



POOP

Detectives



by Ellen Lawrence

Credits

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Up Close with Dung

A zoo veterinarian is at work in a lab.

She opens a large refrigerator and takes out a box.

Is it her lunch? No—the box contains rhino poop!

She scoops out a pea-sized lump and adds it to a bowl of salty water.

Then she begins to examine the poopy water under a **microscope**.

a mixture of
poop and water



Vets and other scientists can learn a lot from an animal's poop. At a zoo, keepers collect dung samples for the vets to study. The poop is stored in a refrigerator to keep it fresh.

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Why do you think the vet is studying rhino poop?

microscope

poop sample

veterinarian

A Poop Checkup

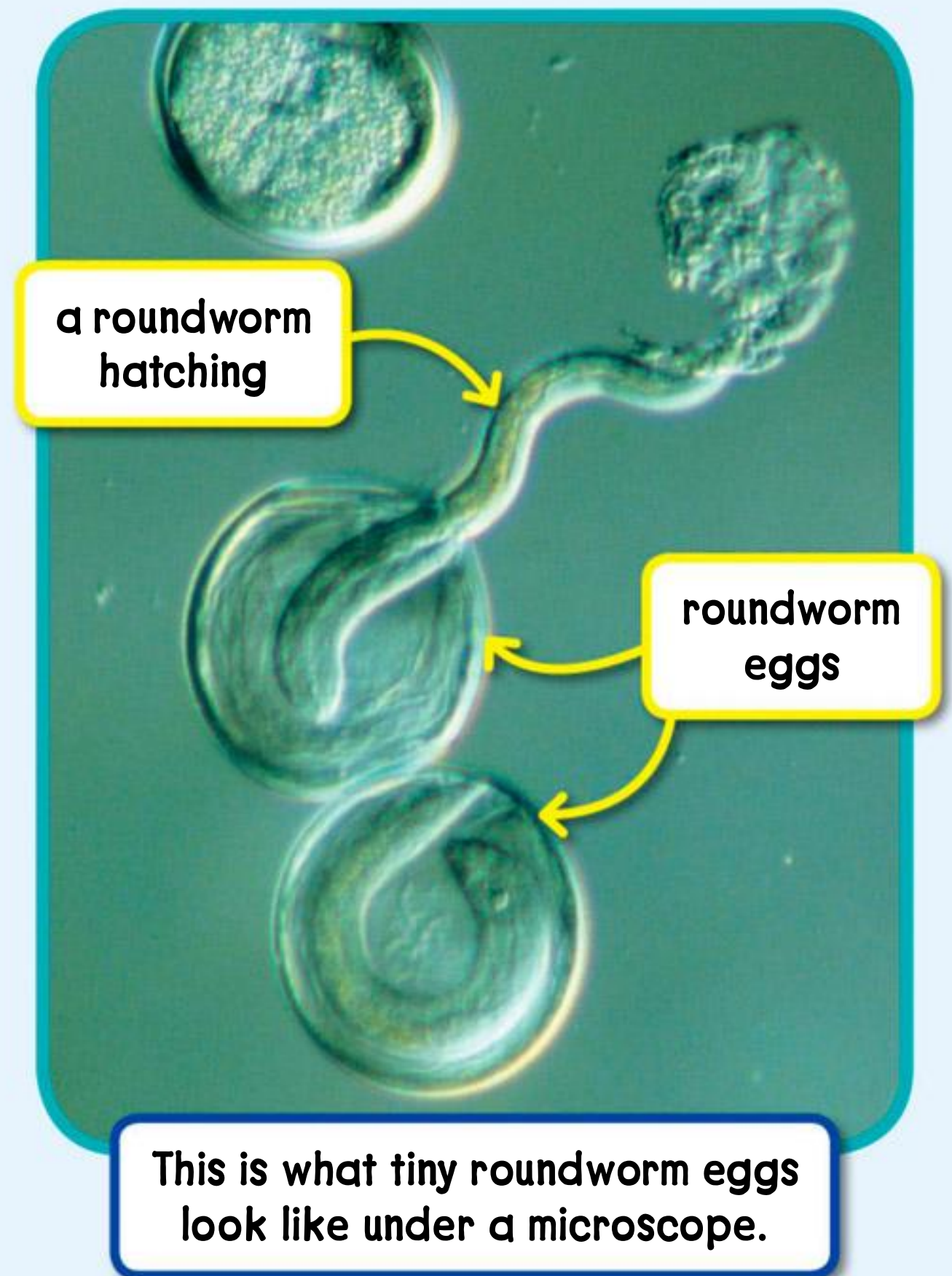
The vet is looking for **parasites**, such as roundworms, that may be living inside the rhino and making it sick.

Roundworms lay their eggs in an animal's stomach.

When the animal poops, the tiny eggs are passed out in its feces.

The vet checks the rhino's dung for worm eggs.

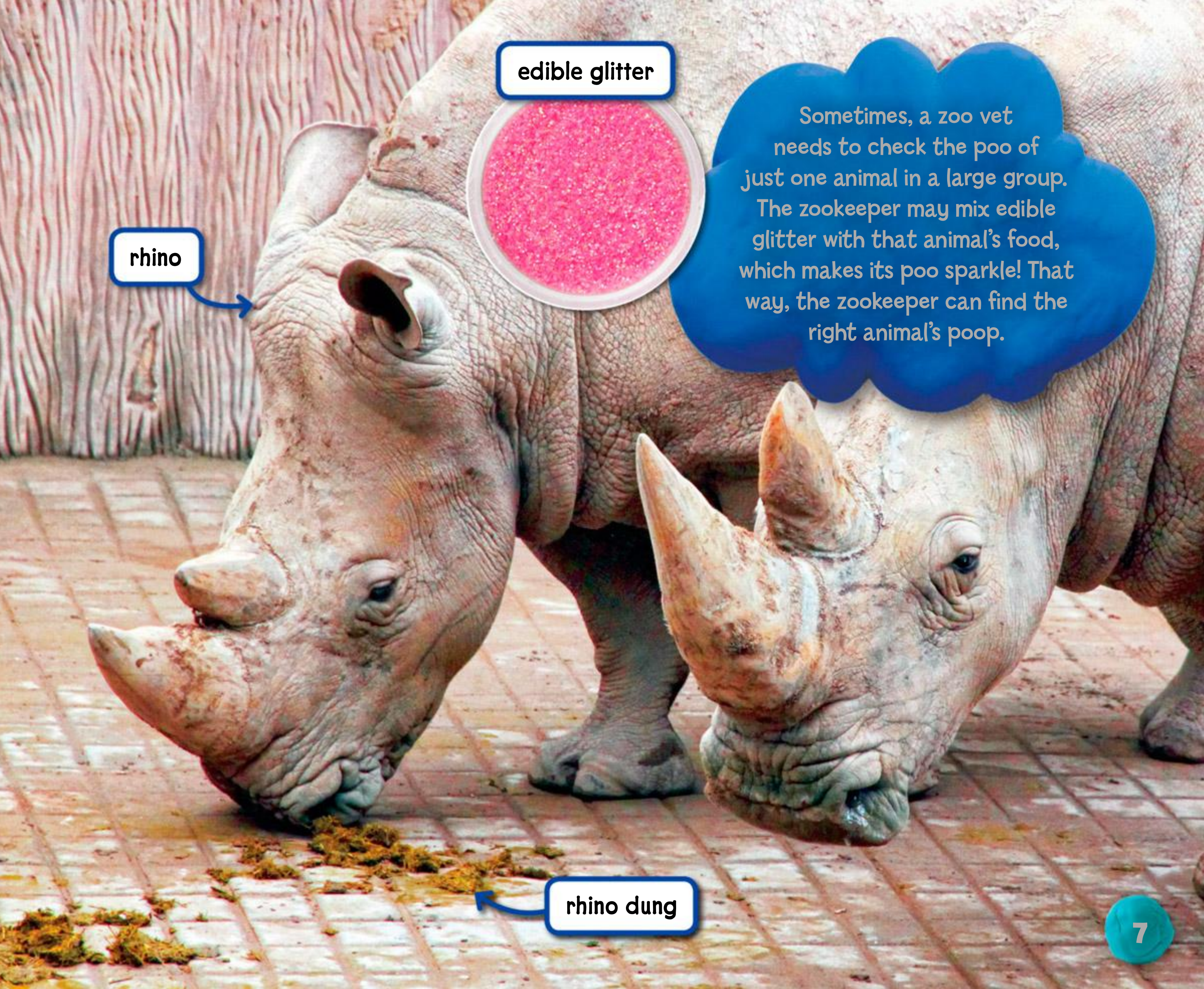
If there are lots of eggs, the rhino needs some worm-killing medicine.



a roundworm hatching

roundworm eggs

This is what tiny roundworm eggs look like under a microscope.



rhino

edible glitter



Sometimes, a zoo vet needs to check the poo of just one animal in a large group. The zookeeper may mix edible glitter with that animal's food, which makes its poo sparkle! That way, the zookeeper can find the right animal's poop.

