



# REPTILE & AMPHIBIAN STUDY

## Merit Badge Requirements

- 1) Describe the identifying characteristics of six species of reptiles and four species of amphibians found in the United States. For any four of these, make sketches from your own observations or take photographs. Show markings, color patterns, or other characteristics that are important in the identification of each of the four species. Discuss the habits and habitats of all ten species.
- 2) Discuss with your merit badge counselor the approximate number of species and general geographic distribution of reptiles and amphibians in the United States. Prepare a list of the most common species found in your local area or state.
- 3) Describe the main differences between:
  - A) Amphibians and reptiles.
  - B) Alligators and crocodiles.
  - C) Toads and frogs.
  - D) Salamanders and lizards.
  - E) Snakes and lizards.
- 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 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 ten species.
- 5) Describe how reptiles and amphibians reproduce.
- 6) From observation, describe how snakes move forward. Describe the functions of the muscles, ribs, and belly plates.
- 7) 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) Maintain one or more reptiles or amphibians for at least a month. Record the 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).
- 9) Do TWO of the following:
  - A) Identify at night three kinds of toads or frogs by their voices. Imitate the song of each for your counselor. Stalk each with a flashlight and discover how each sings and from where.
  - B) Find and identify (by sight) eight species of reptiles or amphibians.
  - C) Give a brief talk to a small group on the subject of reptiles and amphibians. Use at least three living specimens you have collected.
- 10) Give five superstitions about reptiles and amphibians and a correct explanation for each. Give seven examples of unusual behavior or other true facts about reptiles and amphibians.

**NOTE:** Scouts must not use venomous reptiles in fulfilling requirements 8 and 9. Species listed by federal or state law as endangered, protected, or threatened must not be used as live specimens in completing requirements 8 or 9c unless official permission has been given. In most cases all specimens should be returned to the wild at the location of original capture after the requirements have been met. Check with your merit badge counselor for those instances where the return of these specimens would not be appropriate.

## Requirement 1

Describe the identifying characteristics of six species of reptiles and four species of amphibians found in the United States. Under the name and description of each, tell about the habits and habitats of all ten species.

Reptile Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Habitat: \_\_\_\_\_

Identifying Characteristics: \_\_\_\_\_

Habits: \_\_\_\_\_

Reptile Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Habitat: \_\_\_\_\_

Identifying Characteristics: \_\_\_\_\_

Habits: \_\_\_\_\_

Reptile Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Habitat: \_\_\_\_\_

Identifying Characteristics: \_\_\_\_\_

Habits: \_\_\_\_\_

Reptile Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Habitat: \_\_\_\_\_

Identifying Characteristics: \_\_\_\_\_

Habits: \_\_\_\_\_

Reptile Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Habitat: \_\_\_\_\_

Identifying Characteristics: \_\_\_\_\_

Habits: \_\_\_\_\_

Reptile Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Habitat: \_\_\_\_\_

Identifying Characteristics: \_\_\_\_\_

Habits: \_\_\_\_\_

Amphibian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Habitat: \_\_\_\_\_

Identifying Characteristics: \_\_\_\_\_

Habits: \_\_\_\_\_

Amphibian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Habitat: \_\_\_\_\_

Identifying Characteristics: \_\_\_\_\_

Habits: \_\_\_\_\_

Amphibian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Habitat: \_\_\_\_\_

