

Directions

Read this article. Then answer questions 7 through 12.

Saving Snow Leopards

by Pamela Crowe

“Mountain Ghost”

- 1 The snow leopard is rarely seen by humans. This mysterious cat lives in 12 Asian countries among the world’s tallest mountains.
- 2 The snow leopard is smaller than the tiger, the lion, and the leopard of Africa and Asia. It weighs as much as a cheetah, but is shorter and stockier. The cat’s compact shape and thick fur help keep it warm in glacier-chilled air. Dark markings dapple its light-gray coat, camouflaging it in rocky terrain. Big paws make padding over snow easier. An extra-long tail provides balance on steep, rugged ground.
- 3 You might think the snow leopard would be safe living in such harsh, remote places. But it faces multiple threats from humans. The cat has lost important stretches of habitat. (A habitat is the place that fills an animal’s needs—mainly food, shelter, and mates.) Mining, wars, and overgrazing by farm animals have all led to this loss of habitat.

Protecting the Herd

- 4 The loss of habitat has caused a food shortage. Snow leopards eat wild goats and sheep. When farm animals eat too much vegetation, wild plant eaters can’t find enough food to stay healthy. Females don’t have enough babies. Over time, the numbers of wild goats and sheep go down, and snow leopards have less to eat. Then the big cats eat livestock, and the herders kill the leopards to protect their livelihoods.
- 5 Agencies are working to save the cats and help herders at the same time. Some agencies give herders wire mesh and wood to keep snow leopards from entering their stables at night. Some pay herders for the animals they lose to snow leopards. In exchange, the herders stop killing snow leopards and leave more room and plants for the wild goats and sheep.

GO ON

- 6 Are the conservation programs working? Researchers estimate that only 3,500 to 7,500 snow leopards are alive today. But they need more reliable ways to count leopards before they will know.
- 7 That's where scientists like Dr. Kyle McCarthy are needed. He traveled to Kyrgyzstan to test ways of estimating snow leopard numbers. He camped in the mountains with Dr. Jennifer McCarthy (his wife) and other co-workers. They saw no leopards, but they hadn't expected to. Instead, they looked for evidence the cats left behind. "You have to find something related to them: poops, scrapes (claw marks), and pee," Dr. Kyle McCarthy says.
- 8 The group collected scat (poop) for DNA analysis. Along with the waste material of digestion, scat contains cells from the animal's own body. DNA is material inside those cells that, like fingerprints, can identify an individual animal.
- 9 The team also used automatic cameras. The scientists placed motion-and-heat-sensitive cameras along a mountain ridge. When a snow leopard neared one of these "camera traps," the camera snapped its picture.
- 10 Each snow leopard's spot pattern is different. Researchers compared patterns in the photos to identify cats. The cameras had taken photos of 15 different snow leopards at two study sites.

A Close Encounter

- 11 Shannon Kachel, Dr. Kyle McCarthy's graduate assistant, has searched for snow leopards in Tajikistan, where he almost saw one. "I was hiking along a ridgeline in the late afternoon and came around the corner of a rock outcropping to find a steaming, fresh kill site with snow leopard signs all round," Kachel says. "I could see and hear where the cat had knocked some rocks loose as it ran away from me, but even though I waited until it was nearly dark, I never saw the cat."

GO ON

12 “Most people will never see a snow leopard, yet it has a right to exist,” Dr. Kyle McCarthy says. “It’s too magnificent to think about losing.”

THREATS TO SNOW LEOPARDS	
Illegal hunting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Snow leopards are hunted for their fur and bones.
Loss of habitat	<ul style="list-style-type: none">People and livestock move into snow leopard range.
Loss of prey	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Fewer prey are available to snow leopards when wild sheep and goats are hunted.Livestock compete with the wild sheep and goats for food and the number of wild animals is reduced.
Killed by herders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Sheep and goat herders kill the leopards when the leopards eat livestock.
Lack of effective protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The areas in which the snow leopards live are too large to protect.Many countries cannot afford to pay for protection.
Lack of awareness and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Herders do not understand the importance of snow leopards to the ecosystem.

