

# RAISING 'EM RIGHT

by Lee Lamb

If you have a birdhouse in your backyard, you know mama and papa birds make pretty good parents. If you're lucky, you've watched bird couples prepare a cozy nest, take turns sitting on eggs, feeding chicks and teaching them to fly. Bird moms and dads share the responsibility of raising the kids. But that's not always the case in the animal world.

## MAMA MIA

Bull elk take no part in rearing their calves, but elk mothers get help from their friends. Cows and calves band together in herds for companionship and safety. A group of elk moms will leave their calves in the care of a single cow—kind of like daycare. The cows take turns as babysitters, the calves get a chance to play together, and the other moms can relax and eat, knowing their little ones are safe.

Sow grizzlies also raise their young with no help from dad. There may be no mother in all of nature that protects her kids as ferociously as Mama Griz. Sometimes that even means guarding them from dad. A male grizzly may kill any cub—even its own.

## DAD'S THE MAN

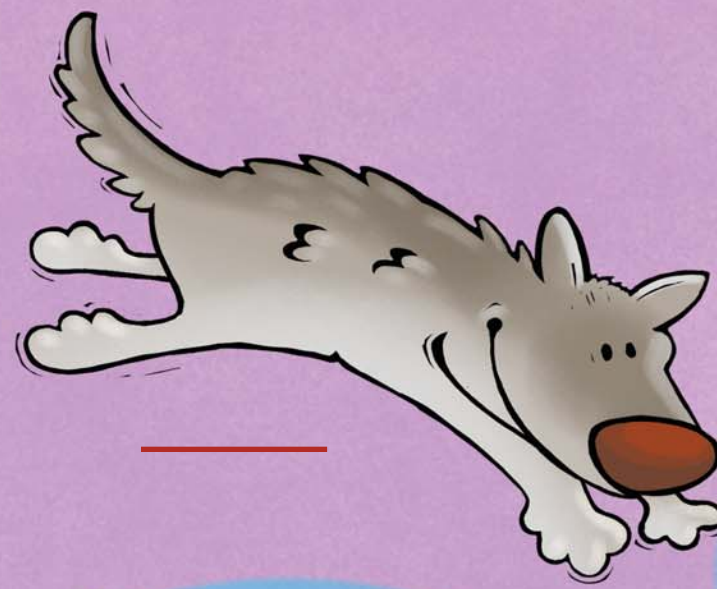
But nature also has lots of examples of Mr. Mom where dad is the one who raises the kids. After a Darwin frog lays her eggs, dad guards them until they hatch. Then he swallows the tadpoles and stores them in his throat! Six weeks later, tiny frogs hop out of his mouth and swim away.

A channel catfish father actually chases mom away from the nest as soon as she lays her eggs. He fiercely protects the eggs, then watches over the tiny fish, called fry, until they're big enough to survive on their own.

## WE ARE FAMILY

Sometimes the whole family pitches in to raise the youngsters. Wolves live in packs, where only the alpha (or lead) male and female breed and have babies. Older brothers and sisters babysit the pups while mom and dad hunt for food. Everyone takes turns watching the pups and teaching them how to survive. After they're grown, pups either stay with the family or strike out to try to establish their own territories and packs.

CAN YOU MATCH THE BABY CRITTER WITH THE CLUE?



- A) BABYSITTING DAYCARE
- B) HOP ON POP'S TONGUE
- C) FATHER KNOWS BEST: EGG THIEVES DIE
- D) FATHER KNOWS WORST: KIDS ARE FOOD
- E) SISTER'S IN CHARGE