Identifying Characteristics: \_\_\_\_\_

Habits: \_\_\_\_\_

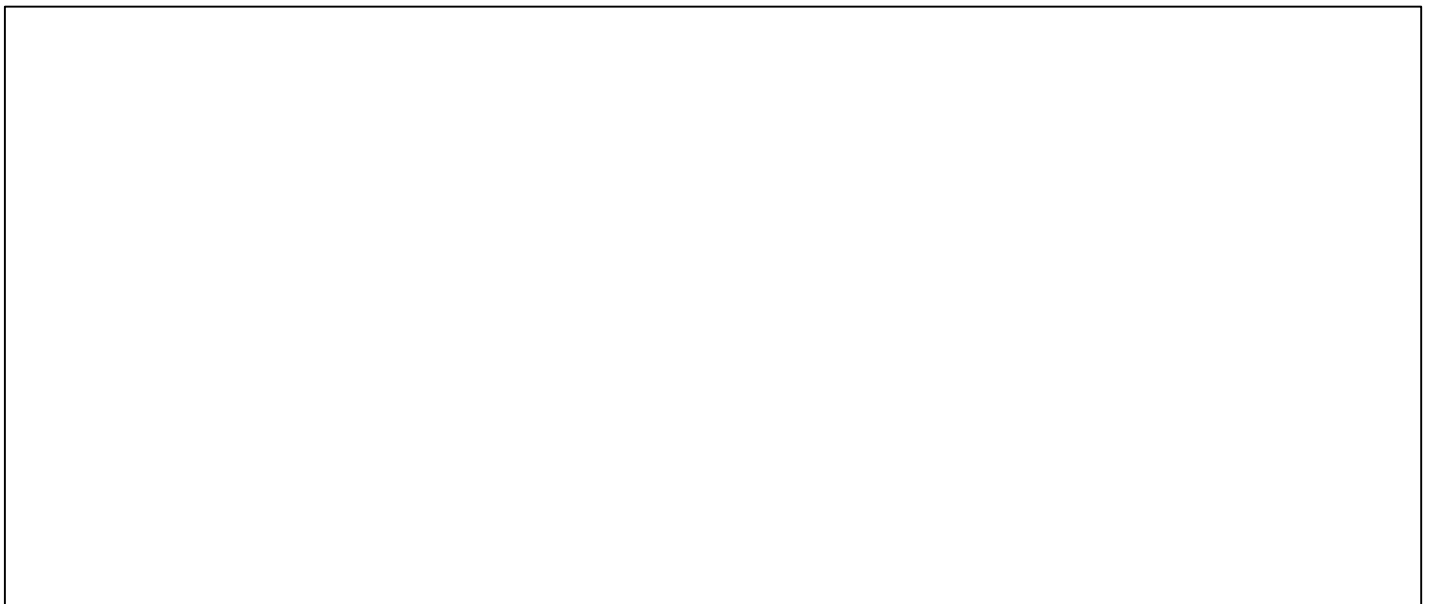
Amphibian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

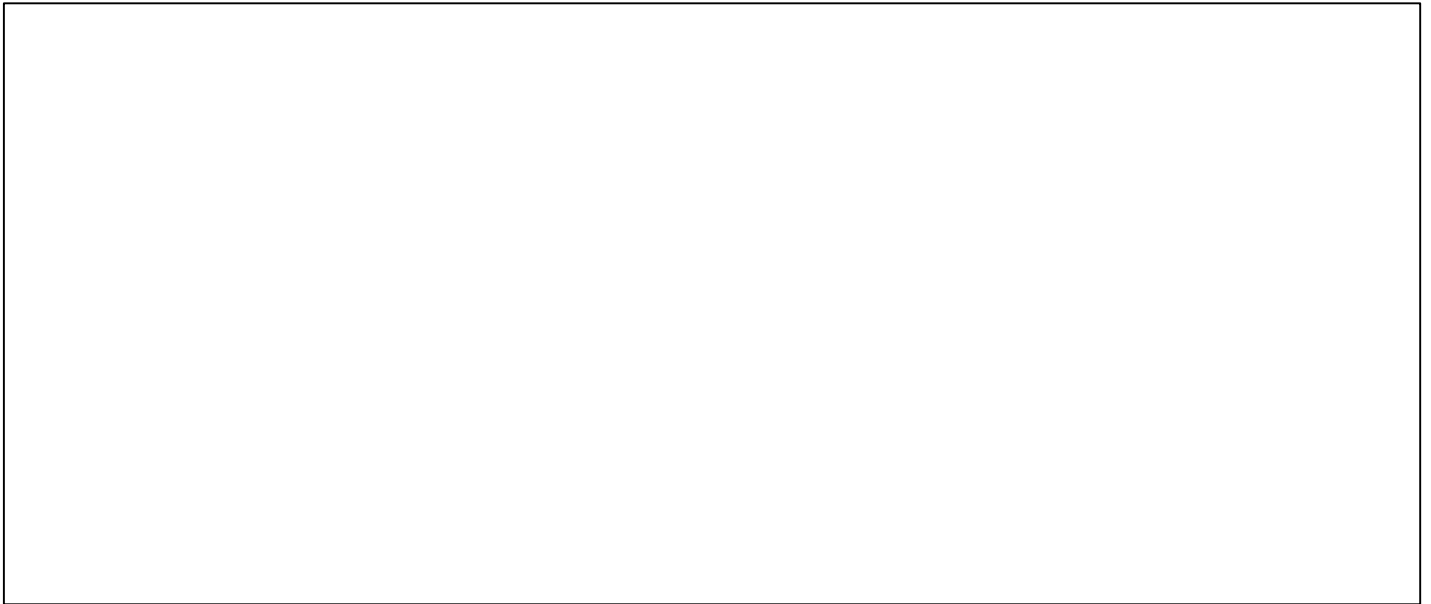
Habitat: \_\_\_\_\_

Identifying Characteristics: \_\_\_\_\_

Habits: \_\_\_\_\_

In the area below and on the following page make a sketch of any four of the reptiles or amphibians that you described above. Make sure your sketches include markings, color patterns, or other characteristics that are important in the identification of each of the four species.

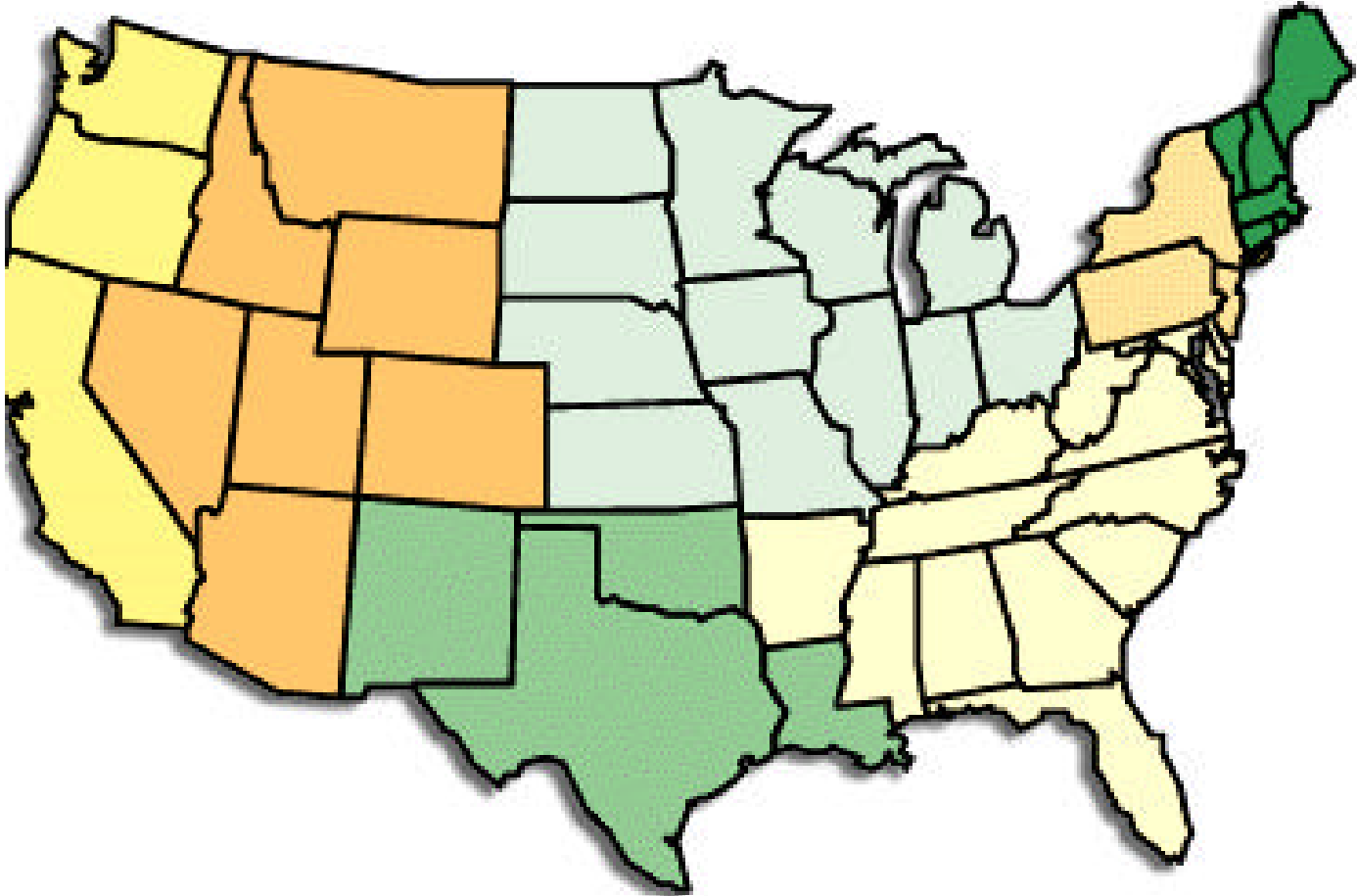




## Requirement 2

Discuss with your merit badge counselor the approximate number of species of reptiles and amphibians in the United States. What number did you come up with for reptiles? \_\_\_\_\_ What number did you come up with for amphibians? \_\_\_\_\_

During your meeting with your counselor, discuss the general geographic distribution of reptiles and amphibians in the United States. You can use the map below to give a visual of your discussion.