GO ON

7 What does the word “conservation” mean as it is used in paragraph 6?

- A** action
- B** education
- C** preparation
- D** protection

8 How does paragraph 9 connect to paragraph 6 in the article?

- A** by describing a method for counting snow leopards
- B** by describing what it is like to see a snow leopard
- C** by explaining why snow leopards are rarely seen by humans
- D** by explaining how scientists identify individual snow leopards

9 Which idea **best** explains why Dr. McCarthy and his co-workers traveled to Kyrgyzstan?

- A** “The loss of habitat has caused a food shortage.” (paragraph 4)
- B** “But they need more reliable ways to count leopards before they will know.” (paragraph 6)
- C** “They saw no leopards, but they hadn’t expected to.” (paragraph 7)
- D** “Researchers compared patterns in the photos to identify cats.” (paragraph 10)

GO ON

10 Which idea from the article **best** supports the main idea?

- A** “The snow leopard is smaller than the tiger, the lion, and the leopard of Africa and Asia.” (paragraph 2)
- B** “Researchers estimate that only 3,500 to 7,500 snow leopards are alive today.” (paragraph 6)
- C** “Each snow leopard’s spot pattern is different.” (paragraph 10)
- D** “The cameras had taken photos of 15 different snow leopards at two study sites.” (paragraph 10)

11 How is the article **mainly** organized?

- A** compare and contrast
- B** sequence of events
- C** question then answer
- D** cause and effect

12 How does the table at the end of “Saving Snow Leopards” support the main idea of the article?

- A** by showing reasons why snow leopards are struggling to survive
- B** by listing ways to better protect snow leopards
- C** by presenting new information about the habitat of snow leopards
- D** by providing evidence that there are fewer snow leopards alive now than in the past

GO ON

Directions

Read this story. Then answer questions 19 through 24.

This story is based on a folktale from Australia.

The Scarlet Ribbon

by Emily Hoffman

- 1 Long ago, in Australia, there lived a girl named Kanikiya. From the time she was small, Kanikiya loved to dance. She moved as gracefully as the brolgas, the tall, slender cranes that courted along the riverbank. The people in the camp would often see Kanikiya dancing down by the water, for she wore a scarlet ribbon around her neck, and it floated as she moved. People believed she danced like moonlight shining on the running river.
- 2 Dancing was fine for a young child, but by the time she was twelve, the people in the camp did not approve of such frivolity in a young woman. She should be working, they insisted. Only the youngest children danced away the day.

frivolity = carefree behavior
- 3 Kanikiya's mother, hearing disapproval around the camp, warned her that she must stop dancing. "Remember the story of the lazy girl who would not work," she said. "She turned into a dingo. The rest of her life she ran with packs of wild dogs, preying on sheep at night."
- 4 Kanikiya, who knew the camp legends, shivered at her mother's words. Such tales frightened her. But she knew she wasn't lazy. It wasn't laziness that made her forget her work. The need to dance surged through her. She could not stop dancing any more than she could stop breathing. She feared that if she stopped doing either, she would die.

GO ON

5 Flocks of silvery gray brolgas stopped near Kanikiya's camp during their migration in the spring and fall of each year. Then, more than any other time, Kanikiya would forget her work, steal to the river, and watch the birds dance as the day darkened. As if impelled by a strong, mysterious force, Kanikiya would join in their dance at the river's edge, her scarlet ribbon flying behind her. If only I could dance with the cranes all my life, thought Kanikiya as she trudged back to the camp, then I would be at peace. One spring evening Kanikiya's mother found her daughter dancing near the river before she had finished gathering cabbage palms for their evening meal.

impelled = moved or driven into action

6 "I can do nothing with you, Kanikiya!" her mother shouted. "I have decided. You must not leave the camp until the brolgas have left. I feel they have powers over you that must be broken." While her mother spoke, Kanikiya felt tears gather. She sensed the eyes of the brolgas upon her. Glancing up, she marveled as they dipped their heads and danced a slow, mournful dance. They understand my sorrow, Kanikiya thought, the knowledge warming her.

