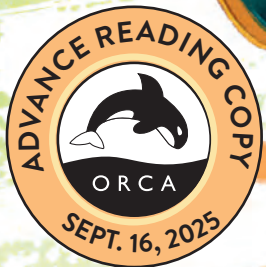


Etta Kaner

illustrated by
Heather Wilson



**If You
Meet a
BARFING BIRD**

How NOT to Help Animals

SURVIVAL OF THE HAIRIEST, SLEEPIEST, GROSSEST!

Animals have some unusual ways to survive in the wild. In *If You Meet a Barfing Bird*, kids discover why they should definitely NOT help the animals they meet. A red-lipped batfish doesn't want water wings and a hairy seaweed crab isn't looking for a haircut. And a hibernating bear would not appreciate an alarm clock—in fact, a wake-up call could be dangerous. Hilarious situations and outraged reactions from animals make for a laugh-out-loud read. Young readers will learn about the strange but true ways animals thrive in their natural habitats

Etta Kaner is an award-winning, internationally known author whose nonfiction books for children have been translated into many languages. A former teacher, she is passionate about science books for young readers. When she's not writing, Etta loves helping animals by growing a large variety of flowers and keeping a birdbath in her garden. She lives in Toronto.

Heather Wilson is a Canadian illustrator and animation designer. She is a graduate of Sheridan College's Bachelor of Illustration program and recipient of the Brenda Clark Visual Narrative Award. Raised on a farm in rural Ontario, she now lives in Oakville, Ontario.

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contact
1-800-210-5277
media@orcabook.com

If You Meet a Barfing Bird

Author: Etta Kaner

Illustrator: Heather Wilson

September 16, 2025

This illustrated nonfiction picture book explores the unique habits and survival skills of animals in the wild and the humorous consequences when kids try to help them.

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KEY SELLING POINTS

- A fun and fact-filled STEM picture book that introduces younger readers to unique animal behaviors. Backmatter includes additional information about each animal featured.
- This interactive book features a phrase on each spread so readers can discover animal behaviors they shouldn't interfere with.
- The whimsical illustrations depict the realistic behaviors of animals and how funny young people look trying to help the animals with those behaviors.
- This book uses humor to illustrate animal survival techniques, for example the barfing northern fulmar bird, and what happens when young people attempt to intervene with these survival techniques (like getting covered in self-defense barf).
- Etta Kaner is an award-winning author of more than 35 nonfiction titles for kids, including *Do NOT Eat Like a Tiger Shark*, *Do Frogs Drink Hot Chocolate?* and *Wild Buildings and Bridges*.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Etta Kaner is an award-winning, internationally known author whose nonfiction books for children have been translated into many languages. A former teacher, she is passionate about science books for young readers. When she's not writing, Etta loves helping animals by growing a large variety of flowers and keeping a birdbath in her garden. She lives in Toronto.



SHARON STEWART

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

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PROMOTIONAL PLANS INCLUDE

- Print and online advertising campaigns
- Promotion at national and regional school, library and trade conferences
- Extensive ARC distribution, including Edelweiss
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If You Meet a Barfing Bird

How NOT to Help Animals

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Do you love animals? Have you ever wanted to lend them a helping hand...er, paw? With some animals, that is NOT a good idea. They might not like it. In fact, the results could be DISGUSTING or even DANGEROUS!



If you meet a barfing bird,
FORGET ABOUT calling a vet.

WHY?

If the bird is a northern fulmar, it's not sick. But keep away anyway. The stinky stomach oil that fulmars vomit will never wash out of your clothes. Yet their chicks love to eat it, and adult fulmars snack on it during long flights. They also use it as a defense against larger seabirds, like skuas. The oil sticks to the seabirds' feathers, making it hard for them to fly.

Don't go
anywhere
near it!

Too late.





If you meet a sleeping black bear, it's **NOT** a **GOOD IDEA** to give it an alarm clock.

WHY?

Black bears hibernate to survive the winter—a time when there is no food for them. To save energy, they lower their heart rates and slow down their breathing. And they live off their body fat. Waking up early uses energy a bear can't spare. It could harm its health or make it angry. Bears wake up naturally when the air temperature warms up in the spring. No alarm clock needed!



Didn't you read the sign?



I was just trying to help.



If you meet a stinky mink frog, it's **NOT HELPFUL** to offer it deodorant.

WHY?

Being stinky keeps these frogs safe. When a mink frog is frightened by a predator like a snake, its skin gives off a rotten-onion smell. This turns off the predator but doesn't bother the frog. In fact, the frog often sheds its skin and then eats it. No sense in wasting good food!

An illustration of a pond scene. In the foreground, a large green frog with dark spots sits on a lily pad. To its left, a brown snake is coiled in the water. In the background, two people are crouching on the grassy bank. The person on the left has red hair, wears goggles, a blue face mask, and yellow gloves, and is holding a blue spray bottle with a pink flower on it. The person on the right has brown hair and wears a blue face mask and a brown jacket. A speech bubble from the person on the right says "Think this will help?". The scene is lit with bright green light, suggesting sunlight filtering through the foliage.

Think this will help?

If you meet a hairy seaweed crab, do NOT try to give it a haircut.

WHY?

A hairy seaweed crab needs its hairs for protection from predators. Many of the hairs have tiny hooks that work like Velcro. Perfect for the seaweed, sponges and algae the crab sticks to its body. That's how it blends in with plants in the shallow waters where it lives. And when the plants on its back grow, the crab looks bigger than it actually is. Go, supercrab!

You're the one who needs the haircut!



If you meet a pooping hippopotamus,
DEFINITELY DON'T scoop.

WHY?



Duck!

You would be covered in poop. As male hippos poop, they spray it around with their spinning tails. Sort of like a poop sprinkler. That spray can travel as far as 32 feet (10 meters). Why do they do that? That's how they mark their territory. When an outsider comes along, it can smell the poop and back away before it gets too close. Since hippos can be vicious, that's a good idea!



Where?

If you meet a red-lipped batfish,
YOU SHOULDN'T offer it water wings.

WHY?



Use them
yourself!



Even though red-lipped batfish are poor swimmers, they get along just fine on the ocean floor. They use their fins to walk instead of swim. Luckily, they don't need to go far to find food. Instead the food comes to them! See that horn on the batfish's head? Just underneath it is a glowing lure that attracts small fish, crabs, shrimp and sea worms. As soon as they get close, GULP!

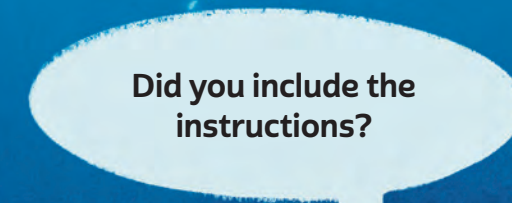
If you meet a slow loris, **DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT** handing it a scooter.

WHY?

Lorises don't want to speed up. When they look for food at night, crawling slowly in the treetops means predators like pythons and hawk eagles don't notice them. And while slow lorises may look cute, they are **DANGEROUS!** They have glands near their armpits that ooze venom. When the loris licks those glands, the venom mixes with saliva and pools in grooves in their teeth, which then pack a poisonous punch! So stay away!

This tastes funny.

Did you include the instructions?



If you meet a loggerhead turtle, it's SILLY to offer it a GPS device.

WHY?



This GPS is really amazing. You'll love it!

Give me a break.

We know the way. Leave us alone.

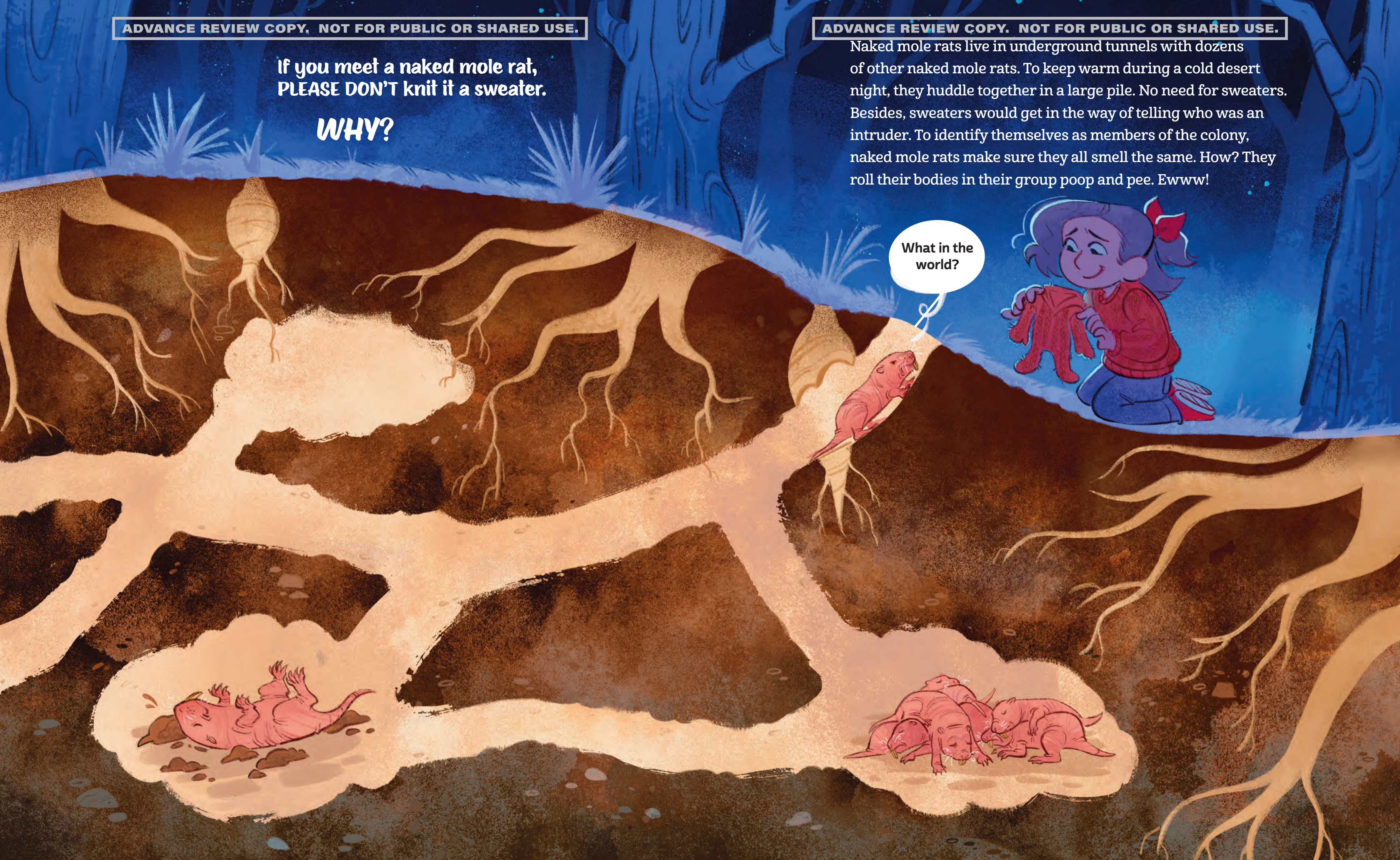
Loggerhead turtles have a built-in compass. They have tiny bits of a mineral called magnetite in their brains that helps point them in the right direction. This is useful when they hatch from eggs and need to get to the sea before a predator catches them. It's also helpful during the many years they spend in the ocean. They swim thousands of miles and yet come back to the very same beach where they were born!

If you meet a naked mole rat,
PLEASE DON'T knit it a sweater.

WHY?

Naked mole rats live in underground tunnels with dozens of other naked mole rats. To keep warm during a cold desert night, they huddle together in a large pile. No need for sweaters. Besides, sweaters would get in the way of telling who was an intruder. To identify themselves as members of the colony, naked mole rats make sure they all smell the same. How? They roll their bodies in their group poop and pee. Ewww!

What in the world?





If you meet a peacock butterfly, you **DON'T NEED** to offer it sunglasses.

WHY?



You would be putting it in **DANGER!** Most of the time, peacock butterflies keep safe by using camouflage. The dark color of their folded-up wings blends perfectly with the tree bark they rest on. But if a hungry bird comes near, **TA-DA!** The butterfly opens its wings and flicks them back and forth, revealing four large, colorful eyespots. The bird is so startled that it leaves the butterfly alone.



Looks like I fooled you too!

If you meet a spotted salamander, **NEVER EVER** offer it an umbrella.

WHY?



Spotted salamanders love being wet! That's how they breathe—through their wet skin. In early spring, spotted salamanders leave their underground homes and head to vernal pools, which are large holes filled with rainwater. That's where they lay their eggs and where hatched salamanders grow into adults.



Maybe it doesn't like the pattern.

HISS!

If you meet a honey possum, it's a **BAD IDEA** to give it a napkin.

WHY?



It's true that honey possums are messy eaters, but that's a good thing. Their eating habits help make new plants. How? The honey possum sticks its pointy snout into large flowers to drink nectar with its long tongue. Pollen sticks to the hairs on its snout. When the possum visits the next flower, some of the snout pollen rubs off. This allows the flower to make seeds, which will grow into new plants.

This doesn't look like a flower.



Don't fall for it. We need you just the way you are!



No matter what animal you meet, ALWAYS show it kindness and respect. After all, animals are living beings—just like YOU!



MORE FASCINATING FACTS...

Northern fulmars

The stinky oil that a northern fulmar spits out can travel as far as nine feet (three meters)!

Black bears

Before hibernating, black bears load up on food—berries, nuts, insect larvae, caterpillars, bees, honey and even bird eggs.

Mink frogs

The call of a mink frog sounds like a hammer on wood. When a bunch of mink frogs call at the same time, it sounds like popcorn popping.

Seaweed crabs

The algae that the seaweed crab puts on its back for protection also makes an easy snack when the crab gets the munchies.

Hippopotamuses

Hippopotamuses are born without bacteria (germs) in their guts. Bacteria are needed to break down food. So they eat their mom's poop. Plenty of bacteria there!

Red-lipped batfishes

Scientists are still trying to figure out why these batfish have such red lips. Some think it might be to attract a mate.

Slow lorises

Slow lorises have two tongues—a longer one for licking nectar from flowers and a shorter, jagged one for cleaning their teeth.

Loggerhead turtles

Loggerhead turtles have hard beaks made of keratin, like your fingernails. That's why they can eat crabs, fish, sea urchins and clams.

Naked mole rats

Naked mole rats never drink. They get their liquid from the roots and tubers (underground stems) they find underground. But they only eat part of the plant, so it can keep growing.

Peacock butterflies

When the peacock butterfly flicks its wings open, they make a hissing sound. Another way to scare off a predator!

Spotted salamanders

Green algae inside salamander eggs help the embryo (developing salamander) grow by giving it oxygen.

Honey possums

Newborn honey possums are the size of a grain of rice. They spend the first 60 days of their lives inside their mother's pouch, just like kangaroo joeys.

For Benjamin and Lianna, with a million hugs and kisses.

—E.K.

For Uncle Larry—whose humor lives on with every silly face, burp and barf I draw. —H.W.

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