

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE



THE SPIRIT OF SPRINGER **The Real-Life Rescue of an Orphaned Orca**

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little bigfoot
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GET MORE OUT OF THIS BOOK

GROUP DISCUSSION

- Before reading the book, elicit prior knowledge about what children already may know about orca populations in the world. Ask:

“Where do you think these animals live?”

“Have you read or heard anything recently in the media about these animals?”

“Have you ever seen a whale before?”

“How might a baby orca get separated from its mother in the first place?”

“Have you ever been separated from your family before? What did it feel like? Did someone help you get back to your family?”

GROUP ACTIVITIES

- After reading the story and the informational text at the end, have children create their own informational poster about orcas, by drawing and painting an orca and labeling external features that help this endangered animal survive in nature.
- Ask children to include the function of each feature such as: eyes/see; teeth/grip prey; fins/swim; flukes/propel through the water; melon/communicates using sound.
- Ask children to include 3 to 5 facts about orcas that the author includes in the text, such as on page 7: “[Springer] needed love and attention just as much as she needed food.” They can also do an internet search to find out more interesting facts about these animals.
- Have three groups of children conduct a research project, each on one of the three types of orcas: **resident**, **transient**, or **offshore**. Ask them to orally present their information and as a group, note similarities and/or differences by building a table.

Type of Orca	Habitat Range	Size	Diet

- Discuss what **evidence** the scientists used to determine who Springer was and where she was from.
- It is not always easy to know if a wild animal is sick because it might not show obvious signs, even up close. It may even be harder to know if a large marine mammal is ill because of the challenge of getting close to it in the water. Discuss what **evidence** the scientists used to determine the condition of Springer’s health. Note that wildlife biologists often become experts or specialists on one species of animal and earn a reputation for their work.

INDEPENDENT ACTIVITIES

- After reading the “Springer Still at Risk” section, ask children to think about what they and the people in their community can do to help preserve the habitat of the orca and create an awareness poster to put on social media.
- Ask: “How are the eagle, salmon, orca, and First Nations people connected? Describe the ways in which they depend upon one another. Why was it appropriate for the ‘Namgis chief to paddle out to greet Springer and welcome her home?”
- Ask children to research other animals that use **voice recognition** or **echolocation** in the water to communicate with one another as well as to locate their offspring. Respond to the questions: “How is this adaptation beneficial to animals in the wild?”
- “How do people interfere with this process?”
- “Is it ethical?”
- Research the question, “Does sound travel best in air or in water?”
- Ask children to write a response to the question: “Why is it important to preserve this animal species?” They should support their writing with a **claim**, details as **evidence**, and **reasoning** behind connections they make in their argument.
- Sometimes when people intervene in the natural course of an animal’s life cycle, things don’t go well. Ask children to respond to the question: “Was it right for humans to intervene for Springer?”