7 Her mother grabbed her arm, pulling her toward the camp. Within Kanikiya's heart something died as she left the river that evening. Plodding up the bank, she felt her life begin to ebb away. The next day, instead of going out to gather food, Kanikiya stayed in the camp. She wove baskets from the reeds the other children collected. Day followed day in a mournful blur. She couldn't eat. She wouldn't smile. The heaviness in her heart grew, and because of that she became weaker. As she worked, she listened to the happy calls of the brolgas and imagined herself dancing with them, twirling, dipping, and free. At night she danced with the birds in her dreams.

8 If only I could dance with them again, she'd think each morning upon waking, then I would find rest for my soul. Soon the call of the brolgas became too strong for Kanikiya to deny. One morning before dawn she heard them calling her. Slipping out of the camp, she rushed down to the riverbank to dance with the cranes.

GO ON

9 Just this one time, she thought as she whirled, her scarlet ribbon floating behind her. Just this once, then peace will visit me again. Later that morning, she was not found at her weaving. Her mother looked for her throughout the camp and, not finding her there, searched near the river.

10 As Kanikiya's mother neared the water, she found dozens of wild brolgas dancing and dipping to the sound of the wind in the trees. Fearful of their savage dance, she turned to go. But before she started up the path, she noticed one graceful crane in the center of the flock, a scarlet ribbon tied around her neck, dipping her head in greeting.

GO ON

19 Which detail from paragraph 1 **best** supports a theme of the story?

- A** The folktale takes place long ago.
- B** Kanikiya likes to wear a scarlet ribbon.
- C** The brolgas are birds that live along the river.
- D** Kanikiya has a talent that is recognized by others.

20 Read this sentence from paragraph 6.

They understand my sorrow, Kanikiya thought, the knowledge warming her.

What does the phrase “the knowledge warming her” suggest?

- A** a feeling of comfort
- B** sadness and disappointment
- C** a feeling of anger
- D** wisdom and clear thinking

21 What does the word “mournful” mean as it is used in paragraph 7?

- A** angry
- B** bored
- C** nervous
- D** sad

GO ON

22

Which sentence from the story **best** shows how a character's actions help to develop the story?

- A “You must not leave the camp until the brolgas have left.”
(paragraph 6)
- B “She wove baskets from the reeds the other children collected.”
(paragraph 7)
- C “Slipping out of the camp, she rushed down to the riverbank to dance with the cranes.” (paragraph 8)
- D “Her mother looked for her throughout the camp and, not finding her there, searched near the river.” (paragraph 9)

23

Which statement **best** describes how Kanikiya changes from the beginning to the end of the story?

- A She realizes that she must leave her home to find happiness.
- B She learns that the most important thing is to obey the rules.
- C She discovers that the birds love her more than she loves them.
- D She is frightened by camp tales and then sees that they are untrue.

24

Which detail would be **most** important to include in a summary of the story?

- A Kanikiya is often seen near the river by others.
- B Kanikiya's mother tells her a story about a girl.
- C Kanikiya feels like she must dance.
- D Kanikiya weaves baskets.

STOP

Directions

Read this story. Then answer questions 25 through 27.

Emily lives in Washington, D.C., in 1908. This afternoon she has been invited by her friends to see her first motion picture. In 1908, motion pictures were silent, so piano music was played in the theater to help the audience understand what was happening on the screen.

Excerpt from *Wheels of Change*

by Darlene Beck Jacobson

- 1 We're bundled under wool blankets to keep most of the chill off. With a jug of hot chocolate and a sack of Mrs. Cook's sugar cookies, I hardly feel the cold.
- 2 Charlie does most of the talking, telling us about the things we'll see. He's been a couple times already, and since Rose and I are first timers, we nod our heads, nibble cookies, and listen. Charlie's excitement captures us like lightning bugs until we're glowing and buzzing with anticipation. Before I know it, we pull up in front of a store on Seventh Street. A huge sign in the window says: SEE THE WONDERS OF THE WORLD. HAVE SOME LAUGHS. ENJOY THE FINEST SONG AND DANCE ACTS AND MUCH MORE FOR ONLY 5 CENTS.
- 3 "Are we really going to see singing, dancing, and action all at once?" I ask. It's hard to imagine so many exciting things at the same time.
- 4 "Just wait until you see!" Charlie crows.
- 5 Mr. Cook ties up the horse and helps us all out of the wagon. "Bring the hot chocolate and cookies," he says.
- 6 "We can eat and drink while we watch the show," Charlie explains.
- 7 To say it is unlike anything I've ever seen only tells part of the story.
- 8 We enter a room nearly the size of the carriage barn. There are some benches up front, but they're taken. We sit in some straight-back chairs half-way down the room. No sooner do we sit than the lights dim, and a spotlight shines on the white wall in front of us. An enormous photograph fills up the light on the wall and starts to move.

GO ON

- 9 It moves faster.
- 10 When a train moves past open fields, mountains, and lakes, I gasp. I can almost feel the wind on my face as the train rushes by. There are comedy skits with famous folks from vaudeville telling jokes, slipping on banana skins, and singing funny songs. I watch dance pictures, and one about the American Revolution with people dressed in costumes.
- vaudeville = a type of entertainment
that was popular in the United
States at the time of this story**
- 11 I'm dizzy, wide-eyed and breathless, watching it all. When I think it can't be any more exciting, a piano player begins music that starts out slow and easy. Once the action on the wall speeds up, the music does too, so I have the feeling I'm right in the middle of the fight between the cowboys and Indians. Then I'm chasing bank robbers down a city street. It's as if it's happening right now before us. Stories are told with signs spelling out what's happening, and, through it all, the piano music fills the room.
- 12 The sights make me want to jump from my seat, but the piano music makes me want to dance, soar, and fly. It's almost as good as being in the forge.
- 13 Almost—but not quite.
- 14 Still, I can't take my eyes off the piano player. In the dark it's hard to see what he looks like. His music makes the crowd laugh, cry, shout, and swoon, at just the right moments.
- 15 When it's over and the lights come back on, the piano player faces the crowd and takes a bow.
- 16 My mouth falls open and I can't stop staring at what I see.
- 17 A woman.
- 18 "Well, what do you think?" Charlie asks.
- 19 "I loved the song and dance parts," Rose says, smiling.

GO ON

- 20 “Did you see the woman playing the piano? I didn’t know girls could have such a job.” I’m so excited I feel like it’s my birthday and Mama made my favorite applesauce spice cake.
- 21 “It was a lady?” Charlie scratches his head.
- 22 Rose, Mr. Cook, and I all laugh at his confused expression.
- 23 “How could you not know that?” I say.
- 24 Charlie shrugs. “I was so caught up in the action, I didn’t pay attention to anything else.”
- 25 “She made the action,” I say as we gather our coats and empty cups and head for the exit.
- 26 “You’re crazy,” says Charlie.
- 27 “What do you mean?” asks Rose.
- 28 “Do you think it would have been anywhere near as exciting to watch with no sound?” I say.
- 29 They all look at me, and Mr. Cook laughs and says, “By golly, Emily, that’s something I never considered. The moving pictures were entertaining, but that piano told you when there was danger, or tragedy, or just plain fun.”
- 30 “Exactly,” I say.

GO ON

25

Why does Emily say that she and her friends are “glowing and buzzing with anticipation” in paragraph 2 of “Excerpt from *Wheels of Change*”? Use **two** details from the story to support your response.

GO ON

26

What theme is supported by paragraphs 12 through 17 of “Excerpt from *Wheels of Change*”? Use **two** details from the story to support your response.

GO ON

27

How are Rose's and Charlie's reactions to the piano music different in "Excerpt from *Wheels of Change*"? Use **two** details from the story to support your response.

GO ON

Directions

Read this article. Then answer questions 28 and 29.

How Birds Beat the Odds

by Charles C. Hofer

1 Raising a nest of young birds is a lot of work. Parent birds have to keep their eggs safe from predators, shelter the chicks from weather, and find enough food for all those hungry mouths. Different kinds of birds do these things in different ways. But they all face the same challenge: making sure that there's a next generation of birds.

The More, the Merrier

2 The Gambel's quail lives in the deserts of the American Southwest. These ground-dwelling birds usually lay 10 to 12 eggs at a time in a shallow nest. That's a lot of tiny mouths to feed.

