.

****DAD WITH THE BEST DIETING PLAN**

The male sea catfish's mouth is his nursery, as he swims around with jaws full of eggs the size of marbles, which he picks up shortly after the female lays them. This strategy precludes eating, so he lives off body fat for the month it takes the eggs to hatch and also for the two or three weeks his young need to grow into independence. Sea catfish inhabit temperate coastal and brackish waters in the northern Gulf of Mexico and southern Florida.

****MOST MISUNDERSTOOD DAD**

While paternal care goes against the norm in the insect world, it also went against the grain of Florence W. Slater, the Victorian scientist who discovered that the male giant water bug shouldered his species' parenting burden: "That the male chafes under the burden is unmistakable," she wrote. "In fact, my suspicions as to the sex of the egg-carrier were first aroused by watching one . . . trying to free itself from its load of eggs." Slater's prejudice led her to misinterpret the behavior of the most conscientious bug dad, whose parenting stint begins with an elaborate courtship dance. "Unlike males in many other species, he tends to be more coy and cautious, and the female more aggressive," notes Randy Morgan, head keeper of the Insectarium at the Cincinnati Zoo. Once they've mated, the female essentially glues her eggs on the male's back. "He'll be expending a lot of energy during this parenting process," says Morgan. "So after she lays some eggs, he insists they mate again to ensure his paternity." After he's loaded up with 150 or more eggs, the male water bug is totally responsible for them. He strokes the eggs-- not, as Slater thought, to dislodge them but to clean them. He executes a sort of deep knee bend to aerate the eggs. He

sometimes sits at the water surface to dry them off and get rid of parasites. Mostly, however, "he takes advantage of having his eggs mounted on a mobile unit and moves around to escape predators," says Morgan. Observant naturalists in the southwestern United States and Florida can see these behaviors in and near moving water at higher elevations. Within a few weeks, the eggs triple in size. Right before they hatch, the male stops eating to avoid consuming his offspring. Once his young hatch and scatter, the male ends his parenting session by kicking the egg pads off his back--this session anyway. He can have three more clutches before breeding season is over.

****MOST SELF-SACRIFICING DAD**

When the tide's in, the lumpsucker (a stout-bodied, tadpole-shaped fish found in our northern coastal waters) isn't much different from other fish dads that aerate their eggs by fanning them with fins or tail. When the tide recedes, however, the lumpsucker goes the extra mile by staying put. He remains with his eggs by attaching himself to the rocks with a sucker formed from his pelvic fins, a kamikaze move exposing him to hungry gulls and crows.

****HARDEST WORKING DAD**

He starts by establishing his territory and attracting a mate with his "three or five hooter" call. Then, since his own species has no architects or builders, both partners must go house hunting for places like old squirrel nests, hawk nests or hollowed-out tree stumps. "I've even seen an owl take over a red-tailed hawk's nest," says ornithologist Richard J. Clark at York College of Pennsylvania. In late winter, the female lays her two or three eggs and the male's marathon begins. While she keeps those eggs from freezing, he brings home the bacon (or, in the owl's case, rats, mice, squirrels--and even prey as large as pheasants). In most bird species, says Clark, the female is the smaller animal, but not birds of prey. So the male great horned owl must feed himself and another adult about 25 percent larger than he. With two or three hatchlings crying for food, his burden multiplies, especially since the mother is caring for owlets that can't maintain their own body temperature for the first days or weeks of life. After about a month, however, she starts to help hunt. It's a good thing too; the fledglings will grow bigger than their parents and require as much as one-fourth their body weight in daily food intake.

