

John Rucker: How Pet Dogs Inspired An Environmental Startup

Twenty years ago, John Rucker, an English teacher, would take his dogs for hikes and noticed they would bring him box turtles. Soon, Rucker and his four-legged team were in demand by universities and wildlife conservation groups for their tracking ability.

Humans have difficulty spotting box turtles in tall grass, and the turtles are prized, tracked, and studied for their invaluable environmental research data.

“A few zoos have taught canines to find box turtles, but Boykin spaniels are uniquely suited to hunt for turtles because they have soft mouths and a keen sense of smell. They’re also eager to please. They love nothing more than to find a turtle and proudly bring it to me.” – John Rucker

What stands out about Rucker’s environmental tracking business is that inspiration came from observing the unique skillset of his pets, rather than taking stock of his own skills.



Source: The Washington Post, Cathy Free, June 8, 2021.. He realized his dogs have an unusual skill. Now he uses them to help save turtles:
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/2021/06/08/dogs-save-turtles-wildlife-ranavirus>