3 Gambel's quail chicks don't need much attention. Just hours after hatching, they're up and running. And they'd better be quick! These birds are a favorite prey of desert hunters like bobcats, snakes, and hawks. This means that only a few chicks will survive to be adults. By laying lots of eggs, adult quails increase the chances that at least some of their young will grow up to lay eggs themselves.

Try, Try Again

4 American robins are common backyard birds. They also lay many eggs—but not all at once. Instead, robins raise two to four batches of eggs over the summer.

5 Robins build cup-shaped nests that hungry predators like snakes or raccoons can easily raid. Building several nests in a season instead of just once makes it more likely that at least one clutch will survive to become adult robins.

Spiny Hideaway

6 Many birds try to improve their eggs' chances by hiding their nests. The Gila woodpecker has found a great hiding place—inside the giant saguaro cactus. This woodpecker drills a hole in the cactus, where she lays about six eggs. Not many egg-stealers are willing to risk being stuck by the sharp spines.

GO ON

28

According to the article “How Birds Beat the Odds,” why does the Gambel’s quail lay so many eggs? Use **two** details from the article to support your response.

GO ON

29

In “How Birds Beat the Odds,” how does the heading “Try, Try Again” relate to the information in paragraphs 4 and 5? Use **two** details from the article to support your response.

GO ON

Directions

Read this article. Then answer questions 30 and 31.

Meerkat Chat

by Karen de Seve

- 1 The afternoon sun bakes the hot desert sand. It's too hot to hunt—or even move. In the shade of a tree is a pile of brown fur, skinny tails, and tiny feet. A mob of 20 meerkats naps, waiting for the temperature to cool down so they can return to foraging for food.
- 2 No one notices that one curious youngster is more interested in exploring than sleeping. He scurries through the tall grass toward the edge of the family's four-square-mile home base. Then he stops, stands up on his hind legs, and looks around. Something is watching him.
- 3 A nearby goshawk eyes the meerkat and launches into flight. It can easily swoop down and nab the furry pup in its orange claws. The meerkat sounds the alarm. He squeals "danger, danger" into the air. The urgent call alerts his family, which runs to his rescue. The goshawk flies away, realizing that it can't win against a big group.
- 4 As meerkats know, danger lurks everywhere in the Kalahari Desert of South Africa. Strength in numbers is a survival skill for these burrowing animals. Another key to survival—out in the world or within the family—is communication. Meerkats have a collection of chirps, squeaks, and growls that mean different things.
- 5 "Meerkats have more than 30 different calls or vocalizations. These are different things they want to say," says Simon Townsend, a researcher at the Kalahari Meerkat Project in South Africa. The organization's scientists have spent years studying wild meerkat mobs. They're cracking the communication code to figure out what meerkats are saying—and how much they understand.

Making the Call

- 6 Lookouts in a meerkat mob constantly scan the surroundings for danger. Up on hind legs, head in the air, looking, listening. Maybe it will be a bird in the sky or a snake in the grass. Maybe a wild cat is stalking from the bushes.

GO ON

- 7 Suddenly a shadow moves across the grass. A lookout gives a high-pitched call and everyone runs for the burrow. From the safety of the entrance, they all look at the sky to see the incoming threat. An eagle flies over the tunnels that the meerkat family calls home. But the eagle is a mile away and not interested in meerkats today.
- 8 To figure out if that alarm call had a specific meaning, researchers watch what the lookout saw and how the mob responds to his alarm. They also record the call with a microphone. The team has been collecting different calls to see what they mean. “We know a certain call is always made when they see something dangerous in the air or on the ground,” Townsend says. “One call might mean, ‘Look, danger on the ground.’ Another might mean, ‘Look, danger in the air.’ ”

GO ON

30

Based on the article “Meerkat Chat,” why is communication important to meerkats? Use **two** details from the article to support your response.

GO ON

31

In “How Birds Beat the Odds” and “Meerkat Chat,” what is one problem that birds and meerkats share? How do birds and meerkats try to solve this problem? Use details from **both** articles to support your response.

In your response, be sure to

- identify a problem that birds and meerkats share
- explain how birds and meerkats try to solve this problem
- use details from **both** articles to support your response

GO ON