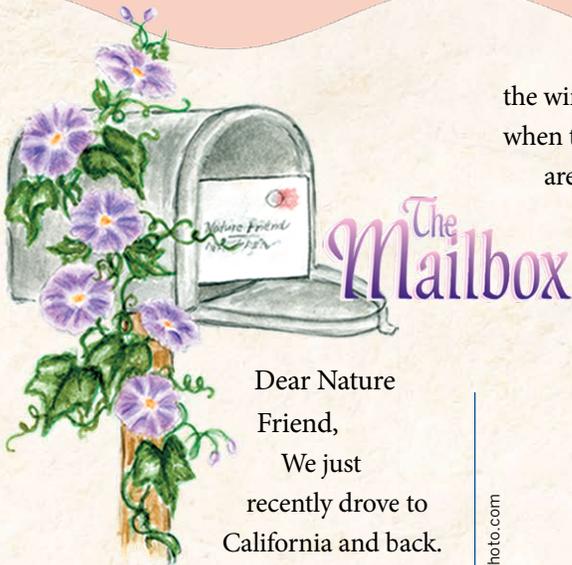


Splash! Oh, hi! You surprised me. Sorry about that smell, but I do that when I am surprised. I have dark splotches on the side of my head, along with several white stripes. I live in streams, ditches, ponds, and lakes in the eastern United States. Be careful; I may steal your bait while you're fishing. I am about 5 inches long. I am in the turtle family. My name comes from my defense system. Who am I?

Answer on page 11.

# WHO am I?

Joseph Henderson, 13  
Burnsville, MN



## The Mailbox

Dear Nature Friend,  
We just recently drove to California and back.

We saw so much nature. We saw a whole herd of elk just about 5 yards away! We also saw a whole herd of around 200 elephant seals, and we fed a bagel to some squirrels that would climb right into our laps! We went through some redwood forests. The redwoods were so tall that one tree could build several houses. We really enjoyed seeing God's amazing creation! We have such an awesome, mighty God!

*Sydney and Maya Simao  
Poulsbo, WA*

Dear Nature Friend,

Someone in the March issue mentioned something about "frozen fish." I learned that some ants can freeze in the winter and come out alive! When they freeze, they have eaten lots of food. They live through

the winter in their "ice huts." In spring when the ice melts, they unfreeze and are still healthy!

*Anna Olivia Lattus  
Beaverton, OR*

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## Nature Friend to the Rescue!

One of our milk cows was missing, so my brother and I went to look for her. In the pasture are some homemade feeders lying upside down until we need them. I like to see what is living under them. I have found mice and black bugs under them. Once, one of my sisters even found a garter snake! Maybe it wanted a "mouse dinner."

Tonight I turned a feeder over, saying to myself, "I wonder what is

under this one," and before I had time to think—a skunk sprayed right past my face! And oh, did it ever burn! My brother went on to look for the cow, while I ran back to the barn with burning eyes and horrible-tasting mouth.

I went to the milking parlor where Mom and my sister were milking. "Mom," I said, "a skunk sprayed me."

At first she looked shocked, then she assured me that I would be all right. "Tears are the best thing to cleanse burning eyes," she told me, "so let your eyes water." I did, and in about ten minutes I could see again.

Many thoughts ran through my mind: "That bad skunk! What will my friends say? How long will I have to live with this bad smell?"

As Mom and I walked to the house, she said, "I think *Nature Friend* has a recipe to take away the skunk smell." I waited in the basement while Mom mixed one quart hydrogen peroxide, one-fourth cup baking soda, and a squirt of liquid soap (see inside the front cover of the March 2008 issue of *Nature Friend*).

I scrubbed my face, hair, and hands with the foaming mixture, then Mom put my shirt and cap in it to soak. My tattered everyday coat went to the trash

burner. Last of all, I took a hot shower. After that, I smelled only faintly like skunk. How glad I was—now I could go along to prayer meeting in another hour, and no one would know what had happened unless I told them. In case they wouldn't believe me, I could tell them to sniff my hair!

Thank you, *Nature Friend*, for helping me out of my predicament! The rest of the family says "Thank you" too.

*Philip Zimmerman  
Tunas, MO*

Dear Nature Friend,

During our last shopping trip, my brother found something he thought was a butterfly. Mother said it was a



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*Do you have a nature experience you want to share, a question you'd like to ask, or a thought you want to share about something in Nature Friend? We want to hear from you! Write to: The Mailbox, 4253 Woodcock Lane, Dayton, VA 22821, or e-mail mailbox@naturefriendmagazine.com.*

moth, and since they live a short time, we could take it home. At home, we looked it up and found out it was a luna moth. We learned that it doesn't hear or eat, and it only lives in North America. I think it is very pretty.

*Caeli Werner  
Steelville, MO*

Dear Nature Friend,

Once my brothers and I were sitting on an overhanging tree around dusk watching our neighbours' goats when suddenly we noticed something swoop into a tree on the opposite end of the field. We looked, and it was a big barred owl. It just sat there looking around. Every once in a while it would silently swoop into the grass and flutter on the ground, then fly back up into another tree. It kept doing that again and again, every time flying back with nothing. A few days later my brothers saw the same owl again. This time he was sitting right over them looking at them when suddenly he spit a pellet at the goats. He stayed around for quite a while, but when I wanted to take a picture of him, he flew away and never came back. It seems that always happens when you want a picture. I am wondering if it swallows the mouse right away, or carries it back to its perch first. It seems strange that the owl never manages to catch anything.

*Conrad Vander Eyk  
Langley, BC*

Dear Conrad,

*Barred owls hunt from a perch for food they can swallow whole. When they observe prey, they swoop down and grab it with their sharp talons.*

*They are good at catching prey, but I am*

*sure they do not catch prey 100% of the time. I once observed a barn owl feeding young, and, if I recall correctly, I believe she would return with a mouse every 20 or 30 minutes. I have no idea how many she caught and ate.*

*—Nature Friend*

Dear Nature Friend,

Seashells are interesting! Take one of the spiral shells and look at the top spiral. Then, slowly spinning the shell, watch the same spiral. The spiral goes to the bottom!

There is a pond on our land, and we collect snail shells all the time.

Look up and read about different kinds of seashells!

*Katy M. Webster  
Willcox, AZ*

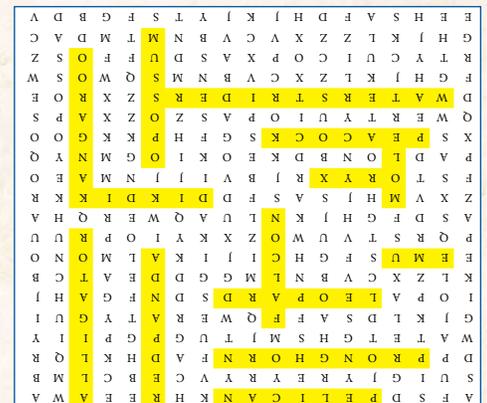
Dear Katy,

*Yes, seashells are interesting! You may read an article about them in the August 2007 Nature Friend.*

*—Nature Friend*

## ANSWERS

- Answer to Who Am I on page 10:  
Stinkpot
- Answer to Birds from North America on page 7:
1. Loon
  2. Grouse
  3. Lark
  4. Flycatcher
  5. Thrasher
  6. Tanager
  7. Magpie
  8. Seagull
  9. Sparrow
  10. Robin
  11. Goldfinch
  12. Hawk



Answer to Animal Word Search on page 7: