Magazine Article

• Magazine articles give details and facts that support the main idea about a topic and use many illustrations.

• Ideas in illustrations, titles, and topic sentences help readers make and confirm predictions.

• The text features help readers predict, locate, and verify information, and graphic sources show information visually.

• Use ideas and text features to predict what will happen next.

• Make connections between literary and informational texts with similar ideas and support your ideas with details from the texts.

Read the title and introduction. What do you predict the topic and main idea will be? Verify your predictions as you read.

He Listensto Whales from Ranger Rick

by E. Shan Correa

Joe Mobley lives near the island of Maui in Hawaii. (Maui rhymes with “zowie.”) It’s the perfect place for a scientist who studies how humpback whales behave. The whales hang out near Maui all winter long.

Joe has lots of questions about these huge mammals. How do they know where to go when they travel through the ocean? How do they find each other? How do groups stay together? Joe thinks clues to these mysteries are held in the sounds that these whales make. To collect clues, he listens to the humpbacks.

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Whale Chatter

“Humpbacks make three main types of sounds,” Joe explains. “Both the males and the females call loudly when they’re hungry or eating. Males talk when they’re hanging out in groups. And males sing during mating time.”

Joe first heard the whale’s feeding calls from a tape that another scientist had made. The whales were feeding in their summer home off the coast of Alaska. All were scooping up small fish and shrimp-like krill with their enormous mouths. And they seemed to call to each other while they ate. “You can imagine how noisy they were,” Joe says with a laugh. “They eat all the time during the summer,” he continues, “and they almost never eat during the winter.”

To listen to whales in winter, Joe doesn’t have to go far: he just heads to their winter home in the ocean around Maui. That’s when he hears the second kind of whale sound, which he calls “talking.”

Joe explains what the sounds may mean: “Whales hang out in groups called pods. While they’re in pods, the male whales make strange clicks, creaks, roars, and whines. Some of them seem to be signaling to females, as if they were saying, ‘Hey, I’m over here!’ Or they might be saying to other males, ‘This is my mate, so stay away.’ So far, no one has heard females or young whales ‘talking’ in this way.”

Long Songs

Whale songs are the third kind of sound that Joe studies. You may have heard them on records. Some parts of a whale’s song sound sad, like children crying. Some parts are high squeaks. And some rumble like thunder.

“These songs are beautiful, but loud,” Joe says. “They’re much louder than any other animal sound, louder even than rock music. Our boat shakes when a singing whale is close by.”

A humpback’s song has parts that are repeated over and over. One song can last 30 minutes. Then the whale might repeat the whole song. Sometimes a humpback sings for more than 20 hours without stopping!

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