****BEST BACHELOR-PAD DAD**

In spring, the male threespined stickleback gets domestic; but to become a homebody, he must build a home. Using twigs, plant debris and mucus as mortar, the resident of northern U.S. waters and the eastern North Pacific meticulously constructs bower-like nests. "It's wonderful to watch," says Boston University's Les Kaufman. "He backs up and stares at the nest like an artist, then swims over to make adjustments. He'll add a stick or two, spitting water to move them into place." Once satisfied with his creation, the stickleback turns to finding a mate. Advertising availability with a bright red belly and blue-green on his tail, he approaches a female and vibrates to signal his interest. To capture hers, he

shows off his prime real estate. The process continues until a female enters his nest to lay eggs. Her role done, the male chases her out and swims through the nest to fertilize what she has left behind. Then he may add to his brood by repeating the process with other females. "Everybody's out for themselves here, working to pass their genes on," says Kaufman. "Females eat the eggs of their competitors. And a male eats eggs if he didn't end up liking the female who laid them. Or if he gets too hungry." Once he moves on to guarding his nest, the stickleback is a protective dad. He fans oxygen-filled water to the eggs with his fins. He removes eggs infected with fungus. He defends his young fry, which remain in the nest for a few days to feed on their still-attached yolk. And he gathers wanderers in his mouth and spits them back into their nursery until they're ready to be off on their own.

**WORST DAD

Deadbeat dads who desert their young are bad enough, but the grizzly bear actually kills cubs. To be fair, the grizzly is an equal-opportunity assassin. He goes after any cubs in his home range, an area as big as 1,200 square miles, where a half dozen females could be rearing young. "There's a good chance he's killing his own offspring," says biologist Harry Reynolds of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in Fairbanks. A murderous male doesn't find it easy to get past mother bears, however--despite the fact that he is likely two or three times bigger than they are. Females with cubs are ferociously protective, and the more aggressive the female, the more likely she'll succeed in protecting her young. "This characteristic has obvious evolutionary advantages and may in part explain the species' personality traits," adds Reynolds. Killing progeny seems counterproductive, evolutionarily speaking, so why does the grizzly practice infanticide? According to biologist Vic Barnes at Alaska's Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge, murderous males may be regulating the size of the bear population. Since females can have litters of mixed paternity, another theory suggests a male kills cubs so a female will come back into estrus and he can impregnate her again to better ensure passing on his genes. To Reynolds, neither theory seems conclusive. "Here's one thing we do know," he says. "Bears are successful because they are opportunists, eating anything from grasses to whale carcasses. If that food source is occasionally another bear, I doubt they stop to think about it."

Source: National Wildlife Federation & Susan Goodman

LOVE THOSE HUMMERS!

*A hummingbird's glittering, metallic-bright colors help it survive. How? Most of the iridescent feathers are flat and mirrorlike. You can see their flashy hues only when the light shines on them a certain way. Most of the time the feathers just look dull brown. And that makes it hard for predators to spot a hummingbird when it's flitting about. But those tricky colored feathers also help a male get a mate. When it wants to be seen, a male hummer can let the light shine on his feathers in just the right way.

**Hummingbirds burn up food energy faster than any animal on the planet--about 100 times faster than an elephant.

**How do hummingbirds survive cold nights? They go into a sort of hibernation called torpor. During torpor, a hummingbird's temperature falls by almost 50 degrees. Its heart rate drops from 500 beats a minute to less than 50. And it looks as if it were dead. Hummingbirds usually come out of torpor about an hour or two before the sun rises. Then they slowly become active again.

**Many hummingbirds migrate amazingly far between their winter and summer homes. For example, some rufous hummingbirds fly more than 2,000 miles (3,220 km) from Mexico north to their summer homes in Alaska. In the fall, they make the same trek in reverse. Hummingbirds migrate alone, not in flocks, resting and feeding often along the way.

**Just-hatched hummingbirds are tiny. Three "newborn" ruby-throated hummingbirds weigh less than a dime!

**When a male Anna's hummingbird is courting a female, it flies up as high as 150 feet (46 m) above the female before swooping down toward her, showing off his brilliant colors and clever moves. As he swoops, he makes a loud, popping noise by rubbing his tail feathers together. Many other male hummer species do fancy moves like this, too, to win over a mate.

HUMMER FEEDER

Want to attract hummingbirds to your yard? You can also make your own feeder using one of these ideas.

Jar Feeder. Use a nail to poke a 1/8-inch (3-mm) hole in the lid of a clean baby food jar. Fill the jar with sugar water and screw on the lid. Add red paint or tape around the hole to attract the birds' attention. Attach wire around the lid to hang the feeder.

