

Reptiles and Amphibians Merit Badge Prework

Hidden Oaks Nature Center

The Reptiles and Amphibians merit badge is a three hour session. Scouts should bring a snack and plenty of water. Please no red liquids. Scouts will be spending the some of the session outside. Please have them wear sunscreen and insect repellent.

What to bring:

- Blue card, pen and pencil.
- Appropriate clothing including closed toe shoes.
- Snack and water.
- Prework.

Prework

4. Explain how reptiles and amphibians are an important component of the natural environment. List four species that are officially protected by the federal government or by the state you live in, and tell why each is protected. List three species of reptiles and three species of amphibians found in your local area that are not protected. Discuss the food habits of all 10 species.
6. Describe in detail six venomous snakes and the one venomous lizard found in the United States. Describe their habits and geographic range. Tell what you should do in case of a bite by a venomous species.
8. Do ONE of the following:
 - a. Maintain one or more reptiles or amphibians for at least a month. Record food accepted, eating methods, changes in coloration, shedding of skins, and general habits; or keep the eggs of a reptile from the time of laying until hatching; or keep the eggs of an amphibian from the time of laying until their transformation into tadpoles (frogs) or larvae (salamanders).
 - b. Choose a reptile or amphibian that you can observe at a local zoo, aquarium, nature center, or other such exhibit (such as your classroom or school). Study the specimen weekly for a period of three months. At each

visit, sketch the specimen in its captive habitat and note any changes in its coloration, shedding of skins, and general habits and behavior. Find out, either from information you locate on your own or by talking to the caretaker, what this species eats and what are its native habitat and home range, preferred climate, average life expectancy, and natural predators. Also identify any human caused threats to its population and any laws that protect the species and its habitat. After the observation period, share what you have learned with your counselor.

Please note: Should you decide to raise a reptile or amphibian for 30 days and wish to have a tadpole (available seasonally), contact Emily Cole at Emily.cole@fairfaxcounty.gov to arrange to pick one up plus the care directions and 30 day tracking form. The tadpole must be released back into the pond at Hidden Oaks at the end of the 30 days.

For help or questions, contact Emily Cole at Emily.cole@fairfaxcounty.gov, or at (703) 941-1065.