rhino dung

Endangered Animals

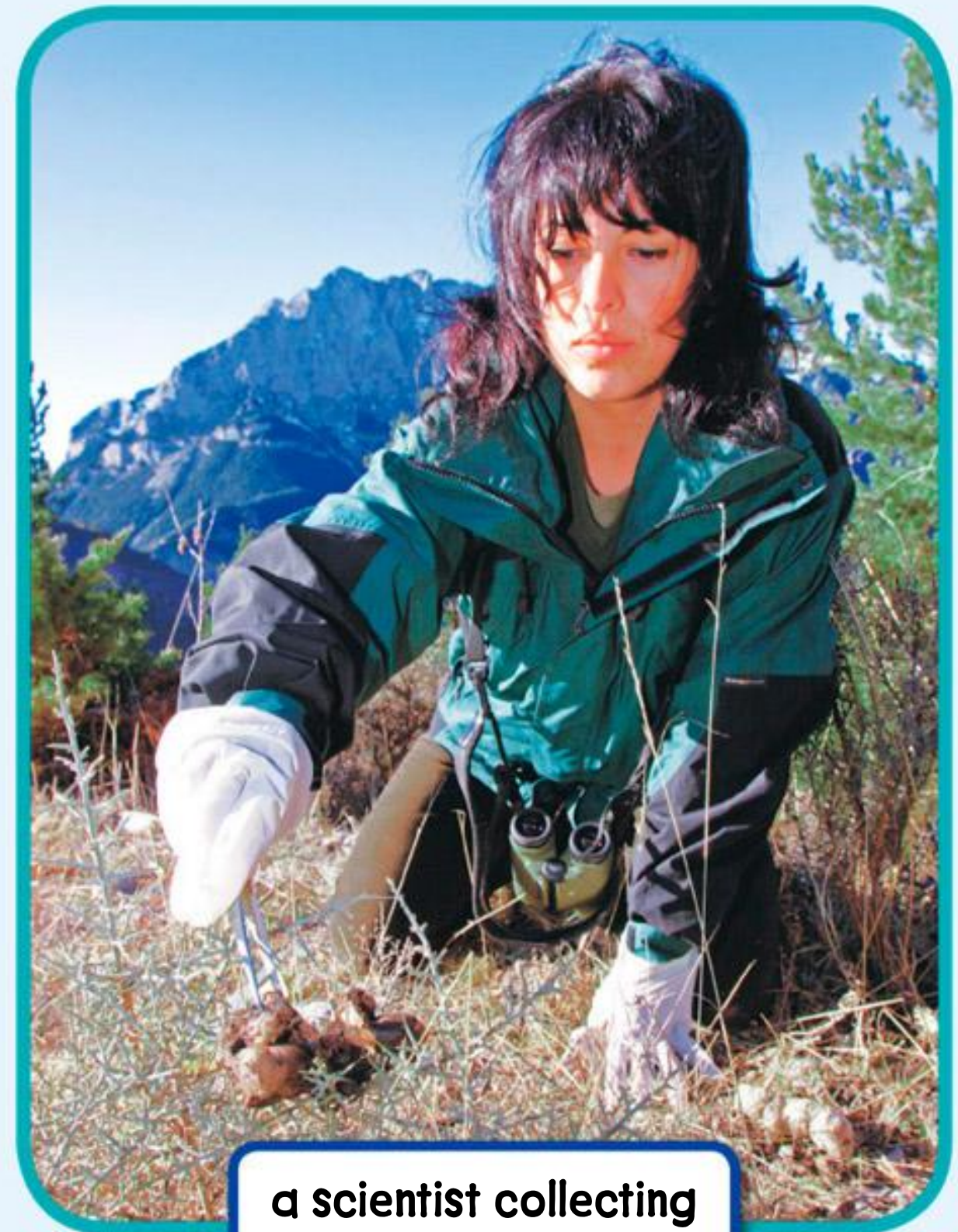
Around the world, many animals are **endangered**.

Scientists can discover a lot about these animals by studying their dung.

They can test the poop for chemicals that show if an animal is hungry, sick, or stressed.

It's not always easy, however, to find a pile of poo in a large forest or field.

So some scientists have furry helpers!



a scientist collecting
wolf droppings



scientists measuring elephant dung



Many animals are endangered because their homes have been destroyed. When part of a forest is cut down, where do the animals that once lived there go? Scientists can track them by searching for their dung.



How do you think scientists might find wild animal dung?

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