Plastic Bottle Feeder. In a clean plastic bottle, make a hole about 1 inch (2.5 cm) from the cap. Push a plastic straw through the hole. Fill the bottle with water, turn it upside down, and adjust the straw until water fills it up without spilling out. Empty the bottle and glue the straw in place with waterproof glue. Tie a string around the bottle to hang it, and add a circle of red cardboard or plastic around the straw.

Frisbee Feeder. Turn a red Frisbee upside down and fill it with sugar water. Simply set it on a table, or poke holes at the top of the rim and attach wire to hang it.

Hang your feeder in the shade. Look for a place with trees or bushes nearby to give hummers somewhere to hide and rest between visits.

Fill Your Hummer Feeder With This Tasty Mix:

**Mix ½ cup of sugar with 1 cup of hot water.

**Stir until the sugar dissolves.

**Add 1 cup of cold water.

Sugar water spoils quickly in summer heat. Every few days, be sure to scrub your feeder clean, rinse it thoroughly, and refill it. You can keep extra sugar water in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.

Source: National Wildlife Federation & Kate Hofmann

PROPER ATV SIZES FOR CHILDREN

The All-Terrain Vehicle Association has earned a major victory in its effort to convince federal safety experts that young riders should be allowed to ride ATVs that are the proper size for the child's body size.

In testimony to the Consumer Product Safety Commission over the past several years, the ATVA argued that current CPSC age guidelines limiting children under 16 to small ATVs prevented or discouraged youth from getting ATV-riding training.

That's because free training is offered by manufacturers to buyers of new ATVs, but only for family members who are of the "proper" age for the purchased ATV. In other words, if you buy an adult-size 300cc ATV, only those 16 and older are eligible for training. A child can be 5-foot-10, 180 pounds and be just weeks shy of 16 years old, but can't take the free training because children under 16 are limited to ATVs with engine displacements of 90cc or fewer.

In late May, the CPSC staff made recommendations to the full board to improve ATV safety nationwide, including rewriting the restrictive age guidelines "so that children under the age of 16 can ride and be trained on ATVs which are more likely to fit them physically and which conform to their developmental capabilities."

The staff report notes that formal training may reduce an ATV rider's risk of injury by half.

"This is great news," said ATVA Director Doug Morris. "The recommendation to the CPSC board by its ATV Safety Review team validates what we've been saying all along: that the guidelines must be changed so that as many kids as possible can get ATV safety training. And that will go a long way to reduce youth injuries."

The three-member board will review the staff recommendations in a public hearing at its Bethesda, Maryland, offices on June 15. It's part of an initiative to write new federal safety rules related to ATVs.

Besides suggesting changes in the CPSC's age guidelines, the staff recommends that all ATV buyers be given free safety training and information, and that smaller machines for use by riders under 16 should have automatic transmissions and speed limiters. ATVs for children ages 6 to 11 would have speed limits of 10 mph, while machines for children 12 to 15 would be limited to 15 mph.

The staff also recommends that ATVs sold in the United States should conform to uniform mechanical requirements for such things as brakes, suspension, controls and lighting.

This proposed rule-making is the result of a petition submitted to the CPSC by the Consumer Federation of America and other groups that called for the CPSC to ban the sale of full-size ATVs for use by children under the age of 16.

That potential ban has been opposed by Morris and American Motorcyclist Association/ATVA Legislative Affairs Specialist Royce Wood, who testified in a commission hearing on the issue. Rather than a blanket ban on the sale of ATVs for use by kids, the ATVA supports a more thoughtful approach that includes greater parental involvement.

"We believe that proper training, the use of safety gear, parental supervision, and allowing children to ride right-size vehicles would do much to reduce ATV-related injuries and deaths involving children under 16," Morris has repeatedly said.

Source: All Terrain Vehicle Association

Emily B. Kling, Ed.D.
Extension Specialist, 4-H & Youth Development
Alabama Cooperative Extension System
210 Duncan Hall
Auburn University, AL 36849-5620
PH: (334) 844-2226
FX: (334) 844-2252
CELL: (334) 750-3540
klingeb@auburn.edu

"Teaching a child not to step on a caterpillar is as valuable to the child, as it is to the caterpillar."

--Bradley Miller