Use the area below to prepare a list of the most common species of reptiles and amphibians found in your local area or state:

AMPHIBIANS

REPTILES

AMP

AMPHIBIANS	REPTILES	AMP
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

## Requirement 3

Describe the main differences between *Amphibians* and *Reptiles*: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the main differences between *Alligators* and *Crocodiles*: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the main differences between *Toads* and *Frogs*: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the main differences between *Salamanders* and *Lizards*: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the main differences between *Snakes* and *Lizards*: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Requirement 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. Tell also the food habits of each.

Protected Species: \_\_\_\_\_ Why is it protected? \_\_\_\_\_

Food Habits: \_\_\_\_\_

Protected Species: \_\_\_\_\_ Why is it protected? \_\_\_\_\_

Food Habits: \_\_\_\_\_

Protected Species: \_\_\_\_\_ Why is it protected? \_\_\_\_\_

Food Habits: \_\_\_\_\_

Protected Species: \_\_\_\_\_ Why is it protected? \_\_\_\_\_

Food Habits: \_\_\_\_\_

Local *Reptile* not protected: \_\_\_\_\_

Food Habits: \_\_\_\_\_



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Describe the functions of the muscles: \_\_\_\_\_

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Describe the functions of the ribs: \_\_\_\_\_

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Describe the functions of the belly plates: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Requirement 7**

Using the area below describe six venomous snakes found in the United States.

Snake Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Geographic Range: \_\_\_\_\_

Visual Description: \_\_\_\_\_

Habits: \_\_\_\_\_

Snake Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Geographic Range: \_\_\_\_\_

Visual Description: \_\_\_\_\_

Habits: \_\_\_\_\_

Snake Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Geographic Range: \_\_\_\_\_

Visual Description: \_\_\_\_\_

Habits: \_\_\_\_\_

Snake Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Geographic Range: \_\_\_\_\_

Visual Description: \_\_\_\_\_

Habits: \_\_\_\_\_

Snake Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Geographic Range: \_\_\_\_\_

Visual Description: \_\_\_\_\_

Habits: \_\_\_\_\_

Snake Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Geographic Range: \_\_\_\_\_

Visual Description: \_\_\_\_\_

Habits: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and describe the one venomous lizard found in the United States:

Lizard Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Geographic Range: \_\_\_\_\_



If you selected *Option A*:

List the three toads or frogs you identified at night by their voices:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Imitate the song of each for your counselor.

After stalking each, describe how each sings and from where:

Toad/Frog #1: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Toad/Frog #2: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Toad/Frog #3: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If you selected *Option B*:

List the eight species of reptiles or amphibians that you found and identified:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If you selected *Option C*:

You have been asked to give a brief talk to a small group on the subject of reptiles and amphibians using at least three living specimens you have collected. Use the area below to prepare or describe your speech and list the three species you used.

Species Used

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Requirement 10

Give five superstitions about reptiles and amphibians and a correct explanation for each.

Superstition: \_\_\_\_\_

Correct Explanation: \_\_\_\_\_

Superstition: \_\_\_\_\_

Correct Explanation: \_\_\_\_\_

Superstition: \_\_\_\_\_

Correct Explanation: \_\_\_\_\_

Superstition: \_\_\_\_\_

Correct Explanation: \_\_\_\_\_

Superstition: \_\_\_\_\_

Correct Explanation: \_\_\_\_\_

Give seven examples of unusual behavior or other true facts about reptiles and amphibians

Behavior/Fact: \_\_\_\_\_

Behavior/Fact: \_\_\_\_\_

Behavior/Fact: \_\_\_\_\_

Behavior/Fact: \_\_\_\_\_

Behavior/Fact: \_\_\_\_\_

Behavior/Fact: \_\_\_\_\_

Behavior/Fact: \_\_